

# Spiritual Fellowship Journal

Volume 3, Number 2

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*Issues and Answers Series:*

***The Urantia Book and Sexist Language***

Judith L. Mace

**God Language**

Meredith Sprunger

**The Goddess**

Gard Jameson

*Also :*

**Why Some Ministers Don't Read *The Urantia Book***

Larry Austin

**Writing Styles of Papers in *The Urantia Book***

Ken Glaziou

**Gender Problems**

**On Accepting Evolutionary Reality**

**Defining the Terms of Equality**

**Interfaith Could Brighten Future for Our World**

**Gender Differentiation in *The Urantia Book***

**On Elbows and Equality**

## **The Spiritual Fellowship of Students of The Urantia Book**

A Spiritual Leadership Network Interested in *The Urantia Book* as a Resource in Living,  
Creative Service, Teaching, Preaching, and Writing.

### **Guiding Network Principles**

1. We believe *The Urantia Book* can make a significant contribution to the stimulation of spiritual creativity in churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions and their people.
2. We believe that at the present stage of spiritual development it is wise for ministers, priests, and rabbis to use *The Urantia Book* as a resource for preaching and teaching rather than referring to the book itself or directing attention to it. Almost every concept in *The Urantia Book* can be associated with some theologian, philosopher, or scientist in the past or present.
3. We believe that, although one should not be secretive about interest in *The Urantia Book*, one should use discretion in recommending it to people. The light of enhanced truth can frighten and blind as well as guide and illuminate.
4. We believe *The Urantia Book's* claim to a revelatory source and status is not germane to its usefulness in the presentation of spiritual truth. Truth has an inherent appeal, regardless of its source, and can be used to enrich one's preaching, teaching, and living.
5. We believe the Spirit of God works among us in a differential and evolutionary manner; therefore, we recognize that for whatever reason some clergy may not wish to read and critically evaluate *The Urantia Book*. This diversity should in no way stand as a barrier to our mutual respect, fellowship, and love.
6. We believe the leavening process of creativity stimulated by *The Urantia Book* should be ecumenical in nature.
7. We believe *The Urantia Book* will eventually be recognized by the great majority of the world's religious leaders as one of the most constructive spiritual messages our world has received since Jesus' ministry on earth.

### **Network Recommendations**

1. Read the entire *Urantia Book* to get its sweeping universe view of reality. Many of us started reading the book at Part IV, The Life and Teachings of Jesus. If you should like to get a quick overall view of the book you might read "The Gift of Revelation," a twenty-two page summary of the basic facts and truths of *The Urantia Book*.
2. Have the *Concordex* of *The Urantia Book* available to help in researching topics on which you are preaching or teaching.
3. Use the *Paramony*, which is a parallel and harmony of the Bible and *The Urantia Book*, to locate *Urantia Book* material on the Biblical text you are using in sermon preparation.

***The Spiritual Fellowship  
Journal***

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**About the Editors**

Meredith Sprunger is a United Church of Christ minister, and college teacher, retired. He served pastorates in the Midwest and taught at Elmhurst College and Indiana Institute of Technology. Merlyn Cox is a United Methodist minister serving in the North Indiana Conference.

## On Accepting Evolutionary Reality

From our vantage point of 2000 years of history, it is difficult for us to understand the hostility which the Pharisees and Sadducees exhibited toward the message of Jesus. We tend to forget the strength of tradition and institutional power structures. If we keep these evolutionary dynamics in mind, it is easier for us to understand both their reaction and our contemporary situation.

Jesus attempted to upstep the spiritual insights of Judaism and used the synagogues to present his teachings until they were closed to him. He succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of only a small number of the Palestine society. This nucleus carried his transforming spiritual message throughout the world. In the context of this 2000 year history, much in Judaism has been changed by the evolutionary dynamics of Jesus' teaching. Today the Reformed branch of Judaism exemplifies the essence of Jesus' message—the Fatherhood of God and the kinship of humankind. Spiritual Reality eventually transforms tradition.

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In our day the Fifth Epochal Revelation presents a similar opportunity to contemporary religious institutions. The authors of *The Urantia Book* express the hope of upstepping the Christian Church and other world religions. After 35 years, the Fifth Epochal Revelation is experiencing a reception similar, but more humane, to that given the message of Jesus. The leadership of the Christian Church has taken a stance of deliberate, benign indifference to its message. They are afraid of what it might do to them. Institutional and theological power structures are strong and pervasive.

Once again, we have a small group of people assuming the task of bringing this enlarged revelatory message to the world. Most of the church will need more time to discover its renewing and transforming power. We need to accept this evolutionary time-lag without too much frustration and discouragement. This is a natural response when we understand the growth dynamics of the evolutionary universe in which we live. All individual and social phenomena follow a course which social scientists describe as “normal curve”

phenomena; growth or change takes place among the few pioneers and proceeds through the population until the new orientation becomes the norm for the majority of society. The ultra conservatives and reactionaries bring up the rear. New generations are required to complete the process.

The pioneers, the 1% which Abraham Maslow describes as the innovators, break the trails into new territory. We hope our clergy-laity network is in the vanguard of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Rather than being impatient with the slow response to new spiritual truth, we need to accept and love people where they are, and devote ourselves to the creative activity of building resources for the future. There is much work to be done. A significant body of literature needs to evolve. Theological foundations have to be restructured. Hymns and rituals will require revision. New art, music, and drama should be created.

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*As people who love the church and long for its revitalization, we hope the progressive orientation of many members of mainline Christianity will enable the church to discover the enlightening and renewing message of *The Urantia Book* in a much shorter time than was required for the spiritual rejuvenation of religious institutions in the past.*

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While slow evolutionary leavening takes place in the old institutions, new religious institutions will no doubt emerge to carry the enhanced and enlarged spiritual insights of *The Urantia Book* to the world. As people who love the church and long for its revitalization, we hope the progressive orientation of many members of mainline Christianity will enable the church to discover the enlightening and renewing message of *The Urantia Book* in a much shorter time than was required for the spiritual rejuvenation of religious institutions in the past.

-MJS

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## The Gender Problem

Some of the perennial problems which men and women have in understanding each other are addressed in this issue of the Journal, including the sexist language of *The Urantia Book* and gender appellations of deity. Recent decades have witnessed two contradictory scientific-cultural gender developments:

- (1) Extensive scientific evidence indicates that men and women have different brain-mind capacities.
- (2) Strong educational-political contentions denying that such differences exist.

