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“The Thrill of Loving Service”

Vol. 9 Summer 2008
A Publication of *The Urantia Book Fellowship*

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THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP

Cultivating The Spirit of Religion



Publications Committee Chair: Linda Buselli. Editor Summer 2008 Issue: Linda Buselli. Members: Lynda D'Arcangelo, Laura Hay, Nancy Johnson, Joe Liszka, Sage Waitts • Design & Layout: Sage Waitts • Banner Design: Courtesy of Nick Curto and Colleen • Published annually by Uversa Press, a subsidiary of *The Urantia Book* Fellowship, P.O. Box 4583, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 USA. Tel: 877.288.3772 Fax: 847.251.2490 Email: fellowship@urantiabook.org www.urantiabook.org Unless otherwise noted quotations are from *The Urantia Book*. References are given as follows: Brackets [] indicate paper, section, and paragraph. Parentheses give page number of single column edition.

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Celestial Ministry: Seen and Unseen

Origin, Nature and Destiny

By Michelle Klimesh, Walnut Creek, CA

This paper is a written reflection of the plenary talks at the Fellowship's Summer Study Session in River Forest, Illinois, in July of 2006.

ORIGIN

The source of celestial ministry in the grand universe is the person of the Infinite Spirit. As the Father is love, and as the Son is mercy, God the Spirit is ministry—the ministry of the Father's love and the Son's mercy to the creatures of the universe.

The Infinite Spirit is: The source of all mind; Personally conscious of every minded person in all of creation; The God of Action; The creator of a vast family of spiritual ministers

The spirit personalities of the vast family of the Divine and Infinite Spirit are forever dedicated to the service of the ministry of the love of God and the mercy of the Son to all the intelligent creatures of the evolutionary worlds of time and space. These spirit beings constitute the living ladder whereby mortal man climbs from chaos to glory. [9:8.17] (P. 107)

For a few years during childhood, I fell into the habit of second-guessing God. For example, I wondered why my mother spent three days in the hospital to give birth to my brother, but the cat gave birth easily by herself out in the garage. If God really knew everything, why didn't he know the jaw he made for me was too small for the number of teeth growing there? I suspected God wasn't as smart as people made him out to be, and this suspicion laid me open to years of mental speculation about how I would run the universe if I were God.

One thing I wondered was why God spent so much time on insect design. Why were there so many kinds of bugs, but only one kind of angel? If my child-self had been God, I would have spent a lot less time on insects and more time designing angels.

Over a decade later, I found the section in *The Urantia Book* that describes the administration of the universes, and I was introduced to the astonishing number of angelic categories described therein. (I also found within the pages of the revelation the answers to why humans have difficult births and why there were too many teeth in my head; but discussion of those must be left for a different essay.)

As we ponder the ultimate source of angels, the Infinite Spirit, we are faced with the challenge of grappling with the perplexing

concept of infinity. How can we approach the origin of celestial ministry without attempting to embrace infinity? Although it seems certain that we cannot truly understand the Infinite Spirit, we can progress toward understanding the enormity of the scope and range of his power and influence by studying information that has been presented in the revelation.

Human progress in life begins on the planet of our birth. We will travel from here through the system, the constellation, the local universe, the superuniverse, the central universe, and Paradise. Since the local universe is the midway point in this journey, and since we have been given a wealth of information about the spirit beings who serve in the local universe, it occurred to me that we could approach the enormity of the family of the Infinite Spirit by simple mathematics; by adding what we know about the numbers of angels at our local level and then multiplying outward.

Let's look at the numbers in the local universe.

Archangels	Almost 800,000
High Commissioners	More than 1.5 Billion
Celestial Overseers	3 Million
Universe Conciliator	400 Million
Technical Advisors	500 Million
Celestial Recorders	75
Recording Angels	4 Billion
Morontia Companions	70 Billion

So we have 76,403,800,000 angels working at the local universe level of Nebadon. 76.4 billion! But this compilation is not complete. We must add to this angelic pile "far up in the millions" Most High Assistants, a number of Mansion World Teachers "beyond the comprehension of the mortal mind," and various other types "too numerous to catalogue." Although these numbers surely add up to something much higher, let's say conservatively that there are 80 billion angels working for our local universe.

$$\begin{aligned} &80 \text{ billion local universe angels} \\ &\quad \times 100,000 \text{ local universes} \\ &\quad \quad \times 7 \text{ superuniverses} \\ &= 56,000,000,000,000,000 \text{ angels working in the local universes} \end{aligned}$$

I worried that this number is too fuzzy, and I decided to try another approach toward understanding the numbers that make up the Infinite Spirit's family.

We have the exact number of inhabited planets in the grand universe. Note that the Chief of Seraphim on Urantia said that he had 1,194,393,600 seraphim assigned to his command. Note also that our planet has a like number of cherubim, and we see that the earth is blessed with the services of 2,388,787,200 angels.

This is a wonderfully precise number (as befits the report of a seraphic math genius), yet I paused before inserting it into the formula. The problem is this: does our planet have more angels, less angels, or the same number of angels as a normal planet? Setting aside a host of interesting conjectures on this question, let's err to the conservative side. Assume that our planet has more than the normal number of angels. Assume that the number of angels on the average world is two billion. Now let's run the calculation.

$$\begin{aligned}
 & 2 \text{ billion angels per planet} \\
 & \times 5.342 \text{ trillion inhabited planets} \\
 = & 10,684,000,000,000,000,000,000 \text{ angels working on} \\
 & \text{inhabited planets}
 \end{aligned}$$

10.7 sextillion angels! Add these to the 56 quadrillion working at the local universe levels, and keep in mind that the Infinite Spirit is personally aware of each and every one of them. How can we be anything but awestruck by the extent of God's power?

Before leaving the subject of origin, revisit the quote on 9:8.17 (P. 107) that describes the Infinite Spirit's family as living ladder. If you consider this phenomenon from the Paradise point of view, it becomes clear that a ladder sent down to each mortal in existence only appears to be a ladder from the human perspective. In reality, the Infinite Spirit's family must be an enormous web, a blanket of love and mercy covering the entire inhabited universe. There is nowhere any of us could possibly go where we are not surrounded by these children of mercy, nowhere we could be where his love doesn't pour over us and into us. We are not alone; we have not been left here to our own devices. We are constantly immersed in love and surrounded by ministers, the children of the Infinite Spirit.

NATURE

The universe of your origin is being forged out between the anvil of justice and the hammer of suffering; but those who wield the hammer are the children of mercy, the spirit offspring of the Infinite Spirit. [9:1.8] (P. 100)

We are told that only good can come of our efforts to love and understand the angels. What kind of persons are these, the children of the Infinite Spirit, who have us in their watch care?

Angels are social creatures. They can work alone but usually work in pairs. They are not male or female, but pair up as positive/negative or aggressive/retiring couples. Angels know us, see us clearly, and share many of our emotions. They are naturally sympathetic, and delight in service.

Angels are exceptionally adept mathematically. They patiently spend thousands of years in training and continuously engage in self-improvement. Angels persistently seek assignment at the lowest possible levels of reality, and especially crave work as guardians of mortal destiny.

We are told that angels like change, rest, reversion, and play. They enjoy our efforts at art, humor and music. Angels never manipulate us or interfere with our free will; they never do anything that might destroy the dignity of free will creatures. Angels are forever our friends and allies.

Nearly every angelic order sets aside reserves and recorders. Many angel orders also have a transport division. But beyond these generic functions, celestial ministers seem to be primarily focused on teaching. One of many orders of angels that extensively minister to ascendant mortals is described this way:

These tertiary seconaphim are the time-savers, space-abridgers, error detectors, faithful teachers, and everlasting guideposts—living signs of divine surety—in mercy placed at the crossroads of time, there to guide the feet of anxious pilgrims in moments of great perplexity and spiritual uncertainty. [28:7.3] (P. 318)

What is it that celestial ministers teach us? The list is mind-boggling.

Patience

Courage

Loyalty

Morals

Ethics

Teamwork

To accept uncertainty

To let pressure develop stability

To be faithful, earnest, and cheerful

To accept challenges without complaint

To appreciate the responsibilities of universe brotherhood

To enjoy privilege without abuse

To avoid self-importance

To feast upon uncertainty

To fatten upon disappointment

To enthuse over apparent defeat

To invigorate in the presence of difficulties

To eradicate the following animal traits:

Procrastination

Equivocation

Problem-avoidance

Ease-seeking

Insincerity

Unfairness

Impatience, anger, fear, anxiety

The angels try to comfort and encourage us. Angels promote

sincere social contacts, spiritual progress, social evolution, ethical interpersonal relationships, home life, health, industrial development, play, and humor. They prompt us to worship, coordinate our various spiritual influences, and bring together agreeable and efficient working groups.

2600 years ago, Heraclites of Ephesus said, “A man’s character is his fate.” An alternative translation of his words is simply, “Character is destiny.”

The angels—teachers of mortal character development—surely agree. The list of angelic lessons above reveals that our celestial guides have a nearly perfect recipe for such development. The angels want to help us erase any animal tendencies that might sabotage our progress through the universe, while simultaneously encouraging the qualities that enhance our chances for human and spiritual success. If we would only cooperate with their plan!

David Kantor’s previous study on this topic provides examples of how angels work with us in social settings. Angels do work within our relationships, but not exclusively. Indeed, in order to be most effective in interpersonal relationships, we must attend to the inner workings of our psyches.

Steven Covey believes that enduring success and happiness is possible only by integrating certain basic principles into one’s character. These foundations of success—integrity, humility, fidelity, courage, patience, industry, simplicity, and so on—are often hard won. Covey advises people to focus first on inner victories, then healthy independence, knowing that these two form the basis of productive interdependent relationships. His idea is that our inner, personal work must precede our interpersonal work.

Angelic ministry concerns itself with both the personal and the interpersonal realms. On our home world, they are concerned with family life, health practices, and industrial development. On the universe levels they deepen our morality, expand our ethics, and improve our awareness of cosmic brotherhood. Angels minister to us perfectly, wherever we are.

The family of the Infinite Spirit steps increasingly downward, drawing as close to mortals as they possibly can. The agents of God stand beside us throughout our entire journey through the universes. Why have they undertaken this enormous challenge? What is the purpose of this astonishing system of celestial ministry that pervades the known universe?

DESTINY

We are surrounded by celestial ministers who are interested in our character development—emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual. The angels spend eons helping to create legions upon legions of perfected universe creatures, creatures who:

- Start from the lowest points of the universes and work themselves inward to Paradise, into the embrace of

God the Father

- Are moral, ethical, cheerful, faithful, trusting, trustworthy, courageous, merciful, and patient
- Thrive on worship and rejoice in service
- Have deep experience with every level of universe reality
- Have irrevocably enlisted in the service of God
- Are forever immune to rebellion

Why? What does God plan to do with this assembly?

Perfectors of Wisdom, Divine Counselors, Archangels, Solitary Messengers, and One Without Name and Number all speculate that we are destined for service in the outer space levels. A Mighty Messenger clearly states that we “*are destined to the service and revelation of this Supreme Deity in and to the future universes of outer space.*” [56:8.2] (P. 643)

Frankly, at this point in my life, a final destiny of service in the future worlds of outer space seems so far removed from present reality that it is nearly incomprehensible. Whatever God has planned for me in the ages to come, the question that most interests me is what God wants from me today.

Steve Dreier once said that people would be better off if we spent less time thinking about what we want the angels to do for us, and a little more time wondering what we could do to help the angels with their work. To imitate John F Kennedy, “Ask not what your angels can do for you, but what you can do for your angels!”

What can we do to help the angels with their work? First, each one of us could immediately work on eradicating our animal tendencies. We don’t have to wait until the mansion worlds to begin to clear our characters of the detrimental traits we harbor, the poor habits we keep that sabotage our health, our relationships, and our efforts in the world.

Second, we can actively pursue that list of qualities that the angels are interested in helping us acquire.

Third, we can seek the Father’s will in all we do, daily. Listen to him, and do what he asks.

Fourth, we can help our unseen friends accomplish what they need to do in the material world. Here and now, imperfect as we are, we can become servants of God on this world. Who better than we who ARE human, to translate cosmic reality into human terms?

Recall the story of the shepherd boy to whom an angel appeared in the night. The angel whispered to the boy:

*The Gods are my caretakers; I shall not stray;
Side by side they lead me in the beautiful paths and glorious
refreshing of life everlasting.
I shall not, in this Divine Presence,
want for food nor thirst for water.
Though I go down into the valley of uncertainty or*

*ascend up into the worlds of doubt;
Though I move in loneliness or with the
fellows of my kind,
Though I triumph in the choirs of light or falter in the
solitary places of the spheres,
Your good spirit shall minister to me, and your glorious angel
will comfort me.
Though I descend into the depths of darkness and death itself,
I shall not doubt you nor fear you,
For I know that in the fullness of time
and the glory of your name
You will raise me up to sit with you on the battlements
on high. [48:6.8] (P. 552)*

We recognize this text as the 23rd psalm:
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me to lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff
they comfort me.
Thou prepares a table before me in the presence
of mine enemies,
Thou anoints my head with oil; my cup runs over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Why did the angel choose to give her message to this particular shepherd? Judging from the imperfect recitation of her message, we can't say that he was an especially good listener. He didn't relay the message perfectly. The angel didn't speak to him because he was well-connected or rich or famous; today we don't even know his name. But somehow this child retained enough of the angel's message to pass it on to others, and his message was such a powerful inspiration to humankind that it has been passed down century after century to comfort people even today.

I love this story because it assures me that we don't have to be perfect yet to be of service to God. We can start now, exactly where we find ourselves, even if we are not Mother Theresa, or CS Lewis, or Mahatma Gandhi, or Hafiz, or Stephen Covey. If a young shepherd who couldn't keep the message straight could become a servant of God on earth, so can you and I.

Author's note: Special thanks to Jack Kane for giving me names for the numbers above trillion.

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[Angels'] work in the universe is without bounds and limitations; they are closely associated with the material creatures of the worlds and are ever in the service of the lower orders of spiritual personalities, making contact between these beings of the spirit world and the mortals of the material realms. [38:5.4] (P. 421)

The Supreme and Outreach

By Arlene and Buck Weimer, Pueblo, CO

The following was presented at the Fellowship Summer Session in July, 2007.

At first glance, it may appear as if the Supreme and Outreach may be an unusual combination of topics for a presentation. As we proceed, this integration will become clearer.

UNDERSTANDING THE SUPREME

Some basic understanding of the Supreme is necessary. Many readers of the Revelation tend to shy away from study of and discussion about the Supreme. And yet: "...he is the maximum of Deity which finite creatures can actually comprehend" [56:8.1] (P. 643)

Source: The Supreme Being is a creation of the Paradise Trinity and God the Sevenfold (also called the Supreme Creators) [17:2.2] (P. 199) Actually, it is only the first three of the Sevenfold (The Creator Sons and Spirits, The Ancients of Day, and The Seven Master Spirits) that participated in this creation. [116:2.5] (P.1270)

Function: There are too many functions of the Supreme to mention in this article, however a few are: allows the Father to achieve freewill liberation from the terrible limitations of absoluteness, as an incomplete *experiential* God of time and space, the avenue through which finite creatures pass inward, a catalyzer of all universe growth, as the mother of our morontia soul, as a conduit through which the Father's love passes to the entire cosmos, and the sum total of all finite growth.

Destiny: The destiny of the Supreme Being is to become perfect; from potential to actual. This will happen at the moment when the entire seven superuniverses become settled in light and life. What a stupendous moment in time! No one finds the Supreme until we *all* find the Supreme; and it will be at that incredible instant. Many readers speculate this will be the equivalent to fusion, because: the Trinity is to the Supreme, what the Thought Adjuster is to mortals [116:3.4] (P. 1271) [117:3.10] (P. 1282) Then, one day, the Supreme will take his/her place among the Experiential Trinity.

When the Supreme reaches full maturity at the time of Grand Universe perfection, the Third Universe age is initiated and God the Ultimate in the outer space levels becomes the focus. But for now we live and have our being in the Second Universe Age of the Supreme (the First Universe Age was the Age of Havona). Duality is our nature.

Of course there is unity and triunity existent in different

realms of reality, but within the seven superuniverses we are *dual origin* beings (Supreme and Father). There are endless ways to view duality: male/female, perfect/imperfect, being/doing, spiritual/material; existential/experiential; the yin and yang of practically everything.

With this in mind, let us look at some of the fundamentals of the Supreme. *The Urantia Book* offers three papers on the Supreme: The Supreme Being (Paper 115) , The Almighty Supreme (Paper 116), and God the Supreme (Paper 117). Like most of the Revelation, these papers appear to be presented in reverse order; but so much for *human* thinking. In the Foreword it says: "*The Almighty Supreme, evolving on the value-level of nonpersonal activities, and the spirit person of God the Supreme are one reality—The Supreme Being.*" [0:8.3] (P.12)

THE BASICS

A fairly simple way to view the Supreme makes use of the philosopher George W.F. Hegel's dialectical method of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. (This is *simple*?) A Mighty Messenger temporarily sojourning on Urantia reminds us: "*But when all creatures and all Creators in the grand universe likewise strive for God-attainment and divine perfection, there is built up a profound cosmic tension which can only find resolution in the sublime synthesis of almighty power with the spirit person of the evolving God of all creatures, the Supreme Being.*" [116:7.6] (P.1276-77)

The *thesis* could be viewed as God the Supreme; as a personality resident somewhere in Havona. The *antithesis* could be the Almighty Supreme; as the pulsating power throughout the organism of the Grand Universe, while the *synthesis* is the becoming of the Supreme Being.

To further confuse understanding, the authors throw in the concept of "Supreme Mind". The Supreme Mind is in Paper 116 on the Almighty Supreme, thereby connecting it with the physical energy of the cosmos. Our morontia mind is built on living physical systems for the purpose of seeking unity between these seemingly opposites.

OK, you are asking by now: How does this apply to me? Using Hegel's ideas again, the synthesis represents a process for *growth*. So growth is what it's all about, for the Supreme Being as well as all ascendant beings.

The Supreme grows as a result of the "food" we provide by decision-action; and is the same technique whereby our soul grows. Hence the oft quoted statement: "*The act is ours, the consequences God's.*" [48:7.13] (P. 556) [117:5.5] (P. 1286)

This represents our highest duty as cosmic citizens—to feed the Supreme. We have the power to do, the personality to choose, and the synthesis in which the Supreme and our unique soul matures.

We the peoples of Urantia have been so fortunate to be one of only seven places out of 10,000,000 possibilities where our Creator Son Michael incarnated. We are doubly blessed with the ideal teachings, his teaching for growth—the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. *And*, we are further blessed with the endowment of his Spirit of Truth; which allows for a reinterpretation of this Gospel with every succeeding generation.

