

# Our Ministry to the Christian World

## Part 1

### The Importance of Christian Ministry

I would like to begin by asking you to consider a question that students of The Urantia revelation often ignore:

Is our ministry to Christian world important?

I believe that it is, and there are two major reasons why. The first is personal and the second comes from the Urantia Book itself.

#### Personal Reason

My personal reason for favoring Christian ministry derives from two inescapable facts of my experience:

Fact # 1. I want to minister to others, especially family and friends. I want to be able to draw near to them and offer help, guidance, comfort, and inspiration, especially in their times of need. I would like to be an encouraging example of religious living in the midst of a secular and materialistic world.

I do not want my religious beliefs to be seen as strange or function as a barrier between us. Rather I want to be able to freely share my religious insights. Like many of you, I believe I have found in Jesus, especially as portrayed in The Urantia Book, the way of truth and the way of life. I want to share the religious guidance and comfort that the teachings of Jesus brings. 1:30

Fact #2. I live in a Christian world. The traditions, culture, beliefs, and values of those I contact with in my daily life are basically Judeo-Christian. Even those who reject organized Christianity generally hold to a background belief in the goodness and value of its better teachings. And on a wider level our highest planetary ideals in morals, ethics, and religion are embodied within the Christian tradition. Even in a world that has grown increasingly secular and materialistic many people still accept, to one degree or another, the authority of the Bible and the value of its Jesusonian teachings.

Given these two facts: that I seek to effectively minister to others, and that Christianity is the dominant religious influence of my world, I have made a conscious decision. I have decided to rely on the life and teachings of Jesus as

portrayed in the *New Testament* gospels of *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*.

Fact #1—Desire Effective Personal Ministry

Fact #2—Live in a Christian World

Reolution--Focus on Jesus; use the Bible

I have found that by using the Biblical record of Jesus I can effectively minister and teach the insights I have discovered in The Urantia Book without arousing antagonism or resistance. Indeed I find that people are quite receptive to a better understanding of Jesus when it is presented in harmony with Christian teachings.

### **The Call of the Urantia Revelation**

My second major reason for Christian ministry derives from the Urantia Book itself. For if we look at what the Urantia Papers really teach we do not find that they direct us to spread Urantia Books—rather, they call for a new revelation of *Jesus* and his actual teachings. The following quotations should help make this clear:

*“There must come a revival of the actual teachings of Jesus...”*  
(1866:170:5.19)

*“Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.”* (2090:196:1.3)

*“Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus’ life and illuminated with a new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation.”* (2084;195:10.1)

And let us take special note of this last quote:

*“Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings.”* (2082:195:9.3)

### **Christians are our Target Audience**

There is another aspect of Christian ministry that is important to realize: the Urantia revelation not only calls for a new revelation of Jesus; it also directs us to bring this new revelation *to Christians*.

For example, consider this quotation from page 2082:

*“...Christianity stands in need of new contact with the uncompromised teachings of Jesus; it languishes for lack of a new vision of the Master’s life on earth.” (2082:195.9)*

In Christian doctrine, an outward church has taken the place of Jesus’ inner spiritual kingdom of submission to God. But membership in the church is not equivalent to citizenship in the kingdom; one is spiritual and the other mainly social. Jesus’ spiritual kingdom still exists in those believers who are dedicated to doing the Father’s will. This brotherhood of kingdom now slumbers within the Christian church, but it will eventually come forth. Our job is to help awaken and inspire sleeping Christians through a revival of Jesus’ actual teachings.

And we should understand that a new revelation of Jesus, which attracts and unifies all true believers, is *the great goal* the revelators present to us in their vision of our world’s ideal religious future. Listen to their prophetic promise from page 2086:

*“The great hope of Urantia lies in the possibility of a new revelation of Jesus with a new and enlarged presentation of his saving message which would spiritually unite in loving service the numerous families of his present day professed followers.” (2086:195.10.15)*

In sum, the clear call of the revelators is to uplift and unify *Christians* by turning them back to the foundation of their faith, Jesus’ original gospel of the kingdom, the good news that God is our loving heavenly Father and we are all his planetary children, sons and daughters of God.