Anne Moir and David Jessel in *Brain Sex* point out, "There is solid and consistent evidence from scientists all over the world that a biochemical influence in the womb determines and directs the structure and function of our brains." (p. 180) They go on to say that not until we face the fact of who we are, and our unique capacities as men and women, will we be able to build solid relations in marriage and society.

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The *Urantia Book* authors harmonize these two contradictory views of gender in agreeing with scientific evidence that men and women have different view points and life reactions but maintain with the women's liberation movement that there should be social, educational, economic, and political freedom and equality of both sexes.

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The *Urantia Book* authors harmonize these two contradictory views of gender in agreeing with scientific evidence that men and women have different view points and life reactions but maintain with the women's liberation movement that there should be social, educational, economic, and political freedom and equality of both sexes. Men and women are essentially complementary: "...always will these two basic variations of humankind continue to intrigue, stimulate, encourage, and assist each other; always will they be mutually dependent on co-operation in the solution of perplexing universe problems and in the overcoming of manifold cosmic difficulties." (U. B. p. 939)

Hopefully, our culture will also learn to live with the fact that men and women have different mental and personality orientations and afford each sex the freedom and equality to contribute creatively to the solution of our many social problems. Such dual associations greatly increase the versatility and potential of humanity.

-MJS

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*Defining the Terms of Equality, contintued...*

"The apostles were first shocked by, but early became accustomed to, Jesus' treatment of women; he made it very clear to them that women were to be accorded equal rights with men in the kingdom." (1546)

If this is true, then much of the turmoil we have in our society over issues of equality is apparently an inevitable stage we must pass through if we are to emerge from barbarism to a truly civilized world. A significant portion of this issue of the *Journal* is dedicated to exploring how the insights of *The Urantia Book* can help us do this: affirm our equality before our Creator while also understanding, affirming, and appreciating our differences.

-Merly n Cox

## *Interface: Defining the Terms of Equality*

A friend once confided to me that she was dismayed by how much anger she saw in her female colleagues in the ministry. She was also concerned by their apparent need to shape their style of ministry around male models. The two concerns may be related.

It may be that the most significant sign of inequality in our society is that women feel compelled to judge their worth and compete for equality primarily on male terms, buying into a system based on assumptions that are inherently condescending.

This, I believe, is both futile and demeaning. I believe that it is demeaning for women in the ministry, for example, to feel they must define their ministries in terms of male role models. I can't help but feel that the great contribution of women in ministry will be muted by such expectations. If the respective domains of men and women overlap but differ, and if both domains are divinely ordained and reflective of the nature of the Creator, then the attempt to define worth in reference to only one of them will inevitably leave us impoverished.

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*The Urantia Book*, I believe, serves as something of a trumpet sound for the true equality of the sexes, while recognizing real differences in their psychological make up. This might sound surprising to some first time readers who find it's language "sexist" as we define it by this generation's standards. But the message throughout *The Urantia Book* is clear, consistent, and unequivocal: before God women and men are equal.

"Sex equality prevails on all advanced worlds; male and female are equal in mind endowment and spiritual status. We do not regard a planet as having emerged from barbarism so long as one sex seeks to tyrannize over the other." (564)

*The Urantia Book* suggests that one the most radical and daring things Jesus did was to commission women to teach the gospel and minister to the sick. (1678)

"The charge that Jesus gave...women as he set them apart for gospel teaching and ministry was the emancipation proclamation which set free all women and for all time." (1679)  
*(continued in left column of this page)*

## ***Issues and Answers:*** **Issues for thought and debate**

*Following are three articles dealing with an issue well introduced and titled by the first.*

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### ***The Urantia Book and Sexist Language***

Judith L. Mace

Have you looked into *The Urantia Book* only to put it aside because of the sexist language you found? Sexist language is nearly planetary in scope. Our society is struggling to develop inclusive or genderless words which reflect our increasing awareness of the impact of language on our conceptual reality. The authors of *The Urantia Book* recognize the limitations of the English language. "It is exceedingly difficult to present enlarged concepts and advanced truth, in our endeavor to expand cosmic consciousness and enhance spiritual perception, when we are restricted to the use of a circumscribed language of the realm. But our mandate admonishes us to make every effort to convey our meanings by using the word symbols of the English tongue. We have been instructed to introduce new terms only when the concept to be portrayed finds no terminology in English which can be employed to convey such a new concept partially or even with more or less distortion of meaning." \*(1:2)

"We are also seriously handicapped in the execution of our assignment by the limitations of language and by the poverty of material which can be utilized for purposes of illustration or comparison in our efforts to portray divine values and to present spiritual meanings to the finite, mortal mind of man." (33:3)

These statements and more than a few additional comments of a similar nature are expressed in the opening pages of *The Urantia Book*. Our language is not only a major handicap in accurate, loving communication, but is also hindering our spiritual growth. The authors of the book reflect upon our immature concepts of Deity and challenge us to enlarge our language and concepts of Reality.

"All too long has man thought of God as one like himself." (57:7) Heretofore, many on our world have viewed Deity as a stern male God with emphasis on judgment, appeasement, and atonement. Larger numbers of people each year are searching for religious and philosophical sources which include and honor a more feminine and humane view of ourselves and the cosmos. *The Urantia Book* offers this more mature vision as well as a more complete and authentic description of Reality.

This fresh and inspiring view stemming from evolution and revelation bears witness to the high value of the fruits of the spirit and encourages their practice. These qualities have

long been denigrated as feminine and yet sought after as the spiritual ideal. Throughout history women's practice of these virtues has awarded her the honorable status of spiritual leader and moral standardbearer of humankind. (938:8) The Women's Movement has called attention to this feminine aspect of the First Source and Center of all things and beings which has been covertly and overtly suppressed from development on our planet. The old Patriarchal perception of Deity no longer adequately describes our growing concept of God which includes not only the female and male aspects of reality, but vastly more.

The text of *The Urantia Book* makes it quite clear that a sexist culture is antithetical to spiritual growth. "Sex equality prevails on all advanced worlds; male and female are equal in mind endowment and spiritual status. We do not regard a planet as having emerged from barbarism so long as one sex seeks to tyrannize over the other." (564:7) "There is no error greater than that species of self-deception which leads intelligent beings to crave the exercise of power over other beings for the purpose of depriving these persons of their natural liberties." (614:3) Sexual tyranny has been, and still is, seen by many to be normal, good, and in keeping with God's will. In *The Urantia Book* we learn that sexism is a stage of planetary growth common to evolutionary creature development that is outgrown, along with militarism, in the ensuing eras when fairness and justice prevail. (594:2) For a variety of reasons, some of the deepest roots of sexism have grown in our religious soil.