Acceptance, by faith of sonship with the Father, results in an increased *spirit* consciousness in our relationship with the Father, *entrance* into the kingdom. But it is our participation in the brotherhood of man that effects our soul growth; and hence the way is open to becoming good cosmic citizens. “*With God the Father, sonship is the great relationship. With God the Supreme, achievement is the prerequisite to status—one must do something as well as be something.*” [115:0.0] (P.1260) (There’s duality again.)

Acceptance, by faith of sonship with the Father, results in an increased spirit consciousness in our relationship with the Father, entrance into the kingdom. But it is our participation in the brotherhood of man that effects our soul growth; and hence the way is open to becoming good cosmic citizens.

The Father requires *growth*; a continuous *doing* of His will. Said Jesus: “...*the Father requires of me only that you shall bear much fruit.*” [180:2.1] (P.1945) And: “*The fruits of the spirits are the substance of the Supreme as he is realizable in human experience.*” [117:6.17] (P.1290) Jesus called attention to eleven fruits of the spirit, and presented them in *dual* form as: *loving* service, *unselfish* devotion, *courageous* loyalty, etc. This represents pure revelation. By comparison, the biblical presentation of the fruits of the spirit are in singular form: love, joy, peace, etc.

So, you want to be like Jesus? Then: “*When man yields the ‘fruits of the spirit’ in his life, he is simply showing forth the traits which the Master manifested in his own earthly life.*” [194:3.1] (P. 2062)

OUTREACH AND JESUS

Rodan of Alexandria said: “*If something has become a religion in your experience, it is self evident that you have become an active evangel...*” [160:5.3] (P. 1780) (our emphasis)

What is outreach? For us the multifaceted process of sharing the gospel of the kingdom in living ministry is outreach; for some this is a ministerial duty. Jesus, when speaking to about fifty of his

trusted followers, said: “*Remember that you are commissioned to preach this gospel of the kingdom...and you must not allow anything to divert your devotion to this one duty.*” [178:1.11] (P.1931)

Outreach ministry can be differentiated into many categories to embrace the believer’s, commitment to and capacity for, living these truths; all of which aids in the growth of the Supreme. To illustrate this, it can be helpful to explore the following:

Personal Ministry: Usually having a one-to-one sharing with family members, friends, and examples of as you pass by.

As a Messenger: Direct sharing in small groups or by indirect (bootlegging) during public speaking; and in creative expression as an artist, teacher, writer, or musician.

Discipleship: Publicly teaching/preaching the Gospel, and serving as a social example of loving God and serving humanity.

An Apostle: Being an ambassador of the kingdom. Giving up all and going forth actively proclaiming the Gospel throughout the world.

The flavor of Jesus’ outreach was first, by *living faith* in God’s guidance and watchcare. He was a living example of the divinity of God, and displayed this divine enthusiasm by spreading good cheer wherever he went. The consecration of will and his unselfish devotion to mankind were the hallmarks of his truths, as was the positive approach of love and mercy in the place of negativity—fear and sacrifice.

Second, his ministry had an aroma of friendship with God while extolling the many gifts from our Father. He always appealed to the divine spirit within each person by looking for the good (God) in them. Jesus completely understood that man, as both human and divine, was best led lead by love. His faith was resolute; while he remained keenly aware of the one battle each Gospel believer had to fight—the battle against *doubt*. And like his Father, he always respected the personality of each person in front of him—the absolute power of choice to determine their own destiny—making that person the most important thing happening to him at that moment.

Third, the substance of his outreach was his balanced and unified personality. He was unfailingly kind yet truthful; truly sincere but without pretense; practical yet original; loving the

sinner while hating the sin. Jesus was never in a hurry; he was approachable. His look into the eyes would change a person's life forever.

The form of Jesus' outreach ministry was twofold in nature: personal and public.

Personal: He challenged his parents' belief in a wrathful god. "*The heavenly father cannot love his children less than you love me.*" [125:0.6] (P. 1378) Of course, at age fourteen he became father to his siblings and a comfort to his mother after the death of Joseph. He used the family council method of running the family and the positive approach to disciplining, especially with Jude, until he finally left home at the age of twenty-eight.

For two years he was on the Mediterranean tour with Ganid and Gonod, ministering to fearful, downhearted, and discouraged souls. With the young man who was afraid, Jesus first asked for directions to Phenix, then explained to the boy the route to the goal of destiny. [130:6] (P.1437) And with the man mistreating his wife at the Tarentum ship landing, after separating them, he led the man to the side and reminded him what a good and virtuous person he was, then parted, reminding the man of the God the Father's equal treating of *all* His children. [133:2] (P.1470) In his personal ministry there was a constant bearing of the fruits of the spirit in his outreach ministry.

Outreach is the ministry of sharing the Gospel, and each individual must find their level of participation. When doing outreach, share in the living faith of your Thought Adjuster's guidance, show friendship with God, and strive toward a balanced and unified approach.

Public: After the selection of the apostles, Jesus prepared them for outreach ministry by instructing them on the many facets of the kingdom of God; ever reminding them of the personal interpretation of fatherly love and brotherly love. He first sent them out two by two to local communities. He then prepared them with spiritual teaching and religious training; and went with them on teaching and preaching tours throughout Palestine and the surrounding regions.

He often counseled the apostles, asking them to refrain from interfering with others who may misrepresent the Gospel. He preferred to teach in parables to the end that: "...*those who desire to know the truth may find that which they seek, while our enemies and those who love not the truth may hear without understanding.*" [151:1.4] (P.1689)

Nevertheless, he commissioned the apostles to proclaim the Gospel to all nations; even to every man, women, and child. "I

send you forth to proclaim liberty to the spiritual captives, joy to those in bondage of fear, and to heal the sick in accordance with the will of my Father in Heaven." [140:3.2] (P.1570)

CONCLUSION

To our Father, the Supreme may represent the whole of the grand universe while each of us represent the *part*. The more we understand the more we come to realize our duty to do our part to help the Supreme grow. The Supreme has a Havona personality (God the Supreme), a physical energy throughout the Grand Universe (Almighty Supreme), and an emerging self (Supreme Being). Mortals have a Paradise personality, a Thought Adjuster, a material physical energy (body), and an emerging self (soul). Added to this is the Supreme Mind and our morontia (soul) mind.

The substance whereby the Supreme Being grows is in the living fruits of the spirit as experienced by evolving mortals. May we bear much fruit.

Outreach is the ministry of sharing the Gospel, and each individual must find their level of participation. When doing outreach, share in the living faith of your Thought Adjuster's guidance, show friendship with God, and strive toward a balanced and unified approach. Because we are both unique individuals

and social beings, we can share in the Master's ways of personal and public outreach. Consciously or unconsciously we are, in fact, doing both.

"As faith-enlightened and spirit-liberated sons of the kingdom of heaven, you face a double responsibility of duty to man and duty to God while you voluntarily assume a third obligation: service to the brotherhood of God-knowing believers." [178:1.5] (P. 1930)

Arlene and Buck Weimer have been students of The Urantia Book since 1972 and have been involved in many and various wonderful study groups over the years. They raised three sons to adulthood in Pueblo, Colorado, while working at their respective careers as therapists. They view their youthful travels as a period of training for the dedication they feel for international outreach of the revelation.

Guess Who's Coming Next?

By Carolyn Kendall, Wheeling, IL

Presented Sunday, July 22, 2007, Fellowship Summer Study Session, Dominican University, River Grove, IL

WHAT IS *THE URANTIA BOOK*'S REAL MISSION AND PURPOSE?

That probably seems like a silly question to most people who have been reading *The Urantia Book* for dozens of years. But ask them and you'll get a variety of responses everything from: "To make us better people," to "Expanding our knowledge of the universe." If you haven't thought about it before, there is a viewpoint I'd like to present that I believe is outlined in the book as a subtext to all of the other major themes:

Premise: *The Urantia Book* is not an end in itself. The primary purpose for sending a new revelation in book form to the peoples of the world is threefold:

- 1) To prepare our world for the arrival of a new Paradise Son.
- 2) To prepare our world for emergence from the quarantine imposed at the time of the Lucifer Rebellion and Caligastia betrayal 200,000 years ago
- 3) To assist humankind in achieving higher thinking, biologic fitness, social peace, cosmic consciousness, enhanced spiritual perception, and the further outworking of the divine plan for evolutionary worlds

The first two events *will* happen. There is no doubt whatsoever. We just don't know *when* they will occur. I suspect that the first two are directly related to each other. Our question should be: How can our efforts best be directed toward attaining these goals?

WHO REQUESTED THIS REVELATION?

There is a vast "army" of unseen beings and overseers behind the scenes who watch over the affairs of our world. Can we assume it was the midwayers who petitioned the local and superuniverse governments for a new revelation of truth on our isolated and spiritually darkened world? Or, could it have been a higher personage? We know that Tabamantia, supervisor of decimal planets in Nebadon, arrived on a "periodic visit" and commented on the current state of affairs on our world. [108:3.5] (P. 1189) Every one hundred years a new resident governor general arrives to serve a term on this rebellion-scarred planet. [114:3.1] (P. 1252) Or, could it be somebody higher up?

Whoever made the requisition, the planned revelation

included a portrayal of God, the Universal Father; his co-equals, the Eternal Son and Infinite Spirit; their vast retinue; Paradise, the central and superuniverses, and the beings of time and space. This was an unprecedented amount of information to be given to a planet at our stage of development; and to such a confused and unruly population. We are isolated—quarantined—from the other peaceful worlds in the local system because our Planetary Prince participated in a widespread rebellion against the government of our Creator Son, Michael, 200,000 years ago.

Because of the pending case, *Gabriel vs. Lucifer* in the Uversa court, the revelators were not entirely certain they had permission to speak about the bestowal of our Creator Son, who once graced our lowly world as Jesus of Nazareth. They were not only given permission, they were charged with revealing his entire life and teachings.

As it developed, all of this truth would be presented in a book, a highly unusual occurrence. Ordinarily, on other worlds, epochal revelations arrive in the form of bestowals—both visible and invisible—beings from Paradise or from within the local universe. These can include Lanonandek Sons, material sons and daughters (Adams and Eves) and occasionally, a Melchizedek. Other sons of the local universe, such as Brilliant Evening Stars and archangels, accompany Paradise Sons on their bestowals and temporary visits. In our unusual revelation, archangels wrote eleven papers in *The Urantia Book*, while the Evening Stars wrote eight, including the Chief of Evening Stars, who wrote Paper 119, *Bestowals of Christ Michael*, on assignment by Gabriel. Many, many other universe personalities participated in the authorship of the Urantia Papers.

This was a full dress effort in our behalf, but no book is mentioned as the medium of revelation on other worlds. How strange.

WHY NOW? WHY DID IT TAKE SO LONG?

The book itself does not explain its timing, except to say that we are "*now quivering on the very brink of one of the most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment.*" [195:9.2] (P. 2082) For all we know, planning for this revelation extended as far back as the Middle Ages when questions about the reality of God were first raised.

Since World War I this has been a terrible century—one war after another, holocaust after holocaust. It was only in 1928 that the proposal to outlaw war, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, was signed. I suppose this made us provisionally civilized. [54:1.10] (P.

614) Historian R.R. Palmer wrote in his *History of the Modern World*, [1965]: “our world has been in a state of cataclysm since 1914.”

The personalities behind the scenes, on Urantia, and on universe levels, see human evolution as eras within epochs. Human events become crises and chaos, such as the circumstances that led to the First World War, which, in turn, stoked the embers of rage and resentment leading to World War II. Communism lay dormant during the war, but emerged in virulent form afterward.

The proposed revelation-in-a-book would include an exhaustive early history of humankind, with remedies for our current problems suggested.

It has been one hundred years since the first contact by revelators. It took twenty years to refine the technique of transmitting information without its being contaminated by personal bias. In 1924 the new revelation was announced. There was a twenty-year period following, when the material was revealed, studied by the Forum, questions were invited, clarification came, the material was expanded, proofreading was completed, and funds were raised to print the book.

and intellectual evolution. If normal growth had occurred, one of our early leaders predicted, there would be no fewer than ten thousand Urantia societies ten years after publication. Was he equating societies with study groups? Did he anticipate the apathy toward new spiritual truth that informed the post-war world? Was traditional religion too comfortable? Or, did he not foresee the outright hostility toward religion in western European society in more recent times?

My personal theory is that *The Urantia Book* is a vital element of a projected second phase of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. In other words, **The Urantia Book** is *Stage I of a Two-Stage Revelation*. The book is intended to be the training manual for those who will assist the next Son, the next demonstrator of truth on Urantia. When will this event occur? Probably not in our lifetimes, if our inaction, apathy, and the world situation are indicators. But I think it will be sooner than most people expect.

PREMISE NO. 1: OUR NEXT REVELATOR—ARRIVAL OF A PARADISE SON

Will it be the Master who returns? The probability of Jesus' return raises the age-old image of Armageddon and the end of the

Why is the settlement of the Lucifer case significant to such an insignificant world as ours? Until the case is adjudicated, we will remain in isolation, and the circuits will not be reinstated.

The human contact commission envisioned publication to occur after World War II, but communism complicated the timing. It required an additional ten years to be certain that the godless system would not prevail before the order came to print the book in 1955.

Following communism, the chaos and confusion of terrorism and the rising tide of humanistic secularism and atheism constitute a never-ending battle against the religion of Jesus.

Meanwhile, the Lucifer Rebellion is still on the docket in the supreme court of Uversa. The first hearing in the *Lucifer vs. Gabriel* case was held during the preparation of these papers. [54:4.8] (P. 616) Why is the settlement of the Lucifer case significant to such an insignificant world as ours? Until the case is adjudicated, we will remain in isolation, and the circuits will not be reinstated. [53:9.6] (P. 611)

WHAT WERE THEIR INTENTIONS?

We have a general idea that the book was timed to enter the evolutionary mainstream at a critical point in history. Like an automobile entering a freeway it blends into traffic, not too fast, but not too slowly. Unfortunately, on this unruly planet, there have been setbacks to what might have been the expected social

world. One of the prime tenets of fundamentalist Christianity is the immanent reappearance of Jesus Christ and the End Times of the Apocalypse. Nothing in the book suggests that such a fate lies ahead for us. While they do point to the many problems that beset our isolated sphere, we have the tools to ameliorate most of them if we set our minds and hearts to the work.

Jesus revealed to his apostles his intent to return, which led them to the conclusion that it would be in their lifetimes. He said, “I also promise that I will sometime return to this world” [176:2.3] (P. 1914) “But the times of the reappearing of the Son of Man are known only in the councils of Paradise; ...However, you should understand that, when this gospel of the kingdom shall have been proclaimed to all the world for the salvation of all peoples, and when the fullness of the age has come to pass, the Father will send you another dispensational bestowal, or else the Son of Man will return to adjudge the age.

But you should be wise regarding the ripening of an age; you should be alert to discern the signs of the times. You know when the fig tree shows its tender branches and puts forth its leaves that summer is near. Likewise, when the world has passed through the long winter of material-mindedness and you discern the coming of the spiritual springtime of a new dispensation,

should you know that the summertime of a new visitation draws near.” [176:2. 5 & 6] (P. 1915)

Have we passed through the “long winter of material-mindedness?” How might we recognize the ripening of the age? Is springtime about to burst forth? Has summer arrived?

A midwayer writes about Jesus’ return, and I have rearranged some of the sentences to heighten the intrigue: “*He promised a new revelation of the kingdom on earth, and at some future time; he also promised sometime to come back to this world in person; but he did not say that these two events were synonymous. . . . Jesus referred one phase of the kingdom to the future and did, on numerous occasions, intimate that such an event might appear as a part of a world crisis; . . . Remember that the order of progressive evolution is subjected to sudden and unexpected periodical changes in both the material and the spiritual worlds.*” [179:4.4 & 5] (P. 1863)

A midwayer continues, and again, the sentences are rearranged: “*On one occasion he intimated that, whereas the eye of the flesh had beheld him when he lived here in the flesh, on his return (at least on one of his possible visits) he would be discerned only by the eye of spiritual faith.*” . . . “*Will his second advent on earth be timed to occur in connection with the terminal judgment of this present age, either with or without the associated appearance of a Magisterial Son?*” “*Many of us are inclined to believe that Jesus will return to Urantia many times during the ages to come. . . . But if every eye is to behold him, and if only spiritual eyes are to discern his presence, then must his advent be long deferred.*” [177:4. 3, 4 & 5] (P. 1919)

Jesus assured his apostles there would be another revelation of truth: “*And when the kingdom shall have come to its full fruition, be assured that the Father in heaven will not fail to visit you with an enlarged revelation of truth and an enhanced demonstration of righteousness, . . .*” [176:2.3] (P. 1914) We have received the written revelation; now we await the demonstrator of righteousness.

THE MASTER SON CALLS THE SHOTS ON HIS BESTOWAL WORLD

On normal worlds, the bestowal Son waits for human races to achieve higher standards of intelligence and spiritual development, high cultural readiness for advanced teachings before arriving on his world of terminal bestowal. [52:5.3] (P. 596) Urantia was not normal; we were in isolation, still beset by barbarism. Only the Jews and Chinese had a strong family culture. Michael elected to bestow himself among the Jews during a period of dawning readiness for a new revelation. “*The second century after Christ was the best time in all the world’s history for a good religion to make progress in the Western world.*” [195:3.6] (P. 2074) Might we wonder where the new “demonstrator” will appear?

A Master Son, such as Michael of Nebadon, has latitude as

to how and when he and other Sons plan their visitations to the worlds: “(R)egarding the future appearance of Paradise Sons, . . . a Michael-bestowal world becomes the individual and personal ward of a Master Son and, as such, is wholly subject to his own plans and rulings. And with your world, this is further complicated by Michael’s promise to return.” [20:4.5] (P. 227) “*After his elevation to settled sovereignty in a local universe a Paradise Michael is in full control of all other Sons of God functioning in his domain, and he may freely rule in accordance with his concept of the needs of his realms. A Master Son may at will vary the order of the spiritual adjudication and evolutionary adjustment of the inhabited planets. And such Sons do make and carry out the plans of their own choosing in all matters of special planetary needs, in particular regarding the worlds of their creature sojourn and still more concerning the realm of terminal bestowal, the planet of incarnation in the likeness of mortal flesh.*” [21:5.6] (P. 241)

Apparently, Michael could rearrange the order of events even before he achieved Master Son status. He announced plans to come to Urantia as far back as Adam’s default thirty-seven thousand years ago. He dispatched Machiventa Melchizedek on an emergency mission to re-introduce the One-God concept, to get the people ready for his own bestowal nineteen hundred years later. In fact, *The Urantia Book Revelation* is a prime example of Michael’s answering the special needs of our planet by ordering up a book for the semi-literate planet of his incarnation, Urantia. The revelators called the Urantia Papers “the Word made Book.”

