

Public Ministry & the bike...

by Paul Harden

Many of us find that although we would like to go out to the public and spread the revelation of The URANTIA Book, that isn't quite as easy as it sounds. I will try to show you, through my own personal experiences, how I overcame some of the difficulties in dealing with the public. Hopefully, I can show you some of the common mistakes made, and how to correct them in a few simple ways.

The personal experience of which I am speaking came from a period of about one and a half years and over 60 hours of time behind The URANTIA Book booth, which has been at different gatherings around the state of Colorado, and personal ministry on a daily basis.

What I would like to do first is to define the word public. The public is simply everyone that you meet in your daily routine. We are not "dealing with the public," we are sharing our joy of the revelation with our family, our brothers and sisters. It's always easier to talk to family and friends than strangers. So, if you can relate to people as children of God, which they are, it makes it much easier to talk freely with them.

The next step is to admit to yourself that you can't possibly get the message out by yourself. You'll need some help. Not just human help, but super-human help. What I am talking about is letting the Spirit lead you through every encounter.

The Spirit that I am referring to is the Spirit of Truth. An explanation of this is in the Book on page 2059, "All became conscious of a new and profound sense of spiritual joy, security and confidence. This new consciousness of spiritual strength was immediately followed by a strong urge to go out and publically proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom and the good news that Jesus had risen from the dead." And the Book goes on to say, further down, that "the believers felt themselves suddenly translated into another world, a new existence of joy, power and glory." As you can see, the Spirit of Truth is there to give us the security and confidence that we need to go out and to proclaim the good news.

When most of us first got the Book, we had a flash of the Spirit of Truth come over us, which gave us a powerful desire to tell

our family and friends about it, and sometimes they didn't accept it as well as we would have liked them to. As we all know, there is something in The URANTIA Book for everybody, so as messengers of this revelation, it should be our supreme joy to discern what it is that would most interest our brothers and sisters. The easiest way to do this is as Jesus did, and that was that He truly desired to know men, and to find out how He could help them along in their everyday lives. He did this by asking sincere, loving questions of the person to whom he was speaking.

Now I am going to go over some very important points to know which, I cannot emphasize enough. These are to help you not to become discouraged because you have made a few mistakes in the past in dealing with people. In public ministry it is OK to make a few mistakes, as long as you learn from them.

Some of the important things not to do are to over-intellectualize the Book, no matter how well you know it. Don't overwhelm a person with the facts of the Book. Try to keep the subject to something that isn't over their heads. Don't take advantage of a person by trying to show them how much smarter you are than them, because you know all about the Book and they don't. Always respect the personality of man, no matter what intellectual level they





are on. Don't try to knock the foundation out from under a person whose ideas are somewhat different than yours. Strive to do as Jesus did and that was to expound upon the truth and build around each individual's personal foundation of faith.

Another important key to public ministry is to know the basic foundations of the individual's or group's beliefs. If you are talking to a Christian, it helps if you know the Bible. When talking to someone, find out where their faith lies, and modify your presentation to them accordingly.

God has found many ways of communicating with His children. This is evident by all the different formal religions there are on Urantia. If you want to do the most service to God's children, first you must desire to know them.

I would like to share with you an analogy that might be able to shed more light onto the subject, from another perspective.

THE BIKE

Witnessing to the public about The URANTIA Book is very much like riding a bicycle. No matter how many people tell you how, or how many books or articles you read, you never learn how until you get on and try.

Remember how when learning to ride a bike you always fell down a few times and

got discouraged and your parents smiled and just said, "It's OK, you are just beginning." That is how it is witnessing to people in the beginning. You always make a few mistakes, and the Spirit of Truth will just smile and say, "It's OK, you are just beginning."

Also, like bicycling, when introducing the Book, you have to be aware of the road conditions, because you might fall into a hole and disable your bike. You have to be aware of your speed, or otherwise you might fall behind with a very intellectual mind, or go too fast for the average person.

If a man were to plan a bike trip to the south, he would take clothing for warm weather. And if he were to go to the north, he would take clothing for cold weather. And as we go riding into the paths of higher communication with our brothers and sisters, we must dress ourselves accordingly. If we are speaking to a Bible believer, then we must "dress" ourselves to the Bible. If we are speaking to someone of the Mormon religion, then we must know some of their doctrines. A good cyclist always plans for a long journey and is always prepared for the short ones.

As you ride through the streets of communication with others, always be courteous and aware of other's needs. It's sometimes difficult to ride at first, but if you start slow, before you know it, you will have found your balance and will soon learn to love the joys of making contact.



Always remember on your journeys through life, whether you ride through the dark tunnels of uncertainty or down the peaceful valley of happiness toward the eternal sunset, the Spirit of Truth will always be there smiling and saying, "**THIS IS THE WAY**".

Remember that all of our work is merely a part of the larger work. Don't let service of the Book take precedence over the service of God. Don't let the presentation of the Book interfere with your service to God's children and hopefully, with your enhancement, the relationship between God and His children.

If you want to do the most for the kingdom, then show people that you yourself are already in the kingdom. This is done by letting the fruits of the spirit show. If you want to make friends, then you must make yourself friendly. Show people that you are happy. Smile, show your kindness, and above all enjoy your life with God.

Jesus could not have stated it any more clear when he made the pronouncement that "The harvest is indeed plenteous, but the laborers are few; therefore I exhort all of you to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send still other laborers into his harvest." May our Father's will always be your will. •