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*The Women's Movement has called attention to this feminine aspect of the First Source and Center of all things and beings which has been covertly and overtly suppressed from development on our planet. The old Patriarchal perception of Deity no longer adequately describes our growing concept of God which includes not only the female and male aspects of reality, but vastly more.*

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Most of our religious traditions were written by and about men. This literature has served as divine authority for men to devalue, oppress and tyrannize women, children, each other and the planet. It has been a grave mistake to teach that these scriptures were sacred. All too often such teachings have resulted in the dimming of divine truths behind veils of prejudice, superstition, bigotry, ignorance, and intolerance. (1767:4, 1769:1) The power behind this grievous heritage is human pridefulness and selfishness; and one of the basic forces which crystallizes and perpetuates this behavior is our language.

"Language molds thought to a much greater extent than is generally appreciated. Every language enshrines its own reality, for the world is organized according to the manner reflected in the language. Hence, the best means to the

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understanding of the way in which other people think is through their language. Different languages do not merely represent different ways of labeling experience, but each language serves as a guide to reality, in that it is by means of its words and grammatical categories that order and meaning is given to the world of experience.”<sup>1</sup>

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*One of the most significant changes we can make to improve our spiritual condition hinges on expanding and improving our language.*

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Ideals are the apex of our intellectual and moral ideas. They are the basis of and impetus to individual and collective philosophy and behavior. They are transmitted and perpetuated by language. Our sexist language encourages our unconscious participation in a system of domination. One of the most significant changes we can make to improve our spiritual condition hinges on expanding and improving our language. We must take care in so doing not to throw out the good with the bad. Much of our literary heritage has value and, like *The Urantia Book*, suffers the misfortune of a sexist nativity. Its message and guidance must be sifted and gleaned out of the ashes of an obsolete language.

“The spread of civilization must wait upon language. Live and growing languages insure the expansion of civilized thinking and planning.... Today, there is great need for further linguistic development to facilitate the expression of evolving thought.” (908:6)

The unparalleled revelations of *The Urantia Book* are afflicted with our sexist language. The acceptance of these papers is seriously threatened by this offensive, inaccurate, and obsolete rhetoric. The book’s language clearly addresses males and not females. Doubtless, this is not the intent of the authors, but is the result of the historic patriarchy of our language. *The Urantia Book* was indited in the 1930’s to a world steeped in sexism. The authors used the then generally accepted generic use of male pronouns. The inaccuracy and exclusionism of the language either was not apparent, seemed the correct usage, or did not seem changeable. In all probability, if the revelatory papers had been given in the feminine gender, they would have been ignored, or changed immediately into the “right usage.”

The authors probably knew of the impending social evolution away from patriarchal language—undoubtedly they hoped for it. Yet, even if they knew when it would occur, their mandate required them to use “the language of the realm.” They did anticipate that whenever the change occurred, it would endanger the credibility of their work: “Accordingly, future students of such a revelation are tempted to discard any element of genuine religious truth it may contain because they discover errors on the face of the

associated cosmologies therein presented.” (1109:3) As it now stands *The Urantia Book* is burdened with sexist language, even though it far surpasses other available cosmological and spiritual literature.

### **Jesus’ Teaching Regarding Women**

“The most astonishing and most revolutionary feature of Michael’s mission on earth was his attitude toward women.... In one generation Jesus lifted women out of the disrespectful oblivion and the slavish drudgery of the ages. And it is the one shameful thing about the religion which presumed to take Jesus’ name that it lacked the moral courage to follow this noble example in its subsequent attitude toward women.” (1671:4, 5; 1840:4)

*The Urantia Book* affirms throughout that the First Source and Center blesses each being with unstinting love and eternal potential without qualification of any kind. No individual is favored over another in creation, nor is any location, mind or sexual differentiation more blessed than any other.

Jesus was adamant that women were as important to him, the universe, and The Creator of All as were men. He persistently accorded women respect and honor. (1839:2) He declared in many places and ways that women were treated abominably by men and that this resulted in a severe handicap for both sexes. (1984:7) His earliest experience with sexism left him appalled when he discovered that his mother was not allowed to sit with his father and him on the floor of the synagogue. (1377:2-4) In his public ministry Jesus formed a Women’s Corps to assist in the teaching and healing associated with his bestowal. (1679:1-3) Jesus went even further in his efforts to restore women’s dignity when, in sharing a few brief moments with Nalda, a battered woman, he told her exactly who and what he was. “This was the first direct, positive, and undisguised pronouncement of his divine nature and sonship which Jesus had made on earth; and it was made to a woman.” (1614:3)

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Such an attitude toward women was extremely unsettling to the men of his day, and these teachings of Jesus were omitted by apostles and others who composed the documents which now make up the New Testament. It is heartening to see *The Urantia Book* record many events and universal patterns that honor women and the feminine aspects of creation. For instance: (1) The first contact made by the Spirit of Worship with the first two human beings was with the female (709:6). (2) During the nefarious hours of the Crucifixion, when all

*The Urantia Book and Sexist Language, cont.*

but one apostle fled, betrayed, or denied Jesus, the women with him were openly loyal to the end (1680:2). (3) When Jesus completed his bestowal mission and earned the title of Sovereign of our universe, he declared a co-rulership with the Universe Mother Spirit (Holy Spirit). He “published to the worlds the fact of the Spirit’s equality with him in all endowments of personality and attributes of divine character.” (368-369:3)

### **Balancing the Feminine and Masculine Viewpoints**

There follows a passage declaring this act as the definitive pattern for all universe creature pair relationships. In light of this and the many thrilling and insightful discussions of human affairs, we see that the Women’s Movement, so recently and tardily initiated, is born of an evolutionary and revelatory imperative: we must balance the feminine and masculine influences in our culture if we are to continue growing socially and spiritually, and avoid catastrophe in human affairs. Any imbalance of these fundamental human viewpoints is incompatible with the outworking of the eternal patterns of development established by our Creator. To achieve this balance necessitates the development and establishment of the Urantian feminine aspects of the First Source and Center. Such reality validation requires linguistic growth and its resultant attitudinal change. No language can be considered universal and serviceable unless it is gender-inclusive or genderless. (807:1#10) It must clearly demonstrate that female and male viewpoints are equally sought after, valued, and acted upon.