A VAIN HOPE FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE—TRINITY TEACHER SONS

These Sons inaugurate “*the transition from the evolutionary ages to the era of light and life.*” [52:7.2] (P. 598) This age is characterized by peacefulness, self-control, and awareness of affairs in the larger universe. Material problems and physical difficulties have been solved. The planet works smoothly and cosmic illumination is exalted. [52:7] (P. 598—9)

Any expectation of the immanent arrival of Trinity Teacher Sons is premature. Their mission is far into the future—thousands of years. Does anyone reading this believe we are nearing the Age of Light and Life, which the Teacher Sons, the Daynals, administer?

Jesus will certainly fulfill his promise to return, “*but no one knows whether his second coming will precede or follow the appearance of Magisterial or Teacher Sons on Urantia.*” [52:7.1] (P. 598)

An unnamed Melchizedek writes, with hope in his heart: “*And all these speculations associated with the certainty of future appearances of both Magisterial and Trinity Teacher Sons, in conjunction with the explicit promise of the Creator Son to return sometime, make Urantia a planet of future uncertainty*

and render it one of the most interesting and intriguing spheres in all the universe of Nebadon. It is altogether possible that, in some future age when Urantia is approaching the era of light and life, after the affairs of the Lucifer rebellion and the Caligastia secession have been finally adjudicated, we may witness the presence on Urantia, simultaneously, of Machiventa, Adam, Eve, and Christ Michael, as well as either a Magisterial Son or even Trinity Teacher Sons.” [93:10.8] (P.1025)

Well, well, I don't think we're ready for that level of excitement yet.

A MORE REALISTIC PREDICTION.

Avonal Sons are created by the Eternal Son and Infinite Spirit; and are a self-governing order of Paradise Sons. They are not creators, but are ministers and judges. There are one billion serving in the grand universe. There are four possible ways an Avonal Son serves an evolutionary planet. [20:2.1] (P. 224-5)

1. Avonal Son on Judicial Mission—Invisible. “The Avonals are known as Magisterial Sons because they are the high magistrates of the realms...They preside over the awakening of the sleeping survivors, sit in judgment of the realm,” and end a dispensation. “... (A) Paradise Avonal” who comes only “to terminate a dispensation and inaugurate a new era of planetary progression is not on a magisterial mission or bestowal mission.” He arrives on a planet, invisible to the material creatures of the realm, and is not incarnated. Such Judicial Missions “occur repeatedly in the long history of an inhabited world,” both before and after bestowal missions. [20:3.1, 2, &3] (P. 226) There was no dispensational adjudication when the Urantia Revelation was received.

2. Avonal Son on Magisterial Missions; Incarnated—Visible. Normally we would have received “a magisterial mission sometime between the days of Adam and the bestowal of Christ Michael. But the regular sequence of Paradise Sons on your planet was wholly deranged by the appearance of your Creator Son on his terminal bestowal nineteen hundred years ago.” [20:4.4] (P. 227) An Avonal Son terminates a dispensation and his presence constitutes a judgment of the realm. When on magisterial missions they incarnate, remaining to act as teachers of spiritual truth. When “this Magisterial Son is universally accepted, he remains for one age;...” [51:7.1] (P. 588) “(W)hen they do serve in the likeness of mortal flesh, they always appear as adult (male) beings of the realm; they are not born of woman.” They do receive Thought Adjusters though they do not fuse with them. [20:4.2 & 3] (P. 226) “Melchizedeks support Paradise Avonals on magisterial missions to inhabited worlds, and are visible to mortal eyes if the Avonal Son is also thus manifest.” [35:2.6] (P. 386) There are usually twelve Melchizedeks on these missions. [20:4.5] (P. 225) Urantia may yet be visited by an Avonal

commissioned to incarnate on a magisterial mission...[35:2.6] (P. 386) “(T)he Avonals, are supported by the full power and authority of a primary Paradise Son [Michael], the Creator Son of their local universe of service.” [20:2.7] (P. 225)

3) Avonal Sons on Magisterial Missions; Not Incarnated—Invisible. When “repeated magisterial missions occur, the Avonals do not always submit to mortal incarnation;” [51:4.2] (P. 226)

A planet may experience many magisterial visitations both before and after the appearance of a bestowal Son. An Avonal Son on a Magisterial Mission, whether incarnated or not incarnated, still acts as an adjudicator of the planetary age and inaugurates a new dispensation. He associates with the invisible beings of the planet; he just isn't visible to humans.[20:2.4] (P.225) Would we be aware of it if an Avonal arrived on this type of mission? It would probably depend upon whether we had emerged from isolation and the human population had accepted the concept of the existence and oversight of higher beings.

4. Avonal Sons on Bestowal Missions—Visible. On most inhabited worlds the bestowal Son is of the Paradise Avonal Son order. Urantia was different; our bestowal Son was the Paradise Creator Son of our local universe of Nebadon who incarnated as a baby, born of woman. Had he not been our bestowal Son, we would have received an Avonal Son born a male infant, of a woman, and grown to adulthood. The Bestowal Avonal Sons work in skilled occupations, just as did Jesus of Nazareth [20:6.2 & 3] (P. 229) They judge the preceding dispensation and open the new age. When an Avonal completes his bestowal, after ascending to the Father, he returns to the local universe, and together, he and “the Creator Michael send their joint spirit, the Spirit of Truth to the bestowal world.” [52:5.6] (P. 596) The succeeding epoch was termed the dispensation of the Spirit of Truth by Jesus. [179: 5.1 &2] (P. 1941-2) We will never receive an Avonal on a Bestowal Mission since we have already had our one allotted bestowal Son.

ENTOURAGE OF AN AVONAL SON

What goes on backstage, among the superhumans to prepare? “In all their work for, and on, the inhabited worlds, the Magisterial Sons are assisted by two orders of local universe creatures, the Melchizedeks and the archangels, while on bestowal missions they are also accompanied by the Brilliant Evening Stars” [20:2.6] (P. 225) The Evening Stars are visible to midways . “A corps of one hundred [archangels] accompanies every Paradise bestowal Son to an inhabited world for the duration of such a bestowal. Two senior archangels are assigned as personal aids of an Avonal on all planetary missions,” ...“If [he] should become temporary ruler of the planet these superangels act as directing heads of all celestial life on that sphere.” [37:3. 5 & 6] (P. 409)

One can assume that the one hundred archangels who arrived with Michael are still here because a divisional headquarters has since been established. More later.

My thanks to another reader for finding the next quotation: “Each new evolutionary attainment within a sector of creation, as well as every new invasion of space by divinity manifestations, is attended by simultaneous expansions of Deity function-revelation within the then existing and previously organized units of all creation. This new invasion of the administrative work of the universes and their component units may not always appear to be executed exactly in accordance with the technique herewith outlined because it is the practice to send forth advance groups of administrators to prepare the way for the subsequent and successive eras of new administrative over-control.” [56:7.5](P. 642) She further suggested that: “The *Urantia Book* is obviously a part of a planet-wide preparation for a large number of celestial personalities who will assist the Magisterial Son when he officially begins his bestowal. However, I also think it is entirely possible that he (the Avonal) is already here and part of an extensive programming of preparation.”

Remember, Avonals are always assisted by Melchizedeks, but Melchizedeks are not rulers; they’re teachers. They can function in any capacity on a temporary basis, and Melchizedeks can make themselves visible, when necessary. [50:2.7] (P.574) With a Magisterial Son and Melchizedeks all visible, that would shock and awe the population!

THE ARCHANGEL CIRCUIT

The book devotes a good deal of space to the archangels, who work with the Magisterial Sons; their circuit, and their new divisional headquarters. Recall that after Jesus’ resurrection, on Sunday morning, April 9th, AD 30, “(t)he circuit of the archangels operated for the first time from *Urantia*.” [189:3.2] (P. 2024) The circuit has proven to be quite useful to the planetary government because we are a world in quarantine. [114:5.4] (P. 1254) “In more recent times a divisional headquarters of the archangels has been maintained on *Urantia*. It is this unusual fact [the divisional headquarters] that soon arrests the attention of extra-Nebadon student visitors. Among their early observations of intrauniverse transactions is the discovery that many ascendant activities of the Brilliant Evening Stars are directed from the capital of a local system, *Satania*. On further examination they discover that certain archangel activities are directed from a small and apparently insignificant inhabited world called *Urantia*.” And this teaser: “Do you grasp the significance of the fact that your lowly and confused planet has become a divisional headquarters for the universe administration and direction of certain archangel activities having to do with the Paradise ascension scheme?” [37:3.3 & 4] (P. 409) We can speculate that the archangel

headquarters has a lot to do with both items of the Premise: the arrival of a Paradise Son, and the end of the quarantine of our Planet.

PREMISE NO. 2: HOW WILL ISOLATION OF URANTIA END?

“The bestowal of Michael terminated the Lucifer rebellion in all *Satania* aside from the planets of the apostate Planetary Princes.” [53:8.3](P. 609) Caligastia is still free on *Urantia*, though he has no power to enter our minds to tempt or corrupt unless we “really desire to be cursed with his wicked presence.” [53:8.7] (P. 610) The devil gets a lot of credit for evil he doesn’t cause. Lucifer has not been on this planet since he tried to dissuade Jesus from his mission 2,000 years ago. Lucifer is now detained on one of the Jerusem satellite worlds. [53:9.2] (P. 611)

The case of *Gabriel vs. Lucifer* was placed on the docket of the Uversa Supreme Court 200,000 years ago. [53:9.3] (P. 611) All disloyal personalities were taken into custody except for Satan, who was allowed to visit the isolated worlds up until the presentation of the *Urantia* revelation, when he, too, was detained with Lucifer. At that time the first hearing occurred in the *Gabriel vs. Lucifer* case in which Gabriel pleaded for annihilation of the arch rebels. [54:4.8] (P. 616) When Lucifer and the others die, the system circuits will be reinstated. [53:9.6] (P. 611)

“The rebellion has ended on *Jerusem*. It ends on the fallen worlds as fast as divine sons arrive.” ... “We await the flashing broadcast that will deprive these traitors of personality existence. We anticipate the verdict (which)... will effect the annihilation of these interned rebels.” ... “All await the Uversa decree.” [53:9.7] (P. 611)

The “neighboring planet” described in Paper 72 is also in isolation, having lost both its planetary prince and Adam and Eve to rebellion and default. They have never received the bestowal of a Magisterial Son. [72:0.3] (P. 808) But one of the nations of that world has made greater progress in religion, government, home life, education, and biological improvement than has our world. Then, the statement, “Of course, if a Magisterial Son should soon come to this advanced nation, great things could quickly happen on this world.” [72:12.2] (P. 820) On the world described in Paper 72, only one nation has achieved civilized status; the other countries still reside in semi-darkness, yet they hold out hope of a new revelator—an indication that the whole world doesn’t need to achieve the same level of progress to receive a revelation.

On *Jerusem*, the system capitol, there are broadcast stations. One of the stations receives broadcasts from the worlds that are not in quarantine, while another sends broadcasts. [46:3.1 & 4] (P. 522) They tell us that if we “could be transported” ... “to some normal planet in the post-bestowal Son stage,” we would see that it “enjoy(s) all the advantages of the universe broadcasts and the reflectivity services of the superuniverse.” [52:6.3](P. 598)

Tabamantia, a finaliter/agondonter who is Nebadon supervisor of decimal planets (of which Urantia is one) [49:5.5] (P. 565) inspected Urantia thirty-seven thousand years ago, and in less than one hundred years, Adam and Eve arrived to “*untangle the confused affairs of a planet retarded by rebellion and resting under the ban of spiritual isolation.*” [73:0.3] (P. 821) His more recent inspection is described, and is alleged to have occurred early in the twentieth century, as “*admonitions and indictments delivered to the various chiefs of superhuman personalities.*” He extolled the work of the Thought Adjusters, “*the Godlike servers of the mortal inhabitants of this strife-torn, grief-stricken, and disease-afflicted world.*” [108:3.5] (P. 1189) Perhaps his visit will hasten the arrival of a Magisterial Son.

PREMISE NO. 3: ASSISTING HUMANKIND IN REACHING HIGHER LEVELS

How to help speed things along?

1. Estimate our level of progress on the two lists below.
2. Do as all associates of previous revelators have done—assume the responsibility of preparing ourselves as teachers of these new truths. Even if the new Son does not arrive in our lifetimes, the benefits of our preparation will ripple outward.
3. Strive for unity and cooperation among fellow readers of *The Urantia Book*.
4. The new Son will need trained partners in his planetary mission; prepare ourselves as leaders.
5. Always look outward, toward uplifting and spiritualizing other human beings.

Circumstances that Impede Progress on Urantia:

1. Erroneous beliefs about God propounded by leading religions.
2. Atheism, secularism, hedonism.
3. Degeneracy, disease, addictions, mental abnormality.
4. War, terrorism, crime, violence.
5. Natural catastrophes, environmental deterioration.
6. Scientific inquiry subjugated by political or religious goals.
7. (Continue your list)

Spiritual, Social and Moral Progress in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Century

1. Majority believe in God; some form of afterlife
2. Majority know of Jesus and aspire to live his teachings
3. International and interracial contacts via travel, commerce, sports, and education
4. National and interracial exchange of literature and history
5. Worldwide communications and information
6. Common language widespread: English

7. Representative government in advanced nations
8. Mankind government in early stage
9. Expect wisdom and honesty of public servants
10. Child welfare and protection standards
11. Women achieving equal opportunities
12. Improved quality of role models
13. Empathy for strangers: service
14. (Continue your list)

WHEN CULTURE ADVANCES OVERFAST

“The slowness of evolution, of human cultural progress, testifies to the effectiveness of that brake—material inertia—which so efficiently operates to retard dangerous velocities of progress... (W)hen culture advances overfast, when material achievement outruns the evolution of worship-wisdom, then does civilization contain within itself the seeds of retrogression; and unless buttressed by the swift augmentation of experiential wisdom, such human societies will recede from high but premature levels of attainment, and the ‘dark ages’ of the interregnum of wisdom will bear witness to the inexorable restoration of the imbalance between self-liberty and self-control.”* [118:8.6] (P. 1302)

“Even on normal evolutionary worlds the realization of the world-wide brotherhood of man is not an easy accomplishment. On a confused and disordered planet like Urantia such an achievement requires a much longer time and necessitates far greater effort. Unaided social evolution can hardly achieve such happy results on a spiritually isolated sphere. Religious revelation is essential to the realization of brotherhood on Urantia.” [52:6.2] (P. 597)

*Dictionary definition of “interregnum:” 1. An interval of time between the close of a sovereign’s reign and the accession of his successor. 2. Any period during which a state has no ruler or only a temporary executive. 3. Any period of freedom from the usual authority. 4. Any pause or interruption in continuity. 5. Gap.

Handout available: “Timeline: Anti-religious Personalities, Events & Trends, 17th—21st Centuries.” Salvingtonpl@att.net

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A Missionary Experience In Turkey

By Bill Rocab, Southington, CT

When I attended the Parliament for World Religions in Barcelona a few summers back, it sparked, for me, an exploration into Islam. I purchased a Quran and on my return, read it and began contacting Muslims online. Using a gracious approach, I encountered people by asking them to share something of their spiritual journey. To date, I could write a short volume on the memorable encounters I have been blessed to experience. One such encounter was with a family in southern Turkey, who eventually implored me to visit.

In mid-November, 2006, I spent two weeks living with a family in southern Turkey, near the coastal city of Bodrum. Though they are Muslim, you would consider this family somewhat unorthodox, even religiously cosmopolitan. Holding the sacredness of love and respect for Allah and the Islamic religion, they were not constrained to follow all the rituals and dogma of the local mosque. This was very refreshing because I was expecting to be using a prayer rug five times a day, ever wanting to experience how this family lived and worshipped. They honestly considered themselves comfortable to follow Allah but not the Mosque edicts. As one local Muslim later described it to me, "When the Imam told me to eat only with my right hand while I am left-handed, I decided to continue to love Allah but ignore many of the mandates of the Mosque leaders." I soon discovered this was very common in western Turkey.

As I was fortunate to meet and talk to more people, I began to discover a public face and a private face to these people. Publicly, they hold deep respect for Allah, their religion, mosque, and ethical behavior, but privately, they were closer to "Cafeteria Catholics." It seems many of the modernized or westernized Turkish people evince deep respect for Islam but manage privately to pick and choose what to believe. And change is afoot! From my online encounters, especially with women, I have discovered they are far in advance of the cultural arena in which they live and patiently push the levers of change. I made friends with a woman from Ankara, the capital of Turkey, who related this telling story:

"I am free to drive a car now...well I should since I am a nurse, nursing instructor, and educator and have traveled for my career more extensively than my husband. But can you believe it? My husband's friend needed a car for a while. Now this man works at the university where I am. My husband gives him my car. He drives my car and I see it parked there every day, while I take the bus (it would not be proper for me to drive with another man, ugh). I must wait until this friend decides to return it...macho men in this Islamic culture."

And it is humorous to walk down the streets in southern Turkey and see seven women in full black covering, then turn a corner and see seven teen-age girls in tank tops with bare midriffs, listening to MP3 players, and carrying cell phones. Women are leading the way in many ways.

Another Turkish woman told me her husband finally agreed to let her learn to drive, but she can only drive with him in the car. While she used different words, she reported him as "clueless."

My first visit to Turkey was very personal. I experienced family life, befriended the two teens of the family and absorbed life as it is lived there. The family was beside themselves with gracious pride to drive me to historical sites like Izmir, Ephesus and Pamukalle. I wept at the site where the Apostle Phillip was martyred. I shared with them my interfaith message of many paths

*On the way up the mountain, there
are many spiritual paths but the
paths all lead up the mountain to the
same destination...to God...to Allah.*

but one Allah. I left this family with a *Urantia Book*, while I knew their modest English skills would make reading it almost impossible.

I had one touching evening where I spoke to a mother about Allah and God. I used an old interfaith analogy that life is like a mountain. On the way up the mountain, there are many spiritual paths but the paths all lead up the mountain to the same destination...to God...to Allah. She was moved to understand Jesus better and relieved that I had not come to sell my religion to her, that I had not asserted my religion as superior, and that I was interested in understanding what she believed. Her daughter saw my Bible and began to argue with her mother. I knew it was about me and religion, but the heated conversation was in Turkish. I really had no clue, but it looked bad! Then, I saw the mother making gestures in the air, round and round. Ahhhh, she was explaining the mountain and many spiritual paths. The daughter's face lit up, and afterwards, she came over to me and gave me a kiss.