### **Effective Techniques for Revealing Jesus**

If we take seriously The Urantia Book’s call to bring about a new revelation of Jesus to the Christian world, what should be our approach? For example, should we spread Urantia Books in an effort to bring about this new revelation of Jesus? If this is what the revelators intended, they certainly do not say so; they consistently call for a return to Jesus’ actual teachings, but nowhere do they tell us that this is to be accomplished by spreading Urantia Books.

For me the answer to this question of how to bring about a revival of Jesus’ actual teachings is the same as the answer to the question of how I can be most effective in my personal ministry. I believe we need to recognize the background beliefs and values of our world and adapt our ministry to the

understanding and receptivity of our audience. This means we need a ministry that, like the Urantia revelation itself, exalts and affirms the best in Christianity. We need to recognize that the truths originally portrayed in the New Testament gospels are the *same* saving truths that The Urantia Book teaches.

In doing this we are merely following the example of Jesus' ministry to the Jewish world. He always adapted his teachings to the ways and comprehension of his audience. He did not incite confusion and arouse antagonism by teaching truths too far removed from the capacity of his hearers. Jesus always affirmed the best in the Jewish religion and showed due respect for the ways and traditions of his people. He often affirmed and even relied upon the authority of the Jewish scriptures in his effort to get across his own expanded teachings.

In our work for a new revelation of Jesus I believe we should do the same. Whereas Jesus lived and taught mostly among the Jews, the culture we live in is basically Christian. If we are to go to the world we live in, the Christian world, we should first respect their traditions, second, affirm our commonly held beliefs and values, and third, present our expanded revelation of Jesus in a way that best harmonizes with their understanding and belief system; in sum, we should simply relate to Christians as fellow religionists who share many of our beliefs and values, and learn to speak to them in their own language.

## **Part II**

### **Experiences in Christian Ministry**

What results may we expect when we pursue such an approach?

I have experimented with this form of ministry for more than 40 years and the following is an outline of some of my experiences and observations. I hope they will inspire you in your personal ministry and help make that ministry more effective.

These experiences and comments are presented on three major levels: personal ministry to close family and friends, social ministry in my workplace environment, and the wider sphere of planetary ministry.

#### **Personal Level**

My first really significant experience in teaching Jesus using the Bible occurred many years ago when my grandmother lay on her deathbed. At such a crucial time in her life I felt a strong urge to read to her good and meaningful words. I searched for the best and most trustworthy teachings I could find and finally settled on a small inspirational book that contained only the teachings of Jesus. I came into her room as often as I could and read to her from this book. I

hope and believe it was helpful; certainly I had the great satisfaction of knowing I had ministered comforting words and the saving teachings of Jesus at a time that would have special meaning for her.

On the personal level the best part of a ministry that seeks harmony and unity with Christianity is the sense of oneness I feel with close family and friends. I grew up as a part of a large and closely-knit extended family that included parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. We all grew up faithfully attending mainline churches and the Christian religion has always been a central part of our lives.

What has my acceptance of the Urantia Revelation meant to my relations with this close family circle? It has not meant that we live in two separate worlds where each side rejects the beliefs of the other. In fact our religious unity has grown much stronger. Because I accept and affirm the best of Christianity, our religious viewpoints are mutually respected. I can minister freely to those closest to me and by openly affirming Jesusonian teachings I can help strengthen them in “fighting the good fight of faith.”

While most members of my personal family circle are a part of the mainline tradition, my wife’s parents and my brother adhere to a stricter interpretation of Christian doctrine. With these religionists I have also found a deeper and closer relationship.

My brother is a devoted Christian, who adheres to traditional Christian theology. We have had many positive discussions through the years and both feel a sense of shared values. In fact, our relationship has been defined more by unity of religious values and ideals than by differences in theology. I have enjoyed attending his church as well as religious retreats sponsored by that church. Even at these church gatherings I found I could easily minister insights I had gained from The Urantia Book, and in turn was uplifted by a sense of unity and fellowship with other sincere Christians.

I have even had a positive discussion with my father-in-law concerning the atonement doctrine. With this more fundamentalist believer I was able to make all my important points and arguments by prefacing my discussion with this viewpoint:

“Of all the teachings in the Bible, Jesus’ stand out as the *highest* and *best*. His teachings are perfect, and all others should be judged by their harmony with his concepts and pronouncements.”

In this way I operated from an authoritative source that he also respected. We had a six-month correspondence and actually drew closer while arguing for fundamentally opposing viewpoints.