One of the attending ramifications of linguistic growth will be the redefinition of every human tradition, institution, and cultural practice. None now embody more than a token of feminine philosophy. Nothing that is now considered great in any field can continue to be so called unless it is considered great by both women and men. Every field of human endeavor must be re-aligned or dismissed as obsolete if it does not reflect the joint creativity of the female and the male aspects of experience. The authors of *The Urantia Book* state that what women and men do in cooperation is far superior to what is accomplished by either working alone. (932:7)

Women are purposely created to view the world differently than men—not less valuably, differently. *The Urantia Book* assures us that the differences we describe as female and male will exist throughout eternity. ((938:1, 939:3) To arbitrarily value one viewpoint more than the other is to ignore the dialectical purposes of creation. Women and men were created as two distinctly different varieties—not two different values— of human beings.

Humanity is beginning to understand that changes in what we view as the purposes and goals of life is imperative. Traditional thought sees fulfillment in terms of the domination and possession of people and goods, and this has brought this planet to the brink of environmental, cultural and spiritual destruction. A conscious revision is emerging which is based on an increased valuation of accommodation, collaboration,

and the development of human resources. Changing the basis of society from material rewards to mindal, emotional, and spiritual rewards will necessarily cause cataclysmic upheavals in the current system. As culture swings from valuing having goods to valuing being good, intense suffering will result. The shedding of the old world order is causing extensive confusion, pain, withdrawal, and retaliation. The molting of these obsolete traditions allows us to embark on the thrilling pathway to harmony with ourselves, one another, and our planet. (43:4) Our planetary problems stem from many historic misadaptations and mistakes. But an important step in getting us back onto the spiritual path of development lies in supporting the evolution of both varieties of human beings into the divine patterns they were created to follow.

### **The Unparalleled Spiritual Quality of *The Urantia Book***

*The Urantia Book*—with all of its true, beautiful, and good insights, and its transcendent inspirations—is undoubtedly meant to be an integral part of the future. Organized religion can be of immense help if it continues to be progressive, flexible, and willing to allow intelligent criticism to guide it toward an active, responsive, spiritual consciousness. The church cannot prosper apart from the totality of human experience. (69:5) In the astute words of Eric Hoffer, “In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who will inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.”

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*The authors of The Urantia Book constantly lament, with varying degrees of frustration, the inadequacy and inappropriateness of our language. It is vital to improve our word-meanings, add to our vocabulary, and consciously create accurate and loving images with our words.*

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*The Urantia Book* urges us to follow truth wherever it leads, and to avoid crystallizing our mindal and spiritual environments. The most important function of the book is to improve the spiritual quality of our planet. Freeing women to be spiritual leaders, which is needed so desperately, is an important step in improving our spiritual condition. Freeing men from the energy loss of subjugating over half of the human race will enable them to discover and actualize their true potentials.

To obtain an increase of the fruits of the spirit, greater service to humankind, and a more intelligent worship of God, one of the first and most significant improvements we can make is in our language. Language is the most powerful exclusionary aspect of patriarchy—it created, and continues to create the images that are the patterns of our current behaviors and entrenches these patterns by teaching them to our children. The authors of *The Urantia Book* constantly lament, with varying degrees of frustration, the inadequacy and inappropriateness

of our language. It is vital to improve our word-meanings, add to our vocabulary, and consciously create accurate and loving images with our words. Language is the major key to our transcendence of spiritual barbarism. Truly, the pen is mightier than the sword.

### The Need to Revise our Language

“The spirit of religion is eternal, but the form of its expression must be restated every time the dictionary of human language is revised.” (1087:3) Currently we seek a new word to call God, one which is designative of our new vision. In *The Urantia Book* we learn that the names of the Creator are many and varied throughout the universe and that the First Source and Center is never revealed by name. (22:4-23:4)

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*In the last sentence of The Urantia Book, the authors write that at that time the Father concept was the highest available imagery to describe God to us. This is not to say that it is the only, nor the best description for every person.*

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Changes of language are difficult to make. “Jesus sought to substitute many terms for the kingdom but always without success. Among others, he used: the family of God, the Father’s will, the friends of God, the fellowship of believers, the brotherhood of man, the Father’s fold, the children of God, the fellowship of the faithful, the Father’s service, and the liberated sons of God.” (1861:6) In the last sentence of *The Urantia Book*, the authors write that at that time the Father concept was the highest available imagery to describe God to us. This is not to say that it is the only, nor the best description for every person. They are acutely aware, and we are learning to be, of the progressive nature of our religious growth. In the 60 plus years since the book was transmitted, radical changes have occurred in our culture and one can justifiably suggest the authors might now choose another concept.

The history of theology has progressed, via the joint ministry of revelation and evolution, from worship of natural phenomena, through worship of idols and even humans, into a concept of familial relationships with various divine personalities. We are once again embarking on a metamorphosis to a more accurate and enlarged vision of our Creator and the cosmos. The “watchword of the universe is *progress*.” (54:5) As we mature spiritually our conceptual framework and theology must mature with us. The crystallization of physical, mindal, and spiritual concepts is the equivalent of death. (1120:5)

The linguistic scholars of the world can be of great assistance to humankind by providing us with new words to embrace our new concepts. One such scholar, Professor Probal Dasgupta of the University of Hyderabad in India,

has responded to this need by offering the word *Primum* for God, *Secundum* for the Eternal Son, and *Tertium* for the Infinite Spirit. These word-titles are fresh and gender-free.

Gender-free words for titles and terms of endearment which allow people to access a closer and more loving contact with the Creator of All would be a helpful development. If and when a word is a deterrent to the spiritual growth of any person, there is no intelligent or loving justification for insisting that this individual use that word. Professor Dasgupta has further suggested the following use of gender-free pronouns: *te* for she/he; *ter* for his/her; and *tem* for her/him. Uncapitalized, even in reference to Deity, such words are not hierarchical and, if in constant use, would change our gender imagery. It is an interesting suggestion to start us thinking about healing our gender problem.

It should go without saying that change and its accompanying move out of comfort zones is not a hallmark of humankind. Yet, such discomfiture is no excuse for rejecting a trial of a viable system of improvement for those who are motivated. All growth involves discomfort and is evolutionary in nature. Our personal communication with divinity is extremely powerful in effecting change in us, and, with an acute perception of the caliber of the problem facing us, perhaps we can generate the courage to try new words and thereby open new vistas of conceptual growth. Remembering that what we call *Primum* is more important to us than to *tem*, can we meet the challenge? “The act is ours, the consequences” *Primum*’s. (556:2#11)

\*Numbers in parenthesis in text indicates page and paragraph in *The Urantia Book*.