Here are some ideas which I have used in my interfaith message (though expressed personally and uniquely to people I meet):

1. We may have different names for God, but by all those names, He is still the source of the amazing life we live on this planet. Like fingerprints and snowflakes, our relationship with God is unique but so, so similar, often fostered by the place and culture in which we are raised. This variety can be celebrated. At its core, we hope that God has more for us after this short life.
2. I believe there is a God; the rest, however, is open to speculation. It is okay not to know! Life is a discovery which may not be settled in this short life on earth.
3. Dogma and rituals do not save—faith and trust in God does!
4. Life is richer if we seek unity in the Spirit and not uniformity in beliefs.
5. It is better that we celebrate the best of our neighbor's religion as opposed to putting down the worst (all religious groups have issues).
6. The real and essential "good news" of Christianity and Jesus is that we are children of a loving God; that we are deeply loved by Him and that means everyone we meet in life is really a brother or a sister.
7. Most of us have experienced the power of LOVE, and to some degree we believe that love has a divine source, God. I believe the more we know and understand our neighbors, sense their motivations, the more we can love them: love God first and your neighbor as yourself.

I sensed from many conversations that these Muslims mildly resented the Christian obsession with Jesus. Aligning our religion with such focus on the Jesus, as opposed to the message of the one true creator Allah, was not proper to them. This is one of the lingering repercussions of Pauline Christianity, I suppose. I did remind them that some Christians think Muslims are equally obsessed about Mohammed, so we usually chuckled at our obsessions.

Some politely remarked that we center our faith on Allah and submit only to Him. This statement from the Quran was mentioned:

"We believe in God and that which has been revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes; to Moses and Jesus and the other prophets by their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them, and to Him we submit."

A few of my new friends from Turkey were troubled that I visited in the off season. Though it was November, I still found swimming in the Mediterranean Sea downright refreshing. But my friends continued to lovingly harass me to come again near

the end of high season, taunting me with markets teeming with travelers from all over the world. While they conceived of this as the Turkish Rivera (a holiday paradise), I could not help reflecting on a desire to experience street ministry; imagining walking the bazaars and speaking with people from all over, I was drawn to the possibilities. Honestly, I had hoped to meet someone who might be instrumental in getting a Turkish translation of *The Urantia Book* started.

When I returned in August, 2007, it was just as I had imagined, hot days and the bazaars overflowing with people till the wee hours of the morning. I visited local mosques and enjoyed bothering the locals to explain the rituals. With limited English, most of the Turkish men went out of their way to explain the prayer and worship experience. Often the conversations would reverse and many were curious about my cross with three circles. Early on I used my cross and concentric circles as a simple way to impart an interfaith message. I was led to explain the cross as the two great relationships: the pole of the cross as the individual's relationship with Allah and the cross bar as our relationship with our brothers and sisters; the three circles as mind, heart and body focused on loving service. Because many Christians come to sell their religion to the Muslims, this approach opened many doors of enlightening personal conversation, which otherwise would have closed.

Visiting local mosques was a precious experience. Sharing with believers in worshipful respect to Allah, I was moved by the descriptions of the Merciful One!

One evening I met a female judge from Ankara with her son and husband, a high military leader. Using my well-mastered Donald Duck voice (in Turkish), their son and I laughed and chatted. Soon I discovered the family had just returned from three months in the United States, and the mother is an international expert and speaker on human trafficking. They recently purchased a summer home in Bodrum, and I hope I will have another opportunity to speak with them.

One local merchant, Bulane, was impressed enough with our conversations to invite me again and again and again for Turkish coffee. He was calling me Chance because every time I showed up, good things were happening. While I protested these remarks, he asked for a copy of *The Urantia Book*. A superstitiously inclined soul, Bulane would pray and randomly open the book to read. He managed many hours of reading while I was in Turkey and we enjoyed many talks together. Before I left, he requested another book and decided to seek other friends to try to translate a few papers.

Since my return, I have spoken to my friends in Turkey every week. Bulane has organized a few friends (one an actual translator) and they are working on Paper 100 as their first translation. YES! YES! YES! We have had very interesting

discussions on the two different translating styles in Turkish, 1) common and 2) literary. The common form is simple; but the literary form of Turkish contains thousands of words from Arabic, Persian, and Greek; and Bulane is concerned that ordinary people will not understand their meaning if he uses them. I suggested he use the common words unless they are inadequate to convey the meaning. Bulane is still struggling with what he calls the “logic” of the book. However, I told him he is doing a profound work. It is so important, but not necessarily “finished” as others read and compare. Before I refer them to some “gained” translating wisdom from within the Urantia readers community, I will let them read and discover the revelation.

Bulane said “Thank you for everything. Now I understand why Allah brought me to you. I believe there is no coincidence.

Everything has a message or a meaning. I mean, we met, we understand each other, and I started reading *The Urantia Book* and something is changing. I said, “Yes, and friendships are a blessing from Allah.”

I am swimming in unexpressed reflections from this experience. I remain deeply thankful to my Turkish friends for their openness and love and also for my friends here in the United States, who helped make the experience possible. Of course, they are asking me to come again this year.

Bill Rocap is a long-time reader and a member of the Connecticut Fellowship for Readers of The Urantia Book. In addition to serving as a society officer, he is also very active in his church; and he has served on the General Council of The Urantia Book Fellowship.

Word Search Puzzle

How many of the 29 names and places mentioned in *The Urantia Book* can you find in the puzzle? They may be forward, backward, horizontal, vertical or diagonal. Puzzle solution and word list may be found in page 40. URANTIA has been circled to get you started.

Abel	Andronover	Edentia	Havona	John	Martha	Rome
Adam	Cain	Eve	Herod	Judas	Nod	Salvington
Agondonter	Cana	Fonta	James	Judea	Orvonton	Splandon
Andon	Eden	God	Jerusalem	Machiventa	Paradise	Urantia
						Van

M	N	H	O	J	Y	A	A	E	D	U	J
E	A	N	U	R	A	N	T	I	A	I	E
L	O	D	A	E	O	D	O	G	S	J	S
A	A	C	D	V	R	O	O	D	A	P	N
S	I	T	A	O	G	N	A	M	L	A	O
U	T	H	M	N	D	L	E	A	V	R	T
R	N	E	E	O	A	S	N	R	I	A	N
E	E	B	N	R	I	D	I	T	N	D	O
J	D	T	L	D	O	N	A	H	G	I	V
R	E	D	E	N	I	D	C	A	T	S	R
R	T	V	B	A	T	N	O	F	O	E	O
J	E	M	A	C	H	I	V	E	N	T	A

You Be The Book

By Michael A. Painter, Plainfield, IN

No, I don't mean *The Urantia Book*, but that would be great if you could!

I bow to the inner spirit, the fragment of God, the inner light, within you. As the gospel of John says, "...the inner light that enlightens every human who comes into the world."

Can you imagine what the world would be like if we truly believed that every time we interacted with another person, we were in the presence of God through his emissary that dwells within each of us?

I realize as Christians (defined as anyone who believes in God and the divinity of Jesus) we acknowledge this idea and give it our intellectual assent, but often even we who say we believe it don't act in a way that would suggest we really "know" it's true, let alone all those who don't even include this idea in their beliefs. And so, like so many ideas about God, we add it to our collection of intellectual ideas that we say we believe in and call it our

believed. Philosophers would suggest reason, the primary tool of the intellect, is the only way to know. Religionists would tell us to just accept what they teach because it comes from a divine authority that shouldn't be questioned. To its credit, religion has been the guardian of another way of knowing. However, religions have often lost sight of it like a treasure they buried and have forgotten where they buried it. But throughout history, Jesus and religious teachers like the Buddha, Teresa of Avila, Thomas Merton, and George Fox, to name a few, have been called upon to renew the search for this buried treasure.

What is this buried treasure? It is the "key to the kingdom" that unlocks the door to a path that leads us up the mountain top to experience God in a way that will transcend merely thinking or believing that God exists with truly "knowing" God exists. This other way of knowing is an inner knowing. It is the inner recognition of truth by our soul as opposed to the intellectual understanding of our mind. It's our inner spirit of God shining a beacon of inner light upon truth whenever we discover it.

The question that occurs to me is why has our approach to knowing God become so dominated by our intellectual understanding about God?

religion. In this sense, *The Urantia Book* can be a religion. Like any intellectual beliefs about God, we have not found any absolutely logical proof they are true, so we argue, debate, condemn, and even war over who has the "true" set of beliefs. Or, if we're in a more ecumenical mood, we "dialogue" about who has the "truer" set and at least give the appearance our religion is not the only real one.

The question that occurs to me is why has our approach to knowing God become so dominated by our intellectual understanding about God? We have limited ourselves to reading the Bible, *The Urantia Book*, and other "sacred" books, listening to sermons and speakers, taking classes or attending seminars, going to conferences and retreats, and participating in discussion groups—all intellectual activities.

My answer is that we have been taught to think that our intellect is the primary, if not the only, way to know anything. I would even suggest that the stronger our intellect is and the more knowledge we acquire, we become better defenders of intellect as being the only way of knowing. It's the idea that our strength can also be our weakness.

Scientists would have us believe that only empirical knowledge, knowledge discovered through our five senses, can be

Imagine if it were so dark you couldn't see anything, and something became brilliantly illuminated. Would you not see it exceptionally clearly as it stands out against the backdrop of total darkness? Could anyone possibly convince you that you did not see it after such a powerful experience? This is the kind of knowing that differs from intellectual understanding. This is the kind of knowing that brings us "the peace which passes all understanding." It says there is a difference between knowledge and truth.

Borrowing an example from our sacred text, *The Urantia Book*, our intellect tells us that if one man can shear a sheep in ten minutes, it is logical to conclude that ten men can shear a sheep in one minute. But we know this is not true.

In everyday life we easily recognize that to know something you must experience it. Imagine a young child comes to you one day and asks you what love is. You're excited that they have asked such a profound and important question. And so you gather your thoughts and begin to explain your intellectual understanding of love. "When a beam of light passes through a prism, it is split into the seven colors of the rainbow. We analyze and learn about the different colors to see if we can see common properties that will help us understand what pure light is. When God sends

pure unconditional love, it passes through the prism of a human being. Instead of colors, it manifests as types of love like love for children, parents, brothers and sisters, friends, husbands and wives, humankind, and God. We study these different types of love to find the common properties of pure love, and we might come up with a definition such as, “*Love is the desire to do good to others.*” [56:10.21] (P. 648)

As you continue your discourse on all that you know “about” love, you notice the child has fallen asleep! It then dawns on you that no matter how good your definitions and explanations are, the child will never fully know love until they experience it. So, the question I hope you are asking yourself by now is, “What is this method by which we can experience God and thus ‘know’ God exists?” My answer to what these enlightened spiritual leaders have been trying to teach us is that we must turn our journey inward if we wish to experience the presence of God, and, once you experience this presence, you will truly know God exists versus just believing in your mind that God exists.

There is a story of a great master who gathered followers and instructed them and sent them out to teach truth to the people in the villages. One day these teachers came back and complained to the master that the people were abusing the truth and weren’t worthy of hearing it. The master asked them what they thought they should do, and they replied they should hide the truth until the people were ready to receive it. The master asked them where they should hide it. They looked around and said they should hide it upon the highest mountain peak. But the master replied that if they could put it there, couldn’t the people also find it there? Then they said they should hide it at the bottom of the lake. Again the master replied that if they could put it there, couldn’t the people also find it there? Having exhausted their answers, they then asked the master where he would hide it. He replied, “Why don’t you hide it within them because it’s the last place they will ever look.” We are so conditioned to look outside ourselves for the answers to life’s questions!

When Jesus was facing his most difficult hours knowing what he was about to endure, he went to the Garden of Gethsemane to be alone with God. His human self knew it was this inward connection to God that would give him the strength, courage,

and composure to go through his trial and crucifixion. He didn’t read a book or consult other humans. He did ask a few apostles to accompany him, but they fell asleep! How about Biblical passages for providing us direction? “The kingdom lies within.” How much clearer can it be said? In Psalm 46, verse 10, it says, “Be still, and know that I am God.” I think this passage means exactly what it says. It doesn’t say read books, listen to sermons, take classes, and participate in discussions. Our *Urantia Book* says “*Of all human knowledge that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.*” [196:1.3] (P. 2090) In my opinion, the essence of his religious life was daily communion with God. He didn’t resign himself to use only secondary sources like sacred texts and other human’s opinions; rather he went directly to the primary source, God, to seek his guidance.

Now don’t misunderstand me; I love and frequently participate in all the intellectual activities mentioned before as good ways to learn “about” God, but I’ve now come to realize that only in the stillness of being in communion with God’s presence can I truly come to know “of” God.

There is a story about Siddhartha Gautama who came to be known as the “Buddha,” which means the enlightened one. You may already know his story. He was born a young prince in the highest or Brahman caste of Hinduism. He was an avid student of the Vedas, the Hindu’s sacred scripture, but his knowledge of them wasn’t providing the answer he sought, so he gave up his wealth and status and wandered penniless for many years seeking a greater truth. One day, while sitting in silence, he felt he was answered when he let go of his intellectualizing and experienced the truth of the oneness of all. This peak experience changed him, and he began teaching about this path of the inward journey.

As he approached a village and a crowd gathered to hear him speak, he sat down holding up a flower in his hand and said nothing. The crowd became restless wondering when he would begin speaking to enlighten them. He continued to say nothing. After a while, one person broke out in great laughter as he understood what the message of the Buddha’s silence was trying to convey. The Buddha walked over and handed the man the flower and left. Did the rest of the crowd even get it? Probably not because, again, we are so conditioned to approaching truth only

When Jesus was facing his most difficult hours knowing what he was about to endure, he went to the Garden of Gethsemane to be alone with God. His human self knew it was this inward connection to God that would give him the strength, courage, and composure to go through his trial and crucifixion.

through hearing about truth.

Zen Buddhism, perhaps the most radical anti-intellectual sect of Buddhism, will start a new student with a “koan,” which is somewhat like a riddle. For example, “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” You can imagine a picture of this and how silly it looks while trying to figure it out. The new student wears out their brain for days seeking an intellectual answer and finally gives up and goes to tell the master thinking they have failed. The master tells them they have successfully learned the first lesson because they have learned there are limits to what we can know through our intellect. Our reluctant recognition and acceptance of this limitation in the West is summed up in the words, “Just believe.” But believing is an intellectual acceptance of that which cannot be corroborated by physical evidence or proven by logic and so requires what we’ve called a “leap of faith.” This is not the same as the experiential knowing I am trying to explain.

Now the student is ready to try the inner knowing and techniques of meditation and silence are begun to be taught and practiced. I think this emphasis on the path of inner awareness and the limitation of the intellect is a great contribution from Eastern religions, but the purpose of the inner journey is described differently by Western mystics and Jesus. In the East, the purpose of the inner journey is to seek total silence and dissolve your sense of being an individual who is separate from all other realities of the world. Instead of seeing yourself as a grain of salt when first poured into a glass of water, you see yourself after the salt has been dissolved. In other words, there is no separate identity. Separateness or an individual self is an illusion the Buddhists call the Maya. You are as a drop of water in the ocean, and the ocean is a diffuse spirit that pervades all life.

In the West, we believe that spirit is a personal God who is the creator and upholder of all reality. This God gives a part of himself to indwell each of us to be our guide on our journey to paradise. This is the guide who shines the inner light on truth whenever we discover it. This is the inner spirit whose presence we seek to discern in silence. This fragment of God, the Thought Adjuster, is our connection to our Father in Paradise. Our purpose is to go within and seek the divine presence through prayer, worship, and listening to God. And when the presence is felt or the still voice is discerned, there is an experiential knowing that transcends intellectual knowing.

Finally, I would like to talk about Teresa of Avila’s experience. She was very passionate in her love for God and sought to understand him through reading the Bible and other books, but she didn’t feel she was finding the answer she sought and her church had banned some of the books she wanted to read. One day, sitting in silence, she heard the still voice tell her to be her own book. In other words, it’s not enough to read books about God. You have to be your own book based on your personal

experiences of the inner journey seeking to know God.

She did this, and she describes how she came to “know” God by experiencing her personal relationship with him in the silence. Of course a skeptic could ask how she really knows, but I think Teresa would smile and say, “How do you know I don’t know?”

When you discern truth versus knowledge, you realize truth doesn’t have to be defended, only shared.

So, my message to you today is twofold. First, go buy a prism just in case someone asks you what love is. I’m joking, though it is an effective analogy. Second, and of course most importantly, spend some time each day with God. Schedule your “divine appointment” in your daily planner. Call it silence, stillness, meditation, centering prayer, contemplation—it doesn’t matter. “A rose by any other name is still a rose.” Spend time seeking God within if you want to truly “know” God. You can’t fully know a person by just reading about them, and God is patiently, forgivingly, and lovingly waiting for you to call upon him and spend some time with him. As a bonus for your time with God, the de-stressing and health enhancing effects of such meditative efforts are well supported in medical and scientific studies.

Create your own first-hand experience with God, and the second-hand experience of believing in religious doctrines won’t seem so all-important. The realization that we are all brothers and sisters in God’s family will become more important than our doctrinal differences. As God told Teresa, “Be your own book.”

In my sixty-two years on this world, I have accumulated some knowledge, but there is only one thing that I can say that I truly know. While I had always believed it in my mind, I never knew it as truth in my soul until I began the inner journey. What is this one truth that makes me smile in every cell of my body? It is “knowing,” based on the inner search, without any doubt, that you and I are children of the most loving Father imaginable and that he has a place for each of us in his kingdom. I realize you’ve heard this many times and you believe it, but do you truly “know” it in the depth of your soul so deeply that it has set you free from your fears?

As Albert Einstein said so beautifully, “I want to know God’s thoughts; all the rest are details.” The question is whether you are satisfied to learn about God’s thoughts from books and other people, or whether you want to go directly to the source.

Thank you for allowing me to share my message with you. I bow to the spirit within you.

Michael Painter is currently teaching philosophy at a community college and serving as president of the Orvonton Society of The Urantia Book Fellowship. He has been a reader for 36 years and a practitioner of daily communion with God for 16 years. You can contact him at mpainter@ivytech.edu

The Start of a Worthy New Tradition

The Urantia Society of North Texas Reports on the First Bestowals Celebration

About the time of the Christmas celebration in 2006, the increasing regrets about the way we celebrate Christmas surfaced again. Every year, there seems to be more complaining about how commercial it's become. After Christmas 2006, there was a decided push to search for a way to elevate it to something consciously more meaningful. The birth of the Christ child marks the beginning of Michael's seventh and final bestowal. It took place on our world, and we now understand what a privilege it was. We came to the solemn recognition that we owe it to the universe to devise a fitting celebration that they could enjoy with us.