It is important to observe that my ministry to the Christian world has not just been one way. In many instances Christian friends and acquaintances have ministered to and prayed for me in my times of need. Indeed, I feel certain that their prayer and ministry has been instrumental in bringing me through my most difficult times. My experience is that when we seek religious unity with others we gain great benefit from the, fellowship, prayer, and ministry of our Christian friends.

## Social Level

This sense of religious community that I feel with close family and friends has also extended to my workplace environment.

For 27 years I served as director of the Einstein School, a small private school I founded in 1981. The following words were part of the school's original statement of guiding principles. They demonstrate the ease with which one may blend Christian and Urantia Book teachings in a way that is acceptable to the general public:

“Einstein School believes that learning and character development should not be separated. Its purpose is the balanced development of the *whole personality*—body, mind, and spirit. The school affirms the basic values and teachings of Jesus. It encourages students to see themselves as children of a loving heavenly Father and to treat others in a brotherly manner. Love, thoughtfulness, helpfulness, and service to others are emphasized.”

This religious orientation was generally reassuring to parents of all persuasions, and in 27 years I knew of only one parent who rejected the school because of its religious stance. On the contrary, the fact that the school fostered Christian beliefs and values was a major plus. A number of parents indicated that the school's religious outlook was an important factor in choosing Einstein School for their child.

We generally had a number of students who came to us from Christian Schools, but we also had others who came from non-religious and secular backgrounds. Also, the school employed a number of excellent Jewish teachers and we often had Jewish students. By ignoring Christian dogma and focusing on the *actual teachings* of Jesus we are able to speak freely to all and encourage our students to learn and live Jesusonian ideals.

I found it both rewarding and effective to apply Jesus' teachings in the many real life situations that arose at school. For example one of the most fundamental problems children face is lack of self-respect. This often results

both in serious learning problems and in difficulties relating to other students and to teachers. The school's answer to this widespread problem was to teach the students to see themselves as children of God and therefore worthy of respect. At the same time it was emphasized that all others are also worthy of respect, and that the more we respect others the more we can respect ourselves. This idea and ideal that we are all sons and daughters of a loving heavenly Father was the central teaching of the school, the one that we sought most to impart to our students.

Because the school was openly Jesusonian and Christian in its policies I found it easy and natural to minister in many ways. For example, I begin each Monday morning by announcing a "word of the week." It was a character or positive value word such as faith, tolerance, altruism, etc., and sometimes a phrase like "Be of good courage," or "To have friends be friendly." We discussed the concept and each student looked up the word and wrote a short description of it. The younger students also did a color poster each week and we voted each Monday on the best poster of the previous week; these posters were then prominently displayed in the school.

The school enjoyed great success and we had no shortage of applications. It became well known in the community as a place where children who had previous difficulty in school enjoyed success, growth, and more fully reached their full potential. All this took place in a school that taught revealed Jesusonian concepts using the Bible as a background authoritative source.

## Planetary Level

My primary efforts at ministry beyond the personal and social levels involve a book entitled *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* that I first published in 1992. I began work on it in the mid 80's after searching in vain for a book that isolated and compiled all the Biblical verses dealing with Jesus. Failing to find a book that I felt comfortable with, I decided to undertake the project myself. Using The Urantia Book as a guide, I sought to collect and organize all the *true* Biblical verses concerning Jesus, in chronological order, from birth through death and resurrection. I used the Revised Standard Version as my basic text, but also used some 26 versions of the Bible to find the most fitting translation.

My first and most basic purpose for the book was to have an easy to read, trustworthy, and acceptable version of Jesus' life and teachings to give to others. The book was dedicated to the students of Einstein School and every year at our closing ceremonies I presented a copy of the book to each departing pupil. I felt real satisfaction in being able to leave every student with a book that continued and reinforced the ideal ministry of the school, and that also could

serve as a life long source of guidance, comfort, and inspiration.

This book was always readily received and even looked forward to by the students. In fact, one year my high school students repeatedly requested that we study the book. So that year I taught History of Religion to my eleventh grade class using *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* as our textbook.