(The following list of passages from *The Urantia Book* (page:paragraph) will aid a true seeker to turn the stumbling blocks of sexist language into stepping stones leading to enlightenment: 9:5; 40:4; 58:1; 60:3-61:1; 501:1; 746:8 - 749:3; 744:1 - 778:8; 835:5 - 836:7; 1220:2 - 1221:8; 1288:2 - 1289:2; 1471:2; 1546:3; 1580:9 - 1581:5; 1603:6 - 1605:2; 1730:7 - 1733:5; 1916:2 - 1917:3; 1921:6 - 1923:2; 2065:2)

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<sup>1</sup> Montagu, Ashley, *Man: His First Two Million Years*, p. 131

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*Judith Mace is an artist, writer, and long time student of The Urantia Book.*

## GOD LANGUAGE

Meredith J. Sprunger

The term most generally used to designate Ultimate Reality on our world is “God.” The name used for God varies with experience and culture. The First Source and Center of all things and beings is not revealed by name but by nature. The name given this Ultimate Reality is of little spiritual importance. The significant thing is that we should know this Spiritual Presence through personal experience and strive to replicate this reality in our lives.

Any name which human beings give to God must, to some degree, be understood metaphorically, for finite knowledge and language cannot encompass the infinite. These metaphorical expressions, nonetheless, contain truth, and generally are authentic finite (obviously partial and limited) descriptions of Reality. They may facilitate or distort the conceptualization of truth, but we should ever remember that the essence of personal revelation is an encounter with God in a personal relationship. Language is not the master, but the servant of revelation. God language may become “worn”, but a loving relationship with the most real person in the universe can only get better.

### Language is Rooted in Experience

The names we give to God are derived from our knowledge and experience of God. The central attributes associated with the nature of God in Western Culture are: spirit, infinity, perfection, limitlessness, personality, justice, righteousness, mercy, truth, beauty, goodness, and love. The most basic attribute associated with God’s relationship with human beings is love. H. Richard Niebuhr in *The Meaning of Revelation* says that our axioms in relation to God are “certainties about fundamental, indestructible relations between persons.” The highest objective of God language, therefore, is to select terms which connote divine love in personal relationships.

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God as a person is most effectively described and understood through our knowledge and experience of personal relationships. Our earliest and most influential experience of love comes from the persons who nurtured us during the formative years—usually family members. For most of us, therefore, the most touching and meaningful metaphors for God are parental/family appellations. They are the best metaphors to express our personal relationships with God.

Certainly those whose predominate experience with fathers, mothers, or family has been negative should feel free to use names for God other than those that have parental/family connotations. Many of us have resented the patriarchal evils

of our culture and patriarchal or matriarchal domination in our families. But we still conceptualize and idealize the role of wise and loving parents and good families. We should strive to eradicate autocratic patriarchy from our culture and arbitrary patriarchy and matriarchy from our families. It would be a great mistake, however, to allow these distortions of parenting to eliminate parental/family metaphors for God.

### The Problem of Gender

A further complication in determining God language is the problem of gender in human experience. Men and women are different but complementary types of human beings. They probably will never completely understand each other, but can work effectively together in common projects. The masculine values tend to dominate primitive civilizations and situations requiring the control of chaotic or critical conditions. The feminine values predominate in higher culture civilizations and social situations requiring nurturance, understanding, and peaceful relationships. Women and men are different but equal human beings in the eyes of God. This equality is only beginning to be recognized in our social, economic, and political structures of civilization. Among the many changes needed in our culture, developing a nonbiased gender language is important.

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*The activities of Deity, as we understand them, sometime appear to be feminine-like and at other times masculine-like. It should, therefore, be natural for us to use both masculine and feminine metaphors in our reference to God.*

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The activities of Deity, as we understand them, sometime appear to be feminine-like and at other times masculine-like. It should, therefore, be natural for us to use both masculine and feminine metaphors in our reference to God. It should be clear to all with even a modest degree of spiritual maturity that gender references to God do not refer to human sexuality or other aspects of human finitude. It is at this point that we have widespread disagreement in our society.

Theologians like Mary Daly (*Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation*) assert that reference to God as “Our Father” originates “in human imagination” and “castrates women.” Ruth Duck (*Gender and the Name of God*) observes that gender connotations are so ambiguous that parental metaphors for God should not be used. On the other hand, W. A. Visser’t Hooft (*The Fatherhood of God in an Age of Emancipation*) declares, “We cannot eliminate fatherhood from the gospel without destroying its very meaning.”

Underlying the entire gender problem is the issue of power. Recognizing the equality of women and men is only a beginning step in correcting the imbalance of power in our society. Living in the heritage of a patriarchal civilization, men still wield the major sources of overt power. The feminist movement is systematically challenging this disparity of

influence. Not until we no longer experience the arbitrary male dominance of power will the struggle to control God language abate.

### **The Place of Revelation**

Those who accept Jesus of Nazareth as Lord believe he had a unique and authentic knowledge of God. The central purpose of Jesus' bestowal mission was to bring a more complete revelation of God to humankind. Jesus chose the term "Father" to describe God's nature and relationship to each individual. Scholars differ in their interpretation of Jesus' use of abba (daddy) and pater (father) in referring to God. The exact meaning of "abba" in Jesus' day, and the use of "father" in the Judaism of the first century A. D. are matters of scholarly debate.

In the context of Jesus' teaching about God, however, there is little doubt that the Heavenly Father he referred to was a loving, understanding, and compassionate God, not a distant, harsh, or authoritarian Deity. There are 170 references in the four gospels in which Jesus refers to God as "Father." Clearly, he thought parental metaphors best described God's relationship to human beings.

Why didn't Jesus speak of the Motherhood of God? First of all, we must remember that he lived in a patriarchal society that would hardly have understood or tolerated such a reference to God. Judaism had a long struggle with the fertility and mother goddess cults of the Levant. Jesus used concepts which would communicate with the people of his day. Nevertheless, he treated women and men as equals and spiritually emancipated women from the patriarchal culture of his day. And Jesus did use Mother imagery in referring to divine ministrations: "O Jerusalem...How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Lk. 13:34).

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### **The Spiritual Need for Motherhood Concepts**

There has been a recurring expression of the need for the motherhood concept of God in history. The Gnostics spoke of the Motherhood of God. Mary, the mother of Jesus, has been looked upon as an intercessor. St. Anselm of Canterbury, Julian of Norwich, Jürgen Moltmann, and others have referred to God as Mother. Students of *The Urantia Book* will recognize that other aspects of the First

Source and Universe Center appear to be mother-like in nature. The original IAM of existence which is the source of the Seven Absolutes of Infinity might be referred to as our Ontological Mother. The Holy Spirit is designated as the spiritual circuit of the Universe Mother Spirit and angelic personalities are referred to with feminine pronouns. It is time for our religious culture to inculcate and familiarize our society with concepts recognizing the mother-like aspects of God: the Motherhood of God, the Parenthood of God, and the Family of God should become natural expressions in our God language.