First, the idea was discussed, then came the recognition that we were in agreement about the desire for this celebration, and finally the many meetings where the idea blossomed into dedicated planning. We couldn't talk people out of our Christmas giving tradition, because it has many spiritual benefits. And what might the whole world, people of all faiths, some day find it in their hearts to celebrate together?

it was unlikely that we could gather together every day for seven days. Someone suggested that we all celebrate individually from our homes—one bestowal per day for seven days—spending as little or as much time as we felt called to, and we were hopeful that experience would be unique and soul-satisfying. We could encourage everyone to embellish their private celebrations in ways that they might feel drawn toward. When the seven-day celebration was finished, we could all gather together and we could each bring to the table something to share with the group, something we did on our own. It seemed a rather good way to share, and next year we would have more ideas to choose from

So that's what we did! Not only did we get to enjoy a great remembrance supper, but we got to enjoy all the creative ideas the celebrants brought to the table.

Rod Holland, society president, hosted the celebration. The rooms of his home were modestly decorated in the colors of the rainbow. He found a mail-order source for wrought iron, votive candle holders in the shape of a rainbow and provided a small number of these. They were real keepers, and we'll be using them for many years to come. As an experimental art project,

We decided to celebrate all seven of Michael's bestowals and encouraged everyone to take a serious look at each bestowal to get a deeper understanding of what it meant to the universe.

We decided to celebrate all seven of Michael's bestowals and encouraged everyone to take a serious look at each bestowal to get a deeper understanding of what it meant to the universe. We figured that meaningful symbolism would be important and beneficial. The rainbow would be a good symbol—a natural wonder, already incorporated into spiritual belief. It stretches across the sky and has seven colors. From the beginning, we were attached to the rainbow idea and soon recognized the beneficial association of each color with each of the bestowals. And we kept our eyes open for other "sevens" woven into our culture and discussed them as they came up

We also discussed appropriate songs, poetry, art projects (especially ones that might work for families with children), and ways to develop a site on the internet so people around the world could take notice. Such a site will certainly be on our agenda for this year's planning.

We soon discovered that one get-together wouldn't provide time for proper recognition of all seven bestowals, and

he filled a tall goblet with seven layers of sand in rainbow colors, which he said turned out to be no small feat: "A flat surface might easily and naturally occur on a sand dune, but not in a goblet." During the celebration and on into Christmas week, he experienced an unexpected, profound sense of peace "that surpasses understanding." He added, "I will now look forward to the Bestowals celebration every year. That peace alone will be one of our most valuable gifts for the season."

David Glass brought a poem from his dear friend, K. Brendi Poppel, written especially for the Bestowals celebration, and a Christmas poem offered by Vern Grimsley. He also wrote an account of his experiences during the days of reflection on the seven bestowals, taking us from here to infinity and back. It focused on the far-reaching effects of Michael's selfless bestowal of himself in the likeness of the creatures he created in order to gain full appreciation of their viewpoint. (See David's article in this issue.)

Debra Guevara wrote and read a touching poem highlighting

the remarkable events of Michael's final bestowal.

During the planning stage for this celebration, it was noted that Paper 119 doesn't provide much detail about what Michael actually did during any of his previous bestowals. The revelators weren't authorized to reveal that information, but they told us much about the creatures of Michael's bestowals. They know we have active imaginations, and they themselves engage in much speculation, so maybe that's what they expected us to do.

Hunter and Jarek Guevara, young sons of Debra and Rick Guevara, pleased everyone by demonstrating their animated computer production of Michael morphing through the seven bestowals. The animation was especially effective in giving us more insight into the mystery. We wish all of you could have been here to enjoy it with us.

Ann Garner, who has for many years been active in the interfaith community, attended a different faith service each day of the Bestowals celebration, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jewish, Christian, Islam, Sikhism, and Zoroastrian. She brought gifts of special prayers and blessings for our new celebration from each faith. There was even a gift of highly nutritious food from the Sikhs, a gold nugget from the Hindus, and frankincense from the Zoroastrians.

Ann had asked each of us in advance to pour a small amount of water from our homes into a little container each day that we celebrated one of the bestowals and bring it to the gathering. At the gathering, she produced water collected from around the United States and poured all of these together into a decorated bowl. To this, she added a few drops of Egyptian oil and a vial of rare water sent to her by Don Estes, of Santa Monica, California.

Ann talked about religious traditions regarding the healing and purification powers of water as well as the fact that water has significance in all world religions. We were then given back a small container of the mixed waters to take home as a reminder of Jesus'

life and his reference to himself as the "living water" and also to the Spirit of Truth which he poured out upon all flesh.

While we're still wandering the universe in these descriptions of our celebration, we'd like to thank Gary Tonge for providing us with his artwork of "The Grand Universe," without which we may never have found our way back to the celebration at Rod's house.

After our return trip to planet Urantia, Kaye Cooper shared a variety of ideas she and Bill came up with and used during their personal celebration. She and her husband Bill tried to focalize each one of the bestowals into two qualities they could hold in mind for each day, and created this chart. (See below.) They associated each bestowal with a color of the rainbow, and suggested that children could participate by drawing with color markers, or shopping for votive candles in various colors to construct their own focal point for meditation.

Overall, we were very pleased with the soul-satisfying pleasure of this new adventure in spiritual celebration. All who knew about it gave their nodding consent to the appropriateness of this new opportunity to reflect on Michael's bestowals perfection. As the word quickly spread, we enjoyed increasing participation from coast to coast ... and received mild disappointment from several others that they had not been given sufficient notice of this inaugural celebration.

With this meaningful Bestowals celebration experience now registered in the universe records, we are confident that increasing numbers of participants will join with us in this uplifting planetary consciousness: the annual celebration of the seven bestowals of Christ Michael.

For further information or suggestions for implementing this celebration, contact Nancy Johnson at ncjohns@tx.rr.com.

Bestowal	Qualities Portrayed	Being
1	Matchless wisdom Supreme love Superb devotion to duty	Loving and wise
2	Just and merciful administrator	Just and merciful
3	Patience, fortitude and skill in trying situations	Patient and brave
4	Humility and service	Humble and helping
5	Worthy of trust by superiors and respect by peers	Reliable and dependable
6	A friendly and sympathetic helper	Friendly and sympathetic
7	Risking all he is and has	Giving and wholehearted
All	Our relation to the Supreme	Like God

The Significance of the Sevenfold Bestowal Career of Christ Michael

By David Glass, Plano, TX

The seven bestowals of Christ Michael, unlike the sevenfold bestowals of the Eternal Son in Havona, are within the range of the appreciation of the mind of contemporary Urantian men and women. A study of the Urantia Papers, in particular of Paper 119, "The Bestowals of Christ Michael," reveals to the reader that what our world has known of the earth life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, called "the Christ," is only a tiny part of the full significance of even those fragmentary records of Jesus' life that have been traditionally presented in and as the four Gospels of the New Testament of the Christian Bible. Seen from the perspective of the Urantia Papers, the beginning, outworking, termination, and resumption of the earth life of Jesus on Urantia, together with the partial accounts of his six other heretofore unrevealed, sovereignty-winning bestowals, have a far deeper and more cosmically relevant significance.

To begin at the planetary level and then to ascend through all levels of ever-widening scope and relevance, Michael's bestowal on Urantia, according to the revelators, came at the most auspicious time for the global appreciation and effect of the bestowal in all history up to that time and, so far, since that time. *The Urantia*

economically, and socially, poised at a more humble level than that of our contemporary era, the local area of Palestine and the Hellenized and Romanized world was, I infer, more conducive to the reception and integration of Michael's life and teachings into the worldly systems and organizations than it would be, or is, at present.

Now, in the present, we find ourselves having just recently (cosmically speaking) been presented with a revelatory restatement of the record of the life and teaching of Michael on Urantia. No doubt, there was and is a certain "timely rightness" or temporal appropriateness about the bestowal of this information of so much of Jesus' life and teachings at this time in history. We can speculate what some of these reasons may be; I feel that a primary purpose for the timing of this bestowal gift is so that it can assist in the preparation of teachers and leaders to function throughout what I presume to be a period of perhaps a millennium of planetary transition, an era into which we have already embarked.

"*This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium. The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustment. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny.*" [99:1.1] (P. 1086)

I believe the implication is that the spiritual and religious climate of Urantia is not now as propitious as it was at the time of Michael's actual bestowal.

Book states that our world has not yet reached a level any more advantageously inclined to receive Michael appreciatively and appropriately than at that which prevailed at the time of the actual Urantia bestowal of the Son of God and Son of Man. What the Urantia Papers actually say pursuant to this point is:

"*Jesus did not come to this world during an age of spiritual decadence; at the time of his birth Urantia was experiencing such a revival of spiritual thinking and religious living as it had not known in all its previous post-Adamic history nor has experienced in any era since.*" [121:1.1] (P. 1332)

Let's appreciate fully what is being stated here. I believe the implication is that the spiritual and religious climate of Urantia is not now as propitious as it was at the time of Michael's actual bestowal. Though mankind was perhaps technologically,

"*Urantia society can never hope to settle down as in past ages. The social ship has steamed out of the sheltered bays of established tradition and has begun its cruise upon the high seas of evolutionary destiny; and the soul of man, as never before in the world's history, needs carefully to scrutinize its charts of morality and painstakingly to observe the compass of religious guidance.*" [99:1.1] (P. 1086)

LEVELS OF SIGNIFICANCE

I submit that the life and teaching of Jesus—presented in the context of the complete fifth epochal revelation—represents both an appropriate and perhaps a maximal revelation of spiritual and cosmic truth assimilable by the general populations of Urantia, perhaps on a partial scale at present, but growing more and more

to embrace the entire planetary citizenry during the unfolding centuries of the future. We have, therefore, established that the seventh bestowal of Michael is certainly of **planetary** significance to our world in the past, present, and future.

The revelation of Michael's life and teaching on Urantia is also of **local system** importance in that, as a man with the sole assistance of his Adjuster, Michael engaged himself in a final struggle with Caligastia and Lucifer and officially terminated the Lucifer rebellion. Additionally, considerable changes in local system administration—most notably the assignment of a new local system sovereign, Lanaforge, to fill Lucifer's vacated office—were necessary.

The bestowal of Michael on Urantia was of **constellation** significance in that, since the outbreak of the Lucifer rebellion, terminated during Michael's Urantia bestowal, a Most High Observer, a Vorondadek Son from Edentia, has been of continuous assignment to the watchcare and potential emergency administration of our planet. [114:4] (PP. 1253–54)

Michael's sevenfold bestowal career was obviously of tremendous **local universe** importance because the one-billion-year enterprise represents Michael's required method of acquiring forever the supreme sovereignty of his own, self-created universe of Nebadon.

The Nebadon Michael's local universe bestowal career was also of **superuniverse** significance in that it needed to be and was recognized by the Uversa Ancients of Days as having satisfied the experiential requirements of a Creator Son to rule with full universe sovereignty in an Orvonton local universe.

Because Michael's bestowal was that of the 611,121st Creator Son in all existence, the bestowal career and the transition of Michael from Crator Son status to that of Master Son were of **grand universe** significance. And because Michael's sevenfold career comprised the living of the seven singular and plural manifestations of the wills of the three Paradise Deities, the bestowal career embraced the seven qualities of grand universe creation, the unification of which established the status and equals the growth and maturation of the Supreme Being, God the Supreme. Therefore was the bestowal career of Michael of

significance to the realization of the Supreme Being and to the actualization of supremacy in general.

Now, since Michael is presently ready to begin the actualization of his absonite potentials, and since these potentials will probably be actualized in the vast regions of the four outer space zones, Michael's achievement of local universe sovereignty is also of **master universe** relevance.

We know that the physical plans, life patterns, and personality traits that Michael selected to create and actualize in his local universe of Nebadon were chosen from, and during his prior tour of, the central universe; thus his bestowal career as a stage in the development and actualization of that local universe, is of **Havona** significance.

Michael's completion of his bestowal career in Nebadon and his accession to the status of Master Son, the sovereign of this local universe, was greeted and acknowledged by the recognition and esteem and love of the Universal Father—hence was Michael's local universe bestowal career of **Paradise** significance.

The revelation discloses that there are **absolute** potentials folded up in the unfathomable natures of the Michael Sons, potentials which are inherent in their origin in absolute beings—the Universal Father and the Eternal Son. Therefore, does the achievement of local universe sovereignty serve as another significant benchmark in the actualization of those unlimited potentials. In this regard, let me close with this quotation:

“When on Urantia, Christ Michael once said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” And we believe that in eternity the Michaels are literally destined to be “the way, the truth, and the life,” ever blazing the path for all universe personalities as it leads from supreme divinity through ultimate absonity to eternal deity finality.” [21:6.4] (P. 242)

David Glass has been a student of The Urantia Book since 1973 and has been active in many study groups and conferences in several states, including Florida, Oregon, and Texas. He gives private piano lessons and enjoys writing spiritually inspired poetry. Currently serving as Vice President of the North Texas Urantia Society, he has just begun his 16th reading of The Urantia Book.

The appearance in and on your world, by apparently natural processes, of a divine Son, we regard as a miracle—the operation of universal laws beyond our understanding. Jesus of Nazareth was a miraculous person. [120:4.4] (P. 1331)

The Urantia Book is not What Used to Be

By Halbert Katzen, JD

The Urantia Book is not what it used to be. It now exhibits a unique and extraordinary quality of credibility. The good news is that the book is doing more than standing up to the test of time; its credibility keeps improving with the passage of time. Simply put, there is not another document anywhere on the planet that so specifically addresses such a wide range of historic and scientific issues and also exhibits the peculiar pattern of having assertions corroborated that were at odds with or not yet considered by science and scholarship when it was published.

To appreciate the implications of this change in *The Urantia Book's* credibility we need to look at three developmental aspects. First, we need to understand what has transpired and the opportunity presented by these developments. Second, the fact-meaning-value relationship presents some challenges. It is challenging because of the tendency to think that scientific facts lead to scientific meanings and values. In this case, they do not. As well, like the book itself but on a much smaller scale, the amount of time necessary to learn the facts can have a tendency to so over occupy our attention that we do not balance out learning about the facts with getting their meaning and value. Third, we must honestly face how our past experiences with sharing *The Urantia Book* can become a serious obstacle to embracing the new opportunities that are now available in light of recent developments.

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGING

Documenting for non-*Urantia Book* readers the ways in which science and scholarship has been catching up to it is an idea whose time has come. This development marks a dramatic shift in our ability to give a quick, positive, and powerful first impression of *The Urantia Book*. When we are speaking with someone who has never heard of or knows next to nothing about the book, we can provide an introduction that is inspiring, interesting, and intriguing. It only takes about one minute. All we have to do is convey the following information:

- 1) *The Urantia Book* was published over fifty years ago.
- 2) It is richly detailed with a wide variety of scientific and historic information.
- 3) Much of this information contradicted or was not yet given consideration by the scientific and scholarly community when it was published.
- 4) Science and scholarship have increasingly and dramatically been catching up to *The Urantia Book*.

Introducing the book in this way sets up a completely new conversational dynamic. It establishes that the book provides uniquely credible information and has a fifty-year track record that is constantly improving. Starting with *The Urantia Book's* unique quality of credibility turns the tables one hundred eighty degrees with respect to the awkward issue of authorship. Information about authorship that formerly sounded strange can now be heard as an internally consistent and objectively verifiable explanation of our assertions. The possibilities of this approach really become apparent when we appreciate that introductions are not a time to try to convert people or to try to convince them about anything. The benefit of this wisdom requires more than applying it as a tactical tool; it requires embracing it as a respectful and loving way to relate to others.

If you have not tried this approach before, it is like breathing fresh air. But do not make the mistake of judging its merits by how things go the first time. Like any new conversation it takes a little time to develop one's ability to do it smoothly and to graciously handle the variety of responses that reflect human diversity. As well, it is important to judge the value of this method for introducing *The Urantia Book* by how it is generally received. This means that we have to give ourselves the benefit of a sample population after we have become adept with the conversation. If we go through these steps then we are in a position to compare it to the other ways we have tried to introduce book.

By informing people about how they can verify this information for themselves, we have liberated ourselves from having to be "an expert" about the various corroborations. Sometimes we need to ask if people would like to hear a few examples. Fortunately, little time is needed to learn how to summarize the reports.

- *The Urantia Book* says that Adam and Eve lived about 37,000 years ago and that they were responsible for significant changes in human genetics. Genetics research done in the last couple of years correlates with the book's story about Adam and Eve in six different ways.

- *The Urantia Book* asserts that all animals are sensitive to the earth's magnetic field. In 1955 the scientific community thought this field was too weak to be detected by animals and knew of no biological mechanism that could do the job. We have now confirmed that many animals can sense this energy and various biological mechanisms related to this sensitivity have been discovered.

- The book describes aspects of our atmosphere that were totally at odds with science when *The Urantia Book* was published. Videos taken from space shuttles now reveal an atmospheric phenomenon that strongly supports what the book describes.

- A supernova that exploded in 1572 is said to have had a double star origin, which is to say that a couple of stars orbited around each other. Eventually the large one pulled in enough matter from the smaller to cause an explosion. The origin of this supernova explosion was not verified until the 1970s with additional support coming in just the last few years.

- In describing the Garden of Eden and how it sank to the bottom of the eastern Mediterranean 33,000 years ago, the book gives numerous details regarding its size and shape. When *The Urantia Book* was published we did not have detailed maps of the Mediterranean Sea basin. Today these detailed maps show correlations with details provided in the book.

- *The Urantia Book* says that the Native Americans came across the Bering Strait land bridge 85,000 years ago. Scholars in 1955 believed that Native Americans entered by this route about 12,000 years ago. Today, discoveries in both North and South America have pushed this date back as far as 60,000 years ago.

Learning how to list several examples to support an introduction is easy and gives us confidence in making the assertion that *The Urantia Book* exhibits a unique quality of credibility. Becoming familiar with the various reports allows us to pick topics that may be of special interest to the person with whom we are speaking. Like the tide that raises all ships, starting out with book's extraordinary quality of credibility will uplift everything else we have learned about conversing with people who do not know about the book. However, suggesting that we start with the book's credibility does not mean that we should focus only on this issue or attempt giving as many examples as possible.

Giving a good first impression of the *The Urantia Book* requires not only beginning the conversation well but also ending it well. The key is to allow the other person to direct the course of the conversation once we have provided the essential introductory information (Of course, because people new to a topic often do not know how to ask good questions, we need to respond wisely.) By monitoring their interest level, we will know when they have heard enough. At that point it is time to initiate a gracious end to

the conversation.

As quickly as we are willing to embrace the blessing, we are liberated from the awkward authorship issue. Its transcendence marks a new and joyous opportunity for service. Now we can all quickly provide a powerful and positive first impression of *The Urantia Book* as we pass by. I suggest starting with those beyond our inner circles. We can learn the value of this new approach better when the stakes are lower and there is no history.