I have also given the book to many others, especially friends and individuals who are facing difficulty or crisis in their lives, and have received numerous reports of positive results. Other readers have also found the book useful. For example one long time Urantia Book student told me it had helped heal his relationship with his parents who had been concerned about his being into The Urantia Book. In another instance, a couple reported using it with great success to teach a Sunday school class in a mainline church—in fact, most of the class later ordered the book

The book has achieved remarkable success in a number of venues without any effort at distribution or marketing. For example, a seminary in Texas gave *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* to graduates at their closing ceremonies for several years. A pastor from India, who discovered the book on the internet, ([lifeandteachingsofjesus.org](http://lifeandteachingsofjesus.org)) heads a network of more than 30 pastors that use the book as a primary teaching tool. This pastor has even translated the book into Telegu, their native language.

### **Part III Summary**

In summary, I do believe that our ministry to the Christian world is important. On a personal level, it is important because it allows us to freely share our religious viewpoint with others, especially family and friends. On a planetary level, Christian ministry is important because the Urantia revelation calls for it. It calls for a new revelation of Jesus' actual teachings. And it calls for a unification of Christianity through a return to Jesus' original gospel of the kingdom, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

The real question is how best to achieve this objective. If we want to be *effective* ministers of the truths that Jesus taught, we must be wise in our techniques.

I believe that success in this great enterprise will be achieved only through unifying with Christianity and recognizing the authority of the Bible. I have cited a number of examples from personal experience that clearly show the effectiveness of this approach. Nor are my experiences unique; other Urantian believers are having real success in their ministry by focusing on the great truths we share with Christianity and as recorded in the Bible.



## *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*

In this regard, I suggest that my book, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, can be a valuable tool. It collects and organizes all the true teachings of Jesus that are readily available and accepted by the great mass of humanity. It provides a way for Urantia Book believers to minister the truth they have found without requiring that the other person read a 2000 page book and make a faith commitment to its truth.

This book gives proper emphasis to Jesus original gospel, the good news that we are all children of God. And it clearly reveals his concept of the kingdom, the rule of the Father in the heart of the believer. Even its organization and the chronology of Jesus' life is revelatory of the greater vision found in the Urantia Book.

*The Life and Teachings of Jesus* is also valuable because it harmonizes the Urantia Book and the Bible. Its very existence is a demonstration of the deep harmony that exists between the teachings of the gospels and Part Four of the Urantia Book. The realization of this harmony should lead students of The Urantia Book to grow in respect for believers in the Bible, and lead Christian believers to gain new respect for followers of The Urantia Book.

For both sets of believers this book is valuable because it provides *the cream of the gospels* relatively purified of the human errors that became a part of the early Christian teachings. The words of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament gospels are our common religious heritage; they naturally evoke religious feelings, and in this organized and purified form we may more readily enjoy and be inspired by them.

So, I urge you to make use of this book. It makes a great gift. It can be a valuable source of uplift and guidance. It is an effective way to spread Urantia Book teachings. It can be a help and comfort to someone going through hard times. And it is an easy way to say to others that you stand for the way of Jesus in the midst of our secular and materialistic world.

## **Closing**

I would like to close now with some words of encouragement from the The Urantia Book for those who feel this call to spread Jesus' religion in our world. Here is what the revelators say regarding our present time and the prospects for a new revelation of Jesus:

*"The teachings of Jesus...are even now slowly triumphing over the*

*materialism, mechanism, and secularism of the twentieth century. And such times of great testing and threatened defeat are always times of great revelation.*” (2082;195:9.3; my underlining)

*“The hour is striking for a rediscovery of the true and original foundations of present day distorted and compromised Christianity—the real life and teachings of Jesus.”* (2083;195:9.5; my underlining )

*“A new and fuller revelation of the religion of Jesus is destined to conquer an empire of materialistic secularism and overcome a world sway of mechanistic naturalism. Urantia is now quivering on the very brink of one of its most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment.”* (2082;195:9.1; my underlining)

Thus we see that the time for this new revelation of Jesus is not far in the future; it is *now*. This means that in working for a new revelation of Jesus we are in harmony with the needs of the time. And most encouragingly, the revelators assure us that our prospects for success are excellent. The teachings of Jesus are destined to rule our world; this revival of Jesus and his actual teachings will be the next stage in our planet’s religious evolution.

If you want to be part of this new revelation of Jesus, there are three basic steps you will need to take:

- 1) Learn the way of Jesus.
- 2) Live the way of Jesus.
- 3) Teach the way of Jesus