### **In Brief**

In summary, we observe that the names we use for God are determined by our knowledge, experience, and culture. There seems to be a consensus that parental and family appellations for God best describe the experience and preference of the majority of people in our culture. It is unfortunate that some traditionalists and some feminists attempt to coerce others to use the God language they prefer. Both sides find theological and religious reasons for their preferences. It is much better to allow each person the spiritual freedom to select their own analogical and metaphorical expressions for God that coincide with their experience. Indeed, we should encourage creative spiritual imagination to enrich our God language.

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*The Rev. Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger is a United Church of Christ minister and college professor and administrator, now retired. He is author of Spiritual Psychology, A Primer, and serves as editor of The Spiritual Fellowship Journal.*

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"To 'follow Jesus' means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master's life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it." (2090:4)

## THE GODDESS

Gard Jameson

*This paper is taken from an address given to a group of Unitarian Universalists.*

To speak of God as *She* in today's society is regarded as either brazen feminism or the deliberate reformation efforts of religious liberals. However, the tradition of the feminine aspect of divinity has a long history. From Ameratsu and Cannon in Japan, to Quanyin in China, to Tara in Tibet, to Shakti in India, to Akua'ba in Africa, to Isis in Egypt, to Ishtar and Astarte in the Middle East, to Demeter, Aphrodite and Venus in Greece and Rome, to the Great Goddess of Willendorf and Laussel, to Freya in Scandinavia, to Spider Woman and Ixchel the Weaver in North America, the Divine Mother has a long tradition in the history of the planet's consciousness. It appears that from approximately 40,000 BCE to approximately 5,000 BCE the Goddess was the primary deity figure. Over 90% of the figurines found from this period appear to be of a female goddess.

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*Our planet has a need to reinstate a sense of the "Goddess" within its understanding of the divine; the nurturing principle of the female is needed to help guide our way through the maze of accelerated change which surrounds us.*

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Our planet has a need to reinstate a sense of the "Goddess" within its understanding of the divine; the nurturing principle of the female is needed to help guide our way through the maze of accelerated change which surrounds us. I would submit to you that many of our problems arise as a result of looking at God only as *He*, the *He* who *appears* to initiate holy wars and conquest. As the Taoist, Buddhist or Hindu would tell you, without the Divine Feminine Principle incorporated into one's concept of the Godhead, you have only told, at best, half the story regarding the divine nature; you have fallen short of a full appreciation of the divinity within and without.

The "feminine principle" is viewed by the traditions of the East as the principle of birth, transformation and rebirth, the nurturing and sustaining influence in the universe. In the Taoist world view, the feminine principle is the responsive nature of the universe in juxtaposition to the "male principle" which is the proactive and initiating nature of the universe. The male principle initiates action and movement; the female principle nurtures and is responsive to those actions and movements.

Our current world view is out of balance, and the world scene reflects that lack of balance. The patriarchal world view has dominated Western Culture for the last seven thousand years. The aggressive concepts of a Patriarchal God have

been responsible for tremendous initiative in the history of the West, but they have lost the respect of many for not inspiring a greater sense of responsibility and nurture for our planet earth.

The traditions of the West have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that they are not ecologically responsive and responsible. They have at best tolerated, and at worst espoused, political and social behaviors which have violated the planet. The results are all around us: the polluted skies, earth, and ocean attest to this gross lack of responsibility, along with the absence of an attitude of care necessary to heal our sick planet. The Goddess, in contrast, is the caretaker, and by neglecting her within ourselves and the cosmos, we have moved into a state of disequilibrium where our relationships to ourselves and to the planet are in disarray. People who have been guided by the defensive and exclusive characteristics of a jealous Patriarchal God have promoted the distinctions and differences amongst the people of the world. Such distinctions and differences can lead to disastrous results if not balanced with the promotion of sensitivity and understanding that leads to a celebration of differences, an appreciation of distinctions. Two North American traditions — Ixchel and Weaver from the Mayan culture, and Spider Woman from numerous American Indian cultures, — attempt by their efforts as weavers to bring integration to the great diversity of life.

Within the analytical tradition of Carl Jung and the work of mythologists such as Joseph Campbell, there is much evidence to support the existence of the feminine principle (anima) within the human psyche alongside that of the male principle (animus). Jung's definition of spiritual growth within the individual in large part relates to the development and integration of those male and female components of the human psyche.

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*The patriarchal world view has dominated Western Culture for the last seven thousand years. The aggressive concepts of a Patriarchal God have been responsible for tremendous initiative in the history of the West, but they have lost the respect of many for not inspiring a greater sense of responsibility and nurture for our planet earth.*

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The Eastern religious traditions have for millennia observed that if you fail to show respect to the female principle within and without, the results can be awesomely destructive. The figures of Kali and Camunda personify that sense of danger. With vast arsenals of nuclear weaponry at our fingertips, it is past time for the female principle to re-emerge and take her position as coequal along side Yahweh, Allah, and the Lord God.

The Goddess image surrounded the planet for well over 35,000 years to about 5,000 BCE, when her position descended like the goddess Persephone into the deep earth, the home

of Hades. Around that time we observe the ascendancy of the male gods—Zeus, Indra, Yahweh, and Thor. There are numerous theories as to why this shift in religious tradition occurred. I choose not to speculate about these theories. Rather, I choose to ask whether in that shift something of value was lost to humanity? In Greek mythology, not until the goddess Peresephone was returned from the kingdom of Hades did the earth restore her health. It was the winter of the earth's history according to the myth. We are still caught as a planet deep in the winter of our history. We should seek after the lost Peresephone and restore her to her Divine Mother so that our planet may find its wholeness, following not only the guidance of the Great Father, but also the Great Divine Mother Spirit.

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*I invite you to welcome the feminine image of God, the Goddess, back into your life. Feel her presence within you, allow her to turn the winter of your existence into a creative and life-sustaining spring.*

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I invite you to welcome the feminine image of God, the Goddess, back into your life. Feel her presence within you, allow her to turn the winter of your existence into a creative and life-sustaining spring. As we allow the Goddess to re-emerge in consciousness, her compassion and wisdom will begin to enfold us. She will gradually reveal herself in all of her simplicity and complexity. As we spend time recognizing and worshiping the Divine Parent who embodies and integrates both the feminine and masculine aspects of reality, we will come more and more to embody this unified wholeness in our consciousness and action. The Sacred Feminine is capable of greatly assisting in the fulfillment of our existence as a people and as a planet.