FACT, MEANING, AND VALUE

The book's emerging pattern of credibility presents a relation between fact, meaning, and value that is challenging for both *Urantia Book* readers and non-*Urantia Book* readers alike. The challenge is that the presentation of the facts can easily misdirect our attention away from the meaning and value of these facts. The tendency to over-focus on the facts is exacerbated when we find their meaning and value to be personally challenging with regard to our attitude about outreach.

The meaning is clear and simple; the book is now enjoying a unique quality of credibility. The value for *Urantia Book* readers is that it presents an opportunity for doing much more effective outreach.

In order for us to develop confidence about this growing forest of credibility, we must take the time to appreciate the various trees in this forest, the facts. Most people are only willing to sit and listen for so long during a presentation. We tend to give even less time to reading through the Website. This is not an implied criticism. It is a necessary perspective for appreciating the process in which we are collectively engaged. Some time must be invested in considering the quality of individual meanings and values. The good news is that overcoming this challenge is simply a matter of time. Eventually, from varying degrees of exploration and osmosis, we will all see the awesome implications of this growing pattern.

Fortunately humanity is hardwired to appreciate this type of credibility. We all tend to conclude that a pattern of stating information in advance of its widespread acceptance means that the source, no matter what it is, is credible. Generally, people who are new to *The Urantia Book* will not jump to the conclusion that the best parts of the book are not directly related to why it has a unique quality of credibility; we need to tell them. And, of course, the value for them has to do with being informed about something

The key is to allow the other person to direct the course of the conversation once we have provided the essential introductory information. By monitoring their interest level, we will know when they have heard enough. At that point it is time to initiate a gracious end to the conversation.

that is intriguing. Just as this new opportunity for service, for sharing good news, inspires each of us to varying degrees, non-*Urantia Book* readers also respond in a variety of ways.

THE PAST

There are a number of issues related to the past that need to be considered in order to appreciate the present circumstances and realize the potentials of future outreach efforts. We need to take an honest look at ourselves both individually and as a group. Of course, only the group dynamics can be addressed here.

Because our individual experiences are varied and personal, we may find ourselves more or less related to the generalizations that will be made here about our collective experiences. My comments come not only from over twenty-five years of experience with *Urantia Book* readers, but also from all the study groups I have recently attended and one-on-one experiences I have enjoyed.

People are especially and reasonably cautious about wholeheartedly embracing new spiritual source material. When people pick up even the slightest hint that someone is trying to convert them, they tend to go running for cover.

There has been an emphasis on identifying ourselves as “reader-believers” in the last fifty years. New cultural movements must of necessity start with the congealing of “true believers” in order to generate enthusiasm and tools for future growth and development. The process we have been going through, the challenges we have faced, and the differences we have had, in a general sense, are common to all new cultural developments.

Ironically, the attitude that was necessary and appropriate in this initial developmental stage also made it harder for us to effectively introduce *The Urantia Book*. Our personal identification with it and the emphasis on being a reader-believer has a tendency to alienate and repel those who are not part of the group. The epochal revelations that were personified in some way may have justified some “hard sell” tactics, particularly when the special persons were not nearby. A book requires a different approach. Most people are disinclined to become “true believers” who are dedicated to creating a new cultural movement, no matter what it relates to. People are especially and reasonably cautious about wholeheartedly embracing new spiritual source material. When people pick up even the slightest hint that someone is trying to convert them, they tend to go running for cover.

What were the factual circumstances we faced? The Urantia Book claims to be written by celestials. It came filled with

scientific and historical information that was inconsistent with the science of the day. The first two-thirds are very challenging to read even with a good education. It has mysterious origins. It is over 2000 pages—not a pretty picture for quick and broad social acceptance.

To make matters worse, reader-believers, for the most part, have not been particularly interested in the scientific and historic material, except for the parts on cultural development. Consequently, for these and other reasons, our collective ability to appreciate and make use of the book’s emerging quality of credibility has been hampered.

How did we handle the initial lack of scientific and historic credibility? We avoided talking about the issues with science and history. We learned how to become apologists when we could not avoid the subject or if we happened to be interested in those aspects. We learned to quote phrases like “the laws of revelation hamper us greatly,” or “very rigorously limited by the instructions of

superiors,” or “not at liberty to anticipate the scientific discoveries of a thousand years,” and especially “the physical sciences will stand in need of revision in consequence of additional scientific developments and new discoveries.” That last one has been a big favorite.

This is not intended as a critical commentary on our community. Quite the contrary, it was good wisdom for the day. We needed to learn how to become good *Urantia Book* apologists.

Now it is time to view this initial stage of cultural development as by-gone days. And I say good riddance to them.

What was our psychological response to these challenging circumstances? Introducing people to *The Urantia Book* and inspiring them to read it was tremendously challenging in the first fifty years. We passionately tried to introduce the book to our family and friends. It was inherently a difficult task and our unrefined zealotry made it worse. For the most part we failed miserably. With our failures came embarrassment and marginalization, being ostracized, ridiculed, disrespected, and worst of all, simply ignored.

Not surprisingly, we had a natural reaction to these experiences. We felt hurt and disillusioned. We stopped talking about it openly. We created a filtering system that excluded most people and only brought it to those who seemed “ready for it.” We

concluded that America was not ready for it. A lot of resources and time were spent on translations and international outreach, thereby deemphasizing the wisdom of the revelators, who wrote it in English and placed *The Urantia Book* in the United States.

Fortunately for our collective psyches, because slow growth was all we were capable of anyway, early leadership put out a “directive” supporting “slow growth.” Whether this was good wisdom or came from superhuman sources is not the issue. The point is that we are past this point.

The opportunity to make a positive and powerful introduction on a person-to-person basis is significantly different today than it has been in the past. Society is different. And most importantly, the opportunity to communicate that *The Urantia Book* has a unique and extraordinary quality of credibility is very different. All of this merits reconsideration of our person-to-person approach and how enthusiastically we “should” inform people “as we pass by.” It is time for the whole process of personal outreach to be reconsidered.

THE PRESENT

The pattern of corroborations supporting *The Urantia Book*'s credibility is extraordinary. This type of credibility, generally speaking, resonates reasonably well with most people. Many people in the United States are especially hungry for harmony between spirituality and science because the controversy between evolution and creation is constantly in our media, bogging down

an immortal staff of one hundred. The second epochal revelation had the immortal, extremely knowledgeable, particularly tall and glowing purple Adam and Eve. Melchizedek came without lineage, apparently did not age, and left as mysteriously as he came. Michael's appearance was marked by many miraculous and unusual events. All epochal revelations are designed to have a particular quality of superhuman credibility. And this one is no different, notwithstanding that it is developing over time and comes in book form. Agondonter status is not the norm and inevitably ends.

Today, informing people about the book is a lot like showing them a gradually unfolding miracle that they can go see for themselves. Leveraging this quality is timely and part of the plan.

Being of service to others means we need to get beyond our own relationship to the book. The relevant question is: What type of introduction stands the best chance of intriguing someone who has never heard about *The Urantia Book* before? It is necessarily true that most all of us who are reader-believers became so in the absence of the type of credibility that the book now exhibits. This does not mean that others should be as open as we were. Taking on the attitude that the corroborations of science and history are not its most important aspect, though true, is not helpful. Who are we to ask people to trust our experience with the book when a verifiable, superhuman quality of credibility is available?

Life is a smorgasbord of spiritually enriching opportunities. The essential element of a good introduction is to impressively distinguish *The Urantia Book* from everything else. This is the

But all these considerations are accompanied by a general human appreciation for anything and anyone that provides factually accurate information in advance of its widespread acceptance.

our legislatures, and undermining our educational systems.

People may reasonably be disinclined to believe an assertion about the book's credibility when they hear of it for the first time. Some may embrace a theology that requires them to discount the value of this type of credibility once they find out more about its theological positions and purported origins. Others may not be psychologically ready to deal with something that exhibits superhuman qualities. Many may be preoccupied with other concerns when we bring it up and just not be ready to hear it at the moment. But all these considerations are accompanied by a general human appreciation for anything and anyone that provides factually accurate information in advance of its widespread acceptance.

Humanity is hardwired to appreciate the type of credibility that *The Urantia Book* now exhibits. This is today's version of epochal superhuman credibility. The first epochal revelation had

type of information that inspires, interests, and intrigues people. Unless we succumb to sophistry, we long for harmony between spirituality and science, especially science (and history) that is ahead of its time. We would do well to honor and encourage the natural human desire to have spiritual beliefs be in harmony with scientific developments. People are starving for *The Urantia Book*'s revelatory credibility and we hold the keys to the pantry.

I was first introduced to *The Urantia Book* when I was working for Greenpeace over twenty-five years ago. The job was going door-to-door on membership drives. I thought the most important thing to talk about was the work that Greenpeace was doing on nuclear weapons, waste, and energy issues. The problems associated with these issues seemed to put everyone's life in danger. Naturally, this was more important to me than saving the whales. Eventually I learned that what I thought was most important was not what was most inspiring for others. And besides, once they

became members, they would get a monthly newsletter to inform them about all the other issues. Similarly, we need to respect where people are if we want to be of service in a manner that is gracious and effective.

The point here is not that most people are into scientific issues, or that its emerging pattern of credibility proves its authenticity, or that this type of introduction will immediately “turn people on to *The Urantia Book*.” The point is that most people want to get a sense of the book’s unique quality of credibility first. People will naturally assume, or at least be willing to consider, that if the book can be ahead of science, then it probably is worth checking out for its spiritual, philosophical, theological, and cosmological content. And they would be right. There is a direct link between these issues. Starting with the book’s credibility both prepares the soil and plants the seed. And sometimes people are so ready the fruit comes very quickly.

Considering the question of whether *The Urantia Book* is what it used to be brings up issues that can be challenging for us to confront. “Where am I in that spectrum between the Alpheus twins, who returned to their nets, and the preaching of Simon Peter?” Ironically, the easier it is to introduce the book, the more we find ourselves confronted by issues that we can no longer pin on “the people who are not ready for it yet.”

Just as it is important to be gracious with people when making an introduction to *The Urantia Book* and to be respectful no matter what their response might be, we also need to be gracious and respectful with each other. The quality of the emerging pattern of credibility is a subjective experience and our personal dispositions and experiences are diverse. Fortunately, we know that God loves us just as much no matter where we fall in the spectrum that runs from “private life” to “public preaching.” And best of all, as far as the credibility of the book goes, like a fine wine, it is getting better with age.

THE FUTURE

When I got involved with the Urantia community over twenty-five years ago, people were rarely quoting phrases like, “the historic facts...will stand on the records of the ages to come,” or “authoritative elimination of error,” or “co-ordination of known or about-to-be-known facts and observations,” or “restoration of important bits of lost knowledge,” or “information which will fill in vital missing gaps in otherwise earned knowledge.” I expect we will hear these quoted a lot more in the future!

When it comes to advancing the fifth epochal revelation on Urantia, the greatest challenge we face is the person staring back at us in the mirror. We are the wellspring to the world for wisdom relating to *The Urantia Book*. The current cultural circumstances, particularly in the country where this gift was bestowed, are well suited for being receptive to the book. The real question is: Can

we let go of the past, embrace the present, get out of our own way, and move boldly forward with the exquisite opportunity for service that lies before us?

The first step is our being willing to find our joy in simply letting people know that the book exists. Then, when we are willing to develop skills with this new type of introduction and be the kind of people who measure success in terms of whether or not we open our mouths, we will find enormous satisfaction in sowing seeds destined to grow and in harvesting some of the low hanging fruit.

There are even opportunities here for planting seeds in the conservative Christian community. Consider a conversation with someone from this community in which we express the following (after we have gotten beyond the initial introduction of *The Urantia Book*’s unique quality of credibility):

“I can easily appreciate and respect that when you came to accept Jesus as your savior, you felt you had to choose between Jesus and science. You made an excellent choice. If I had found myself confronted with such a choice, I might have done the very same thing. As it turns out, my belief in Jesus has developed in such a way that it allows me to accept Jesus as my savior as well as appreciate and respect the discoveries of science.

“On the most important issues, you and I share the same beliefs. We both believe in his combined human and divine nature and that he resurrected and ascended to the right hand of our Heavenly Father, where he had all power in heaven and earth placed into his hands. We both believe that he performed miracles and even raised Lazarus from the dead. We believe in his teachings and that he is the way, the truth, and the life. We believe that he will one day return as he promised. *The Urantia Book* even says that, of all knowledge, knowing about the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it is the most important.

“I just wanted to share what I thought was good news and do not wish to continue the conversation if it is not being mutually appreciated.”

Consider what opportunities are now available for the Thought Adjuster to work with that person’s mind and soul.

When Spirit knows that we are willing to introduce the book in this way, then Spirit has an opportunity to guide us to those individuals in the conservative Christian community who would be most open to this approach. We will not experience these *dead* statistics if the *living* Spirit knows we have developed and are willing to use a new talent.

The good that comes from introducing *The Urantia Book* is something that we will often not get to see directly. This is simply the nature of informing people about something for the first time. Often people need to be exposed to new things several times before they are willing to take an interest. But one thing is for sure. This type of introduction raises the bar. It lets people know a book exists that does more than harmonize spirituality and science; it is also exhibits a unique quality of credibility in this regard. Even conservative Christians will have to respect that we see validation in our text in a way similar to how they attempt to validate the Bible.

It is high time we stop sizing up people we have never met before and making excuses about how they are the ones who are not ready. The real issue these days is whether we are ready to embrace a shift that has already occurred.

THE URANTIA BOOK IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE. ARE YOU?

The shift in the book's relationship to science and history, coupled with our ability to provide reports on these developments to the whole world as quickly as we can get them done and for very little money, changes everything when it comes to introducing *The Urantia Book*. The Internet has also changed our ability to do good research and to collaborate with each other in the process of providing quality reports on the emerging corroborations. The question we need to ask is: How much of our time are we willing to invest to make this happen?

Using the emerging pattern of corroborations to demonstrate *The Urantia Book's* unique quality of credibility is an idea whose time has come. This is the transition period when the harvest is great and the laborers are few.

The most important thing is to learn anew how to introduce

the book. Generally speaking, we all meet people that no other *Urantia Book* reader is likely to meet in the near future. These are the souls that need us to inform them about the *Urantia* revelation. On this increasingly incredible planet, credibility is increasingly hard to find. Feed the hungry, lost sheep.

I am not suggesting that we do away with all we have learned over the years about introducing the book. We have developed a lot of talents because it has been so difficult. Rather the suggestion is that by first making sure the other person in the conversation knows about the book's unique quality of credibility, all these other skills we have learned over the years will become all the more powerful. These days, credibility is everything. Interestingly enough, by first talking about the impersonal and verifiable aspect of *The Urantia Book's* credibility, we enhance our own personal credibility.

Since starting this project, my life has been opening up in well nigh miraculous ways. I believe in the teaching that the individual is not important, the work is. The obvious implication of this precious wisdom is that you too can similarly experience the exquisite joy and extraordinary response of Spirit that comes with engaging yourself in this new and timely opportunity to share *The Urantia Book*, the fifth epochal revelation, with our brothers and sisters everywhere.

Halbert Katzen has been reading *The Urantia Book* since 1981 and is the author of *The Logic of Love: Finding Faith Through the Heart-Mind Connection*. His interdisciplinary undergraduate degree was called *The Nature and Development of Religious Experience* and his graduate degrees are in business and law. Halbert does direct outreach primarily focused on universities and church/interfaith groups and he can be contacted through www.UBtheNews.com.

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"Law Is Life Itself..."

By Linda Buselli, Carmel, IN

(The following presentation was delivered at the Fellowship Summer Study Session, at Dominican University in River Forest, IL in July, 2007)

"Law is life itself and not the rules of its conduct." [48:6.22] This statement is from page 555 of *The Urantia Book*, in the paper on "The Morontia Life." This is one of my favorite papers because it introduces us to many suggestions for improving this life, things we can begin now and carry forward into our cosmic careers.

The law referred to here is divine law as differentiated from material law, which can be put into words. Divine law is life itself; it's alive and dynamic in contrast to static, or dead, material law. And it can only be known by living it. Some years ago I heard a folk tale, one of those that circulate in the Urantia community. Supposedly, the revelators remarked that while the teachings of the book were "true," over 95% of the "truth" was lost simply by putting it into words. That shocks some readers, but we have to remember that the book says "... you cannot imprison truth in formulas, codes, creeds, or intellectual patterns of human conduct." [180:5.2] (P. 1949)

For one entire day, when you encounter another person, visualize the Father's love flowing through you to them, and watch what happens.

The book continually defines truth as a *living experience*. It cannot be encoded in words. We obey material law, but we *fulfill* divine law by experiencing it.

As an example, billions of words have been written on what it is like to be a parent. For someone who has never parented a child, the words are inadequate, and for someone who has parented a child, the words are unnecessary. The parent/child relationship is a primal truth of the universe; and it is so important to experience it, that if we don't parent a child here, then we must do so soon after reaching the mansion worlds, right at the very beginning of our universe careers. Truth must be experienced.

As children of the Supreme, we have to "... *do something as well as be something*." [115:0.0] (P. 1260) Yet in the doing, we are limited by "local conditions in time and space." [92:4.9] (P. 1008) *The Urantia Book* does not give us any lists of divine laws, but throughout the book the authors repeat certain themes or ways of doing things that seem pretty consistent in meaning and function. We will be using these techniques for fulfilling divine law throughout our universe careers.

Divine law is the will of the Father in the universe, and the better we know the Father, the more likely we are to begin to ascertain divine will. Of course, if you want to know someone better, you do have to spend some time with that person. The most common method is meditation, withdrawing from the world and listening for the voice of the Adjuster. There are many variations which I won't go into here, but they involve a one-on-one relationship with the Father and in listening quietly for guidance. However, I think of this method as a passive way of experiencing the Father's presence in contrast to another more aggressive approach which involves literally reaching out into the world, and involving another person. As the book says, "*The Father's love can become real to mortal man only by passing through that man's personality as he in turn bestows this love upon his fellows.*" [117:6.10] (P. 1289)

I heard about this exercise a number of years ago, and I've seen it change lives, not only for the recipient of this love, but for the person practicing it. It's very simple and very powerful. For one entire day, when you encounter another person, visualize the Father's love flowing through you to them, and watch what happens. It can be a total stranger, even someone who doesn't know you're looking at them. I love this exercise because I don't

have to define what's happening, such as "my Adjuster is contacting her adjuster," or asking myself "Do I really love this person?" etc. I don't have to worry about what words to use; they just come. I don't have to do *anything* except let the Father's presence fill my mind and work through me. I have to take out the "I" in the equation, along with any prejudices, preconceived ideas, etc. that I may have.

Sometimes it seems that there is no response from the other person. But once in a while, something special happens, something that changes not only your life but the life of the other individual as well. You know the guard we put up that separates us from others? It shows in our eyes unless we're looking at someone we love very deeply. It's also our protection from being known. Well, once in a while we can look into the eyes of a complete stranger during this exercise and watch that guard come down. We find ourselves looking at a naked soul, and they see the Father through us. It's like a foretaste of how we will see and be seen on the mansion worlds.

Shortly after I heard about this exercise, a magazine sales-

man came to my door. As I listened to him I just let the Father's love flow through me. Suddenly his whole face changed and the guard came down. I don't remember how it happened, but we spent the next 45 minutes sitting on my front steps talking about the Father. It was an incredible experience. Try it, you'll like it

What I call "applied methods of fulfillment" of divine will consist of a few categories that overlap somewhat, and they have one quality in common—they require contact with other personalities. Our universe is intensely personal. Remember this quote: "*Everything non-spiritual in human experience, excepting personality, is a means to an end. Every true relationship of mortal man with other persons—human or divine—is an end in itself.*" [112:2.4] (P. 1228)

The first of these techniques is sharing. In fact the *The Urantia Book* defines doing the will of God as "...*nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God.*" [111:5.1] (P. 1221) The book also tells us that sharing is Godlike. In this case I believe the authors mean sharing ourselves with others, not just material goods, or wealth. As children of the Father and the Supreme we are part of a vast family. And what makes a family a family? Have you ever wondered whether or not you would even like a member of your family if they were your neighbor, or perhaps a co-worker? Most of us have a relative or two that make us a little crazy at times. But we love them, because we have shared life experiences with them, not just DNA. We have become part of each other's lives. And friends become part of our extended family as we share experiences with them. This concept of the family will someday be widened into one that includes our cosmic family.

Many years ago I watched Johnny Carson take a microphone into the audience and place it in front of a couple celebrating their

sharing" [48:7.28] (P. 555) Excuse me? After all, if I read a book I have that knowledge whether I tell anyone about it or not. Why should sharing be required to possess knowledge? One explanation might be that being able to teach it would be proof that a person possessed it. And of course, it's a nice, brotherly thing to do. Neither explanation quite satisfied me.

But some years ago, I began to understand it in another dimension. In 1993 I became a Reiki Master. For those of you who may not know, Reiki is the Japanese term for universe energy, and the practice of Reiki is a form of hands on healing using this energy. Practitioners of Reiki may be attuned at three different levels, but only the third, the Master level, can teach and attune others. Following my attunement to Master, I did not do as many Reiki Masters do and begin my own private healing practice, although I used it for individual healing sessions occasionally.

And then in 1995, within a single week, four different people asked me to attune them to the beginning level. We were able to do it in one very long day, since there were only four people. There were four distinct levels with this introductory level; I taught, attuned, and we practiced on each other four times throughout the day. And that evening as I looked at four new Reiki practitioners, I realized that for two years I had had the title, the knowledge, and the ability of a Reiki Master, but that day I finally fulfilled the truth of the essence of a Reiki Master, which is that of a teacher. I had not only given them new knowledge, but we had shared the experience of using this energy. Now I felt I was truly a Reiki Master.

The Urantia Book confirms that we must pass on not only knowledge but experience in this quotation from page 339: "*The entire ascendant plan of mortal progression is characterized by the practice of giving out to other beings new truth and*

We need to share truth so that both persons can get a fuller understanding of the essence of that truth; and when we do, both individuals simultaneously become both teacher and student.

fiftieth wedding anniversary. He asked the woman to give him a definition of love. Almost without hesitation, she said "sharing." It was an epiphany for me. I realized love isn't just a warm, fuzzy feeling, or a sentiment—it's a sharing of the good and bad of life itself with others. We can share something of ourselves even with strangers, and let them share themselves with us. What is service but the sharing of ourselves with others?

What does being willing and able to share something we have just learned with someone else really mean? One of the Morontia mota statements is "*Knowledge is possessed only by*

experience just as soon as acquired." [30:3.9] I had been missing the significance of the word "experience" in that statement. How do you give out experience? Just by describing it, or by helping that person to experience the same truth also, and in his own way? We need to share truth so that both persons can get a fuller understanding of the essence of that truth; and when we do, both individuals simultaneously become both teacher and student. This enrichment of each other's experience with truth will continue throughout our universe careers.

Another "applied divine law" is the absolute necessity to

“act” upon our decisions. *The Urantia Book* makes it clear that a decision is not complete until it is acted upon, and not once, but over and over again. The Adjuster waits for the “habit-forming certainty” not just of our decisions, but of our actions. And, “. . . action, completion of decisions, is essential to the evolutionary attainment of consciousness of progressive kinship with the cosmic actuality of the Supreme Being.” [110:6.17] (P. 1211) In the paper on “God the Supreme” we find this: “When man decides, and when he consummates this decision in action, man experiences, and the meanings and the values of this experience are forever a part of his eternal character on all levels, from the finite to the final.” [117:5.13] (P. 1287)

The following quote brings up an interesting point. “What man himself takes with him as a personality possession are the character consequences of the experience of having used the mind and spirit circuits of the grand universe. . .” [117:5.13] (P. 1287) It is literally our actions that allow us to benefit from these mind and spirit circuits. From page 1638: “The Father in heaven has forgiven you before you have even thought to ask him, but such forgiveness is not available in your personal religious experience until such a time as you forgive your fellow men. God’s forgiveness in fact is not conditioned upon your forgiving your fellows, but in experience it is exactly so conditioned.” [146:2.4] This principle was so important to Jesus, he included it in the prayer he taught the apostles. Here’s how he said it:

*And forgive every one of us our debts
As we also have forgiven our debtors.* [144:3.3] (P. 1620)
Notice the past tense? We have to act first.

Unless we are willing and able to pass on love, forgiveness, even knowledge, to others, we cannot truly experience them. This is an example of a very basic divine law. When we give something material away, we don’t have it anymore. But we don’t have things of the spirit until we give them away.

I would also like to point out that action is required in order to obtain angelic assistance in our spiritual endeavors. Our angels can enhance what we initiate, but how can they enhance something that doesn’t exist? And our decisions don’t exist in the reality of Supremacy until we act on them. This principle is shown in one of the “Conditions of Effective Prayer.” [91:9] (P. 1002) In order to pray effectively for assistance we must first have taken some action on our own. And this is in keeping with the universe law of free will. It is our completed decisions—our actions—that demonstrate our true will.

A third applied method of fulfillment might be “Stay open to whatever the Adjuster may show us.” If we are going to pass a truth on to others, we must be able and willing to receive it in the first place. I know we all want to do the Father’s will, but how open to the Father are we, really? Have we ever allowed our opinions on something to prevent the Father from letting us see his? And if we

have blocked the Father, are we honest enough with ourselves to admit it? Or do we believe this must be the Father’s will because our own opinion seems so clear and just to us?

I told the following story some years ago, but I think it illustrates my point about staying open. I was about 12 years old and my mother and I were on our way to a movie theater in Chicago’s Loop when I spotted a wino sprawled in a doorway. With all the judgmental certainty of an adolescent, I said “Look at that dirty old man.” My mother turned to look at him and said, “Somewhere a mother’s heart bleeds for him.” So I looked at him again and thought “I wonder how I would feel if that was my son.” And the universe turned inside out. I stood there in tears of compassion. After I told this story, someone came up to me and said “That was an unusual experience for a child to have.” But he was wrong. It didn’t happen in spite of my being a child, it happened because I was a child. When I said “I wonder. . .” I had absolutely no preconceptions to get in the way of my Adjuster, who had a clear field of action for contact. And I believe it was the Adjuster because that incident has had such a strong impact on my life.

Jesus asked us to have the faith of a child, and I think we also need to have the wonder of a child’s view of the world and of the universe. A child sees every day as a new adventure, another chance to enjoy new experiences. We are children of the Father and of the Supreme; we are children period, and we need to be as open and trusting as they are. Even with the knowledge gained from *The Urantia Book*, we know almost infinitely less about the universe than a new-born infant knows about this world he’s just come into.

Pope John XXIII was probably the most beloved Pope in history. In the four short years of his papacy, he made revolutionary changes in the practices of the Catholic Church. When an interviewer asked him what caused him to initiate these upheavals of tradition, how did these ideas come to him, he replied: “I always leave a window open.” We need to leave our own windows open so that the fresh air of the Father can touch our minds and our hearts.

Linda Buselli has been a Urantia Book reader and active participant in the Urantia community since 1971. She is currently a General Councilor of the Fellowship, and serves as Chair of the Publications Committee.

Moral Cosmic Citizenship

By Doreen Heyne, Jersey City, NJ

The following was presented as a workshop at the 2007 Summer Study Session at Dominican University, River Forest, IL

What is morality? It is the act of choosing how we ought to behave in society, in our community, and the influences of our own personal behavior. It involves making choices that are best for the individual and for the advancement of the whole.

According to James Q. Wilson, “Determining what behavior is unacceptable is the province of morality, which is essential to all civilized societies. Religion is one important source of moral insights, but it is not the only one.” Also, “Every voice urging greater recognition and implementation of morality in this nation is entitled to respect and consideration, religion no less than any other.”¹

Cosmic morality determines the supreme ends of life and exercises faith in a commitment to these ends. It may merge with ethics and religion to become altruistic values. It is my hope that as a collective humanity we can responsibly participate in transforming the future.

While studying a few time periods in civilization, you may discover a pattern of progress or stagnation—where we are today and where we would like to be in achieving moral order in this world. Civilizations are not cosmic, they come and go; but science, morality, and religion always survive the crash.

IN THE PAST

The Babylonians had documents showing precepts that may date back to a period around 1800–1000 BC. They are called Counsels of Wisdom.² The writings were very similar to those of the Hebrew writers—appeals for forgiveness, confessions of sin, pleas of universal human ignorance, retributive divine acts, and acts of purification, as well as sacrificial offerings. All religions have some moral codification.

Because Israel was the crossroads of the ancient world, over many generations her wisdom became international. Over time, her sages and priests borrowed material from her cultural environment, influenced by different currents of thought as well as by observing and discerning between natural consequences and human nature. This resulted in insight on behavior, studying cause and effect, while always seeking insight into the divine order of creation. Another viewpoint was discovering wisdom through suffering, anguish, and reflection. This reasoning was inherited

from the Greeks, Egyptians, and Babylonians, that we are citizens of the world and everyone’s needs are fundamentally the same regardless of cultures that divide and conflict. Through years of experience, their love of wisdom helped develop a moral code for a way of life.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Jewish people were given a set of laws of right conduct to govern their social morality. Israel had codes for her tribal society. Early on it allowed for retribution or revenge such as “an eye for an eye.” This law was designed for a people who were barbarous at the time to maintain some sort of order, realizing getting even was a normal feeling.

There are two types of laws in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures): conditional and absolute. The conditional laws include acts and consequences; unconditional laws meant no ifs, ands, or buts. “Israel could not claim to be better than other nations, either morally or religiously, for the people displayed the same weakness and strength that are found in the life of any people. It was with the conviction that Yahweh, their leader, was going before them that the people faced the future.”³

The first four commandments present a moral norm on how to personally conduct oneself with God. The other six are social moral laws dealing with man’s relationship with other men. Without these moral laws for man’s conduct, he would be ethically and spiritually lost. Penal codes do not teach real love or charity.

CHRISTIANITY

Early Christianity did not encourage social change like abolishing slavery; owning slaves at that time was acceptable. Paul of Tarsus claimed that although the Jews made a covenant with Yahweh they were not able to keep it. The inward assistance of Jesus would help them destroy the urge to sin with a new covenant of Christian love, an attitude of self giving toward others. At the same time, the Christian church also said that women were the originators of sin and that giving them equal rights would go against God’s will. Both the old and new testaments are full of what we now feel to be errors and contradictions written to instruct the people in that period of time.

True morality consists in having allegiance to universal principles such as, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” for all humans are your neighbors. Well, if you set yourself higher than your neighbor because he is different, you justify doing wrong to him. The Christian church based its teaching on Aristotle’s morality—to attain the supreme good. When you want to attain good, you do

good things from within and without; you develop moral habits.

Christian love, “agape,” is the ethical foundation for morality. Thomas of Aquinas, the 13th century philosopher and theologian, said “either you live in harmony with each other, or you live in disharmony and kill each other. If you do the right thing you will be rewarded; the wrong, you will go to hell.

How important is the fear of hell or the desire to live as God wishes in motivating people?

The morality of the religions of evolution drives men forward in the God quest by the motive power of fear. The religions of revelation allure men to seek for a God of love because they crave to become like him. [5:4.1] (P. 66)

Can we have moral values without religion? Can we be good without God? Does freedom exist without morality?

Morality is not necessarily spiritual; it may be wholly and purely human, albeit real religion enhances all moral values, makes them more meaningful. Morality without religion fails to reveal ultimate goodness, and to provide for the survival of even its own moral values. Religion provides for the enhancement, glorification, and survival of everything morality recognizes and approves. [196:3.24] (P. 2096)

THE PRESENT

Secularism (humanism) questions the moral authority and absolute truth of the Bible. Some people think the Bible consists of fairy tale stories to help teach us morals. Therefore, the concepts of right and wrong are left to the individual—a morality of reason, not religion.

Though reason can always question faith, faith can always supplement both reason and logic. Reason creates the probability which faith can transform into a moral certainty, even a spiritual experience...Reason alone cannot achieve harmony between infinite truth and universal fact. [102:6.6] (P. 1125)

Is it moral to force someone to live who wants to die? Is it the same as forcing someone to die who wishes to live? Where is respect for the individual? Another controversial issue of today is: do we have the right to improve the genetic makeup of a fetus by using biotechnology? Are we playing God? Is this immoral or virtuous? The Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, said virtues are rational.

*When man wishes to modify physical reality, be it himself or his environment, he succeeds to the extent that he has discovered the ways and means of controlling matter and directing energy. Unaided mind is impotent to influence anything material save its own physical mechanism, with which it is inescapably linked. But through the **intelligent** use of the body mechanism, mind can create other mechanisms, even energy relationships and living relationships, by the utilization of which this mind can increasingly control and even dominate its physical level in the*

universe. (Emphasis mine) [111:6.5] (P. 1222)

Has the notion of personal rights weakened society’s values? Have we lost the idea that family is a human commitment, our jobs are commitments, friendships are commitments, all expressing our accountability? Intelligence alone cannot explain the moral nature. Morality, virtue, is indigenous to human personality. Moral intuition, the realization of duty, is a component of the human mind. “*But a moral being possesses an insight which enables him to discriminate between ends as well as means. He knows what he is doing, why he is doing it, where he is going, and how he will get there.*” [16:7.4] (P. 193)

Dostoyevsky said: “If there is no God, then everything is permitted.”

What moral values can be accepted by all religions? Can we start with treating all human beings with dignity and respect and take the interests of the entire community into account? Aren’t we all interdependent?

FAMILY

We are told that “*family life is the progenitor of true morality, the ancestor of the consciousness of loyalty to duty.*” [84:7.30] (P. 942)

An early example of family loyalty was the Han dynasty of China, 206 BC to AD 220. The Chinese people excelled all other races in family loyalty, group ethics, and personal morality. Families were accountable for the conduct of their members, duty, self-control, and group ethics. Confucius, 551 BC, said the ruler had to be a shining example for everyone. The powerful had to act with self-constraint and modesty. He taught that education and music helped create harmony. Confucius encouraged his disciples to master historical records, music, poetry, and moral philosophy, expressing that by nature man was good and everyone is born to recognize what is right and act upon it.

China gave Europe a legacy, the modern civil service. In 165 BC, candidates for public office had to take an exam of their moral excellence given by the emperor. His achievement was setting up schools that produced statesmen with a strong sense of state and duty, known as the “School of the Literati.” He said a man should practice what he preaches as well as preach what he practices. His simple moral and philosophical teachings lasted two thousand years. Love others, honor your parents, don’t do to others what you would not do to yourself, rule by moral example not force and violence, and if a ruler has to resort to force he has already failed. Wisdom, compassion, and courage are the three universally recognized qualities of men. These are the patterns of morality carried forward from civilization to civilization. Was this the early recognition of cosmic citizenship?

THE FUTURE

Hans Kung, theologian, said there can be no peace among nations unless there is dialogue and peace among religions. If barbaric acts are not denounced by the world in outrage and silence becomes acceptable, when national leaders selfishly seek their own benefit, wisdom will not prevail; and we will never unify. The world will not progress. Can the major religions work together to proclaim truth, justice, peace, harmony, and tolerance? Do we need a world ethic and moral code?

Education: Teaching morality helps to make it habit-forming. Aristotle understood virtue perfectly. “We acquire virtue just like we acquire crafts, you learn to build by building.” We become brave by acting brave. It is a habit repeated by small acts in youth.⁴

Citizens need to be taught how to intelligently evaluate their leadership. The civil rights movement was a moral recognition of the highest ideals in the struggle for the soul of America. Social movements have spiritual foundations. Hopefully in the near future more people will care about social justice in other parts of the world, but religions need the moral will to eradicate global poverty.

We have lots of helpers and one group is described on page 1256: “The Angels of Enlightenment” “*Urantia is now receiving the help of the third corps of seraphim dedicated to the fostering of planetary education. These angels are occupied with mental and moral training as it concern individuals, families, groups, schools, communities, nations, and whole races.*” [114:6.11]

Self-government: Can we govern ourselves? When our morals decline we need to have more authority governing us, which in turn limits our freedoms. When we develop a global consciousness, have a just society, work with other religions to find common ground for cooperation and agreement, we will move forward. We understand that in order to have less government there are prerequisite stages of social progress, unifying philosophy, science, and religion.

On page 1255 [114:6.7] under “The Religious Guardians,” *The Urantia Book* describes how the angels of the churches maintain from one epoch to another those moral values worth saving. Since moralities sooner or later outlive themselves, the only ones that are sustainable are universal. The evolution of morals becomes obsolete in time unless they contain a way of living that transcends any present day mores and elevates itself to a godlike reflection driven by the Spirit of Truth. It must contain love for humanity through God, and faith in him that recognizes the spirit of God in each person. Our souls must be dominated by love.

In and through all the historic vicissitudes of religion there ever persists that which is indispensable to human progress and survival: the ethical conscience and the moral consciousness.

Faith-insight or spiritual intuition is the endowment of the

cosmic mind in association with the Thought Adjuster...Holy Spirit...[and] Spirit of Truth. [101:3.1–2] (PP. 1107–8)

This combination constitutes man a spirit personality in potential.

COSMIC CITIZENSHIP

How do you live as a cosmic citizen? Cosmic citizens have the mind and spirit to discern the cosmos. Because our world as a whole is far from attaining the level of cosmic citizenship in the near future, we can be hopeful that when we reach Jerusalem, the system capital, the seraphic interpreters, the Quickeners of Morality, will assist us in becoming cosmic citizens. There we will learn liberty, loyalty, and universe brotherhood. Freedom will not be had until the finaliter stage.