May the holistic reality of this Divine Parent within you bless you, sustain you, and create new life within you.

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*Gard Jameson is a Certified Public Accountant and teaches comparative religion at the University of Nevada.*

“The modern age will refuse to accept a religion which is inconsistent with facts and out of harmony with its highest conceptions of truth, beauty, and goodness. The hour is striking for a rediscovery of the true and original foundations of present-day distorted and compromised Christianity—the real life and teachings of Jesus.” (2083:2)

## INTERFAITH COULD BRIGHTEN FUTURE FOR OUR WORLD

Sue Tennant

Recently in Chicago, at the *Parliament For The World's Religions* (a historic centenary celebration of the Interfaith Movement), I saw the possibility of a brighter future for religion, the Christian Church, and our world.

6,000 religious enthusiasts from all parts of the globe, representing some 126 religions, gathered under one roof at the Palmer House Hilton. The scene was colorful to say the least. Not present were the hopelessly indoctrinated and closed-minded. Some, however, may pay a price for their progressive openness. One Mormon friend became progressively concerned during the Parliament that he would be “excommunicated,” simply because of his exposure to other religions. Another Sufi friend knew his television interview would invite untold controversy. Yet courage and curiosity prevailed. People wanted to break away from the familiar, to experience the democracy of spiritual liberty, equality, and respect for religious differences.

In the interfaith context, huge demands are made on the participants, but all became more than they could be with only their own kind. The unprecedented religious diversity in Chicago was a large context indeed. Minds were stretched, concepts grew, and so did understanding, respect, even love. The atmosphere was electric! In over 800 major presentations, lectures, seminars and workshops, common themes were repeatedly shared by diverse religions. The spirit of God indwells each of us; since this spirit comes from the same Source, we really *are* brothers and sisters, one human family. The *desire* to serve and the *power* to love all humanity comes from the indwelling spirit of God. Love and service to the human family are always the spiritual fruit of real religion. A Sikh Dharma International sign read, “My God and your God is our God. If you can't see God in all, you can't see God at all.”

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*Love and service to the human family are always the spiritual fruit of real religion. A Sikh Dharma International sign read, “My God and your God is our God. If you can't see God in all, you can't see*

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It should not surprise students of *The Urantia Book* that the Spirit has been busy upstepping all religions. The enlightened thinking expressed at the Parliament was clearly centered in the Spirit of Truth. Since this Spirit of Truth was poured out upon all humankind, sincere seekers, through personal faith experience, are nurtured by this globally pervasive ministry

*Interfaith Could Brighten... cont.*

within their own cultures. Truth is living and dynamic. Theology and dogma only partially symbolize its power, and no culture has any monopoly on it.

The religions of the world agree that they have a critical task ahead—to spiritually unite for the very practical emergencies which face the world today. But only the *globally minded* religionists are in tune with how serious the situation is. The goals are to end violence, restore the environment, educate a global citizenry, stabilize population growth, ethically guide technology, fairly distribute the world's resources, and promote equal rights, to mention only a few. The prerequisite to such co-operation is *spiritual unity*. Spiritual unity results when diverse groups actively share common goals but not necessarily the same thinking. Necessity demands invention and our world's necessities have become so complex, that we need abundant inventiveness. Yet it is diversity, not uniformity, which feeds creativity and releases a variety of solutions. In the Spirit of God, all solutions born of unselfish intentions, are efficiently harmonized to produce progress. To do what religion does best, it must be free and affirmed, so that it can inspire that moral factor in the community which restrains self-interest in favor of the whole.

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*The prerequisite to such co-operation is spiritual unity. Spiritual unity results when diverse groups actively share common goals but not necessarily the same thinking.*

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With this in mind, the Parliament underscored, for me, the great privilege of the Fifth Epochal Revelation and the enormous responsibility that goes with it. Because of the enlarged concepts and facts revealed in *The Urantia Book*, students have been given a rare and thrilling education, one which compels readers to include all of humankind as the children of God, and to place the highest priority on Jesus' command to work for the spiritual well-being of the whole planet. All religions play an important role in the cosmic realization of the sovereignty of God, and all must eventually enter into the process of mutual respect and interdependence. The Christian Church, with its impressive organizational resources, could rapidly globalize its peace-making ministry if it were to so globalize its thinking. As facilitators of compassionate appreciation and collaboration among independent religious traditions, Christians could become the global peace-makers of the twenty-first century.

Unfortunately, I know few *Urantia Book* readers or members of the Christian Church today who are willing to give their lives to a global movement. But if all of us could understand the interfaith synergy, the transcendent power of diversity, experienced at the Chicago Parliament, we might rally to a sense of mission badly needed in the church and throughout our culture. Is it conceivable that individuals and

groups in the various religions of the world might summon the insight, humility, and courage to learn from other faith traditions and work together for a better world? I believe the hope of humanity rests on the strong shoulders of such pioneers.

The many religions of Urantia are all good to the extent that they bring man to God and bring the realization of the Father to man. It is a fallacy for any group of religionists to conceive of their creed as *The Truth*; such attitudes bespeak more of theological arrogance than of certainty of faith. There is not a Urantia religion that could not profitably study and assimilate the best of the truths contained in every other faith, for all contain truth. Religionists would do better to borrow the best in their neighbors' living spiritual faith rather than to denounce the worst in their lingering superstitions and outworn rituals.

All of these religions have arisen as a result of man's variable intellectual response to his identical spiritual leading. They can never hope to attain a uniformity of creeds, dogmas, and rituals—these are intellectual; but they can, and some day will, realize a unity in true worship of the Father of all, for this is spiritual, and it is forever true, in the spirit all men are equal. (U. B. p. 1012)

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*Because of the enlarged concepts and facts revealed in The Urantia Book, students have been given a rare and thrilling education, one which compels readers to include all of humankind as the children of God, and to place the highest priority on Jesus' command to work for the spiritual well-being of the whole planet.*

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The multifaith resources in large North American cities are rich indeed. The world has dramatically changed in just a few decades and the concept of "neighbor" has expanded to include the whole community of religions. A new vision of interfaith collaboration, a unity of purpose, not uniformity of thinking, could give the Christian Church an appeal and relevance it badly needs. If we will expand our context and heed the call of a global mission, one that will serve to create a spiritual brotherhood and sisterhood for all God-knowing people, then I think the beginning of the next stage of the *kingdom of heaven* on earth is within this generation's grasp.

*Sue Tenant attended Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology. She is a former Toronto publicist and author of Crossing Cultures in Business. She is presently Director of the World Interfaith Education Association.*

## WHY SOME MINISTERS DON'T READ *THE URANTIA BOOK*

Larry Austin

Almost everyone who discovers the astounding wealth of truth in *The Urantia Book* is highly motivated to share the book with others. Church members frequently show the book to their minister in the hope that he or she will discover in its pages the amazing richness of spiritual insight which has inspired them.

The reader may give the book to the minister without explanation or personal comment hoping that the Spirit of Truth will inspire open-minded receptivity. Sometimes the book is given to the clergy person along with pamphlets, guides, Concordex, Paramony, and a personal testimony of its high spiritual quality. Either too little or too much introductory information may jeopardize a positive response to the parishioner's invitation to take a look at this imposing volume. In any case, the minister will probably be on guard when examining a book claiming to be new revelation.

Endeavoring to temper enthusiasm, be objective, and give prudent advice, the layperson may recommend reading the book from front to back, start with the life and teachings of Jesus, or examine the book randomly as interest dictates. Whatever approach is used to intrigue the pastor into a serious examination of its contents, the reader does so with great anticipation. As time passes there is anxious speculation as to what the minister's judgment will be.

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Typically, there will be no response for some period of time. Perhaps even a half year will transpire, and then the minister finally returns the book with a "thanks, but no thanks" rejection. Sometimes the pastor will make still more critical remarks, referring to the book as unchristian or a work of the devil, and will admonish the parishioner to have nothing to do with it. The minister's observations clearly indicate that he or she has read very little of the book. The parishioner, who so enthusiastically and lovingly placed this unique book in the hands of the minister, experiences disappointment, dejection, and in some cases, deep hurt. Some people take the minister's disinterest or rejection as a personal attack on their value judgment, and a calloused insensitivity to their exhilarating discovery of enlarged revelatory truth with its intrinsic transforming power.

This joyous reader, now changed to a despondent sharer, wants to know why the minister will not read the book—not just any book, but *The Urantia Book*—which the reader regards as a most special compendium of revelatory knowledge. When asked why, some ministers will state the real reasons with a sincere sense of pastoral authority guided by a particular theological viewpoint. Others will give superficial answers to conceal their real reasons for rejecting the book.

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*For many ministers when first introduced to the book, its size and weight are too intimidating for them to consider taking the time to read it.*

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I came across *The Urantia Book* in 1968 while in college, and then began a short teaching career after graduating from the seminary, and before entering the Christian ministry. In this pilgrimage I have personally experienced some of the usual ecclesiastical reasons for laying the book down and rejecting its contents as a revelatory resource. As a reader and minister who now reads the book faithfully, I have wrestled for years to understand why for long periods of time I did not read *The Urantia Book*. I have loaned or given the book to some of my clerical colleagues for their perusal in the hope that they might accept it as a valuable theological and spiritual resource. But, in fact, most reject it! Or, if not rejecting it outright, they simply do not read it. As a result of sharing the book with others in my profession and having it returned to me with a polite, chagrined refusal to examine it closely, I believe I have been able to identify several specific reasons why some ministers perceive the book as not worth their time.

One of the simplest reasons why some ministers don't read *The Urantia Book* is that it is too long—2097 pages. One look at its size, and ministers determine that there is not enough time in their daily schedule to give the book even half-a-chance at a fair reading. Sometimes when the book is placed in their hands and they feel how heavy it is—about five pounds—they will hand it back. For many ministers when first introduced to the book, its size and weight are too intimidating for them to consider taking the time to read it.

Many decide against procuring a copy because it is too expensive and troublesome to acquire. Even more troubling is information about authorship. If they are told that authorship is anonymous, or that it was written by supermortal beings, they reject the book out of hand—especially if they are told the book purports to be new revelation.

In some cases, ministers have heard about the book before a reader presents it to them. They may have read about it in Larson's *Book of Cults* or may have seen it in a bookstore among the occult or New Age books, which in

*Why Some Ministers Don't Read..., cont.*

their experience suggests inferior quality. In such instances, when the book is shared with them, they ignore it without a second thought. They assume they know it contains false and dangerous teachings, and question the credibility of the person recommending it.

The above reasons are simple and straightforward grounds for not reading *The Urantia Book*. Other reasons for ministers not reading it involve more sophisticated explanations to account for their negative judgments based on a cursory examination of only some of its parts. Examining the book by reading here and there, some ministers claim that it is too much like a textbook, and that many of the unfamiliar words are difficult to pronounce, making it hard to read and enjoy. They dismiss the book's content as high-minded ivory-tower talk. Other ministers, after a hasty and scattered reading, assume that it is a work of gnosticism, syncretism, or mysticism. In short, ministers who give the book superficial consideration, and try to classify it according to the theological knowledge they possess, usually see it as a heterodox or even a heretical document.

Some, who have read a few of the pages more closely and discovered a clear critique of the dangers of institutional religion, cast the book aside because of its criticism of clerical authoritarianism and dogmatism. Certain other ministers look at the book to investigate its teaching on particular doctrines, such as the atonement, the rapture, or the resurrection. If they find the book's ideas are contrary to their own theological positions, they reject it and often warn the one who presented it of the dangers of its teachings. Still other ministers leaf through the book and read random samplings of such stories as Andon and Fonta or the rise of the Sangik races and become disenchanted with the book's presumably outrageous, fictionalized narratives. On the basis of these stories, they assume the book lacks authentic substance and dismiss it from their minds.

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*Many ministers, however, who spend some significant time with the book, find it interesting, edifying, and provocative. Since the book claims to be revelatory, they are confronted with the upsetting question of what their colleagues in ministry might think of them if they were to find out about their reading such an unorthodox book.*

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Many ministers, however, who spend some significant time with the book, find it interesting, edifying, and provocative. Since the book claims to be revelatory, they are confronted with the upsetting question of what their colleagues in ministry might think of them if they were to find out about their reading such an unorthodox book. To protect their careers, they never mention the book to their peers; or out of fear and a sense of guilt, they stop reading the book until a safer time. In one case, a wife was so angry

at her husband for being fully immersed in *The Urantia Book* that she gave him an ultimatum: either the book or the marriage, not both. He chose the marriage and sent the book back to the reader who had introduced it to him.

Occasionally, a few philosophically-minded ministers determine that the book's philosophical orientation in some parts tends to be Platonic or Kantian, and since their own philosophic viewpoints may be Aristotelian or Kierkegaardian, they dismiss the book as irrelevant.

Some ministers will disavow the validity of the book because a favorite miracle story