Doesn't it benefit all of us if we recognize we have a common destiny? While it is disheartening to acknowledge that civilization still has not passed beyond the religions of fear and superstition, we are told there is a new unrevealed planetary destiny that may bring us into a new dawn of spiritual awakening.

Cosmic citizens have the mind and spirit to discern the cosmos and recognize that the highest moral choice is to do God's will. Are we at the level of progression where we are so in tune with God consciousness that we delight in bearing each other's burdens?

In the Adjuster papers *The Urantia Book* describes how we can attain this now by “*Joyful acceptance of cosmic citizenship—honest recognition of your progressive obligations to the Supreme Being, awareness of the interdependence of evolutionary man and evolving Deity. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty.*” [110:3.10] (P. 1206) When we look back over history and recognize the ebb and flow of events, we could question whether the advances have outweighed the setbacks.

These decisions are in our hands. The choices we make lead to transforming ourselves, our society, our planet. Do we need a new way to love, to serve, to be kind, have peace? Hasn't the groundwork been laid for thousands of years? The consciousness of the planet is transformed by each and every one as we see ourselves and treat each other as God would. Our past is filled with moral stories teaching us how to be more civilized, carrying truths and hope for our future. The spiritual consciousness of the planet will be reborn as individuals are reborn.

Do we have one foot in our tribal beginnings and one foot groping in the dark, reflecting a partial reality? There is in us the never-ending quest toward perfection, but some in society choose to see the imperfect, inconclusive, evolutionary steps taken, believing that humanity is regressing. It is not so. All humanity has not lost its soul. Together we will go forward towards our planetary destiny, sooner rather than later.

Doreen Heyne retired from 33 years of serving the public with a retail business. During some of that time she served as President of a spiritual institute before committing herself to Fellowship service. She was a member of the Outreach Committee before being offered an opportunity to serve the Fellowship as Secretary-General; and after six years in that capacity, she is presently Treasurer of the Fellowship.

End Notes:

¹. James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997) 245.

². Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1981).

³. D. Winton Thomas, Editor, *Documents from Old Testament Times*, (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1961) 104 - 108.

⁴. John F. Wilson and Donald L. Drakeman, *Church and State in American History*, (New York: MjF Books, 2003) 269,

The Roots of Morality

By Henry Begemann

There may be a great difference between acting from good human motives and doing the Father's will. Morality and its correlated motivation is in the first place an evolutionary phenomenon. Then it is "super-animal, but sub-spiritual." Morality derived from this level is not spiritual activity, but an activity derived from a sense of duty. Morality as Jesus taught is more than evolutionary, it is revelatory because its origin is in the Father-child relationship. This experienced relationship has as a consequence an enhanced morality that transcends duty. "The one characteristic of Jesus' teaching was that the morality of his philosophy originated in the personal relation of the individual to God—this very child-father relationship." [140:10.5] (P. 1585)

We may intellectually accept this, believe it, but this is not sufficient, not the real thing. The *Urantia Book* continually and consistently places the accent of the point that such a relationship should be an actuality for us. The first phase of the kingdom is described as "The personal and inward experience of the spiritual life of the fellowship of the individual believer with God the Father." [170:4.1] (P. 1862) Then the second phase of the kingdom results as "The enlarging brotherhood of Gospel believers, the social aspects of the enhanced morals and quickened ethics resulting from the reign of God's spirit in the hearts of individual believers." [170:4.1] (P. 1863)

To have once experienced this contact with the Father does not imply that henceforward this contact is an established factual

relationship. All too often, and all too easily, we drift away from this living contact. Then our morality is no longer rooted in this communion-experience; and it descends again to the evolutionary level of duty, though our aims and purposes may nominally remain the same. We then act as sons of God (at best,) but not in a sonship with God. And our good motives and intentions are human then, and not divine, though they may be our human concepts (not experience) of the Father's will.

To know the Father's will requires an actual, living contact with him as he lives in us. This contact is characterized by experiencing his attributes as our values. When we actually feel those values (values must be felt says *The Urantia Book*), then we begin to discern the Father's will. "The human Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful, and good. All these attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as the 'will of the Father in heaven.'" [196:0.2] (P. 2087)

Searching among alternative religions in Holland, **Henry Begemann** found *The Urantia Book* as he was retiring from an insurance sales career. Recognizing its importance, he immediately began translating the book into the Dutch language. His dedication inspired him to organize and facilitate study groups as European Field Representative. He served on the General Council of the Brotherhood (now the Fellowship) before his graduation to the Mansion worlds in 1990.

Ethics and morals become truly human when they are dynamic and progressive, alive with universe reality. [12:5.10] (P. 135)

Casting Pearls Before Personality

By David Elders, Darien, CT

Presented at The Urantia Book Fellowship Summer Study Session, July 22, 2007

I believe that in probing the truths presented in *The Urantia Book* for a new and higher understanding, it is critical that we seek to comprehend each concept directly for meaning and refrain as much as possible from projecting onto new truth what we already understand, or think we understand. For example, while it is useful to examine the meaning of human fatherhood in the context of God's fatherhood, it is wholly misleading to do the reverse.

Each human being constructs an eternal identity at the relationship juncture of a unique personality and a Thought Adjuster—both bestowed by God. Using gifted tools facilitating discovery, self-consciousness, realization, will choice, and insight, and aided by unseen helpers at every stage, we experientially weave ourselves together using the glues of personality—unity and love—to explore as cosmic citizens of sonship dignity our Father's eternal and infinite reality.

Triggered by a child's relatively free-will, self-conscious, moral choice, a new soul is born and a cosmic citizen is set free to find his/her way back to the bestower

We didn't "earn" our cosmic citizenship. It was guaranteed us when the Father said to the Son, "*Let us make mortal man in our own image.*" [6:5.7] (P. 78) Echoing the pattern of the Gods, a unique personality expression of the Father was bestowed by him on every humble, animal-origin yet normal-minded material human creature on each and every inhabited planet in the universes. This bestowal constituted each human being a "son" of God, which is not about gender but has to do only with personality status. Not long after this initial bestowal, as personality and its attributes, will and self-consciousness, take the first steps toward unifying the creature's being, a second bestowal, that of a pre-personal spirit fragment, the Thought Adjuster, completes the actualization of the Father's initial vision. With this bestowal, triggered by a child's relatively free-will, self-conscious, moral choice, a new soul is born and a cosmic citizen is set free to find his/her way back to the bestower of the very personality and pre-personal spirit fragment which together with mind and consciousness constitute a new universe being created in the Father-Son-Spirit image.

Though our human bodies come from a collaboration of human, material potentials, who we really are (to use a well-worn phrase) appears wholly gifted from above. Though our consciousness is limited to a finite framework, our unique personality and the Spirit fragment indwelling our soul both hail from a level of reality far beyond the finite. In between, mediating the relationship between these two far-separated realities, resides mind, sourced in the Infinite Spirit but manifest locally by one of his daughters. Our bodies are destined to remain on the material, planetary plane while our being-personality-spirit, climbing the rungs of cosmic consciousness, goes on to explore God's infinite reality. We have begun the ascent of true cosmic citizenship, ever seeking higher employment in our Father's spiritual economy. After all, we all want to work in the family business!!

So, who are WE really? And, just what does our cosmic citizenship mean—to us and to God? And when he and the Son made us in their image, what does THAT mean? And because we surely don't want to re-gift these particular pearls of great value, what is the return we need to make for the gifts we've been given? We've neither asked for nor earned any of them—yet. Besides, we

aren't really sure of how to use these gifts very well anyway. We stumble around on our level of reality as if the Creator Son forgot to turn on the lights. Some image of the Gods we are!!

You probably think (or at least hope) that I am about to attempt to answer these questions so we can all go home happy. Well, keep breathing. No answers will be forthcoming; but, let's explore some of the elements already discussed because in my opinion, one of the first responsibilities of cosmic citizenship is to begin to figure out the answers to such questions and thereby take our places as true, contributing per-Sons of God, citizens in his universe reality.

I suspect that we would all agree that who we are as cosmic citizens is one of the mysteries of personality that we need to unravel during our ascent to the Father on Paradise. Here are some ideas to reflect upon as we think about our place in the universe:

1. In Paper 1 we are told that "God is personality." I take that literally to mean that God is personality—both all personality

and each personality. Thus, while we cannot say that each of us IS God, we can say that God is each of us. When the conceptual “I AM” became Father to the Son and personality was realized, a Divine Counselor writes that God did so in order to escape “*as a personality from otherwise inevitable diffusion throughout the potential of Total Deity.*” [0.3.15] (P. 6) By focalizing personality and will choice in a manner less than total Deity, the Father thereby makes it possible for less-than-total-Deity experience and choice to take place (obviously including human will creatures). In other words, the bestowal of personality by our Father enables Deity (God) to function on sub-Absolute levels while retaining many Deity attributes. Thus, the Father can “become” the Eternal Son, the Supreme, or even a mortal, finite will creature. At minimum this concept offers us a heightened sense of the profound value and power of personality. Considered yet another way, being a personality has no meaning when there are no other personalities. You may be the boss when you’re home alone, but it’s not much fun!

I would suggest that when the Father bestows a wholly unique personality gift of his Deity reality on any qualified being, including mortal creatures, a similar pattern is repeated—the Father escapes from the need to “be” that particular person. Simultaneously, that now-personalized being receives some amazing benefits: the dignity of cosmic citizenship, free-will choice, the deity characteristic of unity, the potential of time/space transcendence, the possibility of experiencing the absolute level of reality, future eternity existence, and via fusion with the Adjuster, “*past-eternity experience and memory.*” [112.7.1] (P. 1237) Thus, if all goes as planned, the bestowal of personality on humble, animal-origin creatures may well enable us to self-realize not only the great God who has become us but also to become

thus free-will choice (like the self-conscious, moral choices which build our souls and the Supreme), we are literally “doing” God’s will on his behalf on our level of time-space reality. Thus while that choice may appear to happen only in time, it also takes place simultaneously far beyond time and at the level of God’s will. So, in this way our decision may not be known to him in advance and is thus not pre-determined and hovering nearby waiting for us to discover and choose it.

3. “We” live and are self-conscious at the relationship focal point of a highly-qualified, unique personality bestowed by God and an unqualified pre-personal fragment of Deity. It is not entirely clear, at least to me, exactly who we are in this relationship of absolutes, albeit we are blessed to be present and know it as these two aspects of God interact—the qualified and the unqualified, exemplifying infinite diversity and undivided unity. Fusion unites these two and our self-developed morontial identity, the soul, in a marriage that secures our eternal existence as unique and personalized cosmic citizens and facilitates our exploration of God’s infinity. Surely our ascending careers will clarify who we really are and what personality sonship actually means both to us and to God. Until our journey is complete and we know for sure, we can take solace in the knowledge that we are in a direct and unending partnership with the very God we seek.

Cosmic citizenship is inherent in the bestowal of personality, but, like most experiential realities, it is the assumption of its responsibilities that make it real to us. Awareness of the responsibilities of cosmic citizenship begins during the early days of our human sojourn coincident with the embryonic awakening of moral self-consciousness and the birth of our souls. As this awareness grows, we begin to understand that our responsibilities

As Grandfanda did for us, we, too, can illuminate the way forward for others to travel making real the truths we have been told.

consciously and increasingly aware, as we ascend towards God, of our past and future eternity existence as personalities. This is cosmic citizenship of an unimaginable order.

2. One of our integrated responsibilities as cosmic citizens is to “do God’s will.” For many of us that phrase means to do as God would do in whatever situation confronts us in the moment. Others might see it as an injunction to do as God wants us to do. I would like to speculate on an alternate concept. If it is true that the bestowal of personality is the process of God becoming each of us, then personality bestowal links us literally to “first cause” will choice. This would mean that when we use the “free will” which accompanies personality to make an uncaused and

include our duty to God in time-space, the Supreme, and the recognition that our choices contribute to his growth as well as our own. Grandfanda was the first human-born will creature to climb the ladder of cosmic citizenship all the way to Paradise, a task made even more difficult by virtue of the fact that he had no one to follow. But because he blazed the experiential trail, our way forward has been illuminated and trod by many before us. Nonetheless, the journey is ours alone to make unified by the unique personality that we are, or rather, that is us.

We live on a planet undergoing accelerating change, the breakdown of institutions and systems and thought that heretofore made us feel secure, with the consequent and increasing

interpersonal stresses that have unnerved many of our fellows. Inasmuch as revelation comes to a world when the potential for further evolutionary growth has been exhausted, we can be sure that the arrival of this revelation signals that existing knowledge, concepts, belief systems, and evolutionary religions are now insufficient to help humankind integrate and understand this accelerating change and our new, unfolding planetary destiny.

We have been blessed with a revelation of truths that, if understood and truly practiced, can help stabilize our communities, beginning with our own. If we desire to be cosmic citizens in more than words alone, it is time that we together give ourselves fully to our cosmic responsibilities, not just to contribute what we can today, but to leave a building-block legacy for the future. The revelation is not ours alone, but the world's. As Grandfanda did for us, we, too, can illuminate the way forward for others to travel making real the truths we have been told. The Eden we need to prepare for the coming of this new truth is the Eden of the mind, placing into human consciousness a new philosophy of living based on the reality of personality bestowal, its significance, and its promise of eternal life; the comprehension of a new and expanded cosmology that makes real our place in a universe

teeming with children of God; and a new religion built on revealed truth experientially realized by direct, personal contact with our Father God, the God indwelling our fellow universe travelers, and the joyful responsibility of building our own souls and thereby contributing to the realization of God in time and space, the Supreme.

So we end where we began. Each human being constructs an eternal identity at the relationship juncture of a unique personality and a Thought Adjuster—both bestowals by and of God. Using gifted tools facilitating discovery, self-consciousness, realization, will choice, and insight, and aided by unseen helpers at every stage, we experientially weave ourselves together using the glues of personality—unity and love—to explore as cosmic citizens of sonship dignity, our Father's eternal and infinite reality.

David Elders has been a student of The Urantia Book since 1970 and has explored the amazing concept of personality as revealed in the book for most of that time. He and Marta have been married for forty-three years and are experiencing one of the fruits of that partnership—the five grandchildren their two sons and their wives have brought into the world.

Puzzle Solution

M	N	H	O	J	Y	A	A	E	D	U	J
E	A	N	U	R	A	N	T	I	A	I	E
L	O	D	A	E	O	D	O	G	S	J	S
A	A	C	D	V	R	O	O	D	A	P	N
S	I	T	A	O	G	N	A	M	L	A	O
U	T	H	M	N	D	L	E	A	V	R	T
R	N	E	E	O	A	S	N	R	I	A	N
E	E	B	N	R	I	D	I	T	N	D	O
J	D	T	L	D	O	N	A	H	G	I	V
R	E	D	E	N	I	D	C	A	T	S	R
R	T	V	B	A	T	N	O	F	O	E	O
J	E	M	A	C	H	I	V	E	N	T	A

A Good Way For Us To Live Our Lives

One law the Master shared with all of us;
One precept which surpasses every thought;
He taught that men in timeless Brotherhood
Are sons of one true Father. Truth has sought

To be the Center of our outward Love;
The Truth of Living Sonship with one's God;
The global and the universal Truth
That gives us heav'nly glory. We have trod

Upon this planet several years and seen
Its ghastly ironies and untold sorrow;
But we do know that should we now proclaim
God's timeless Truths, there will come a tomorrow

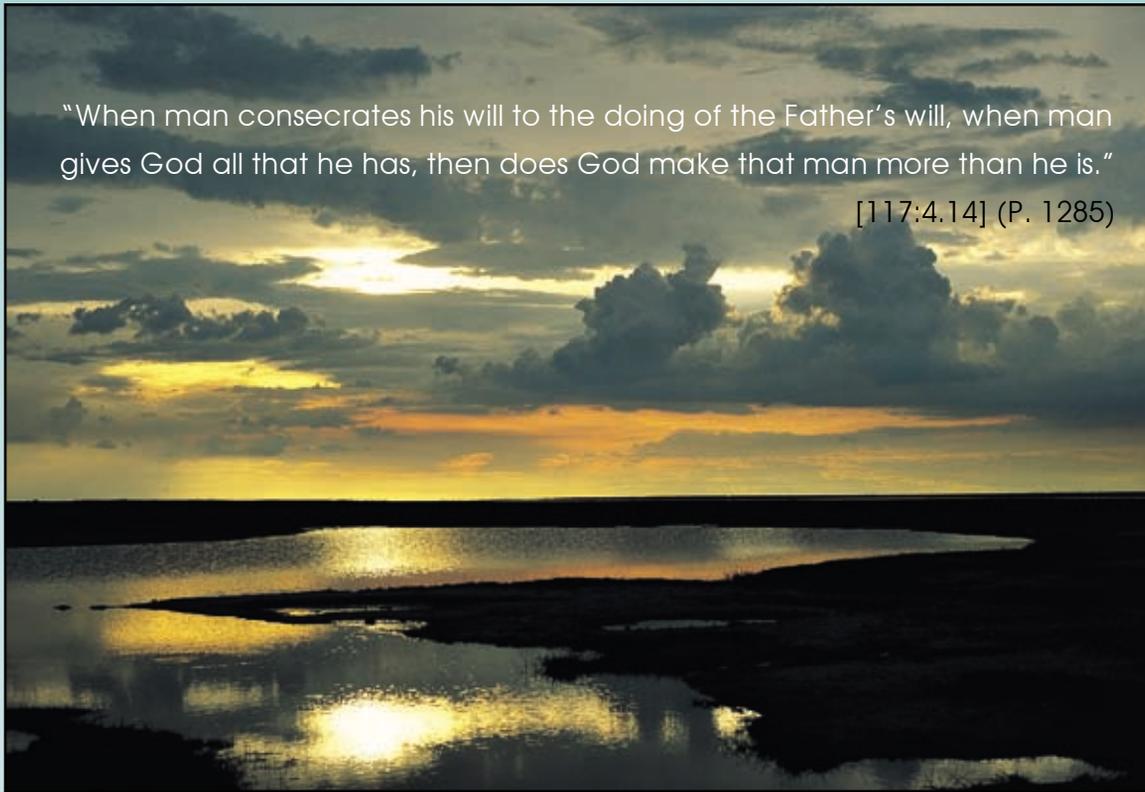
In which the conflicts of our present globe
Shall be refashioned in a better light
In which the Father's bidding will be done
And Truth will spread her radiant beams of Light.

We have an opportunity to Serve:
Proclaiming Jesus' Truth and sharing Love
That all may be in-gathered to his Heart
And life below resemble life above.

David E. Glass
Plano, TX

"When man consecrates his will to the doing of the Father's will, when man gives God all that he has, then does God make that man more than he is."

[117:4.14] (P. 1285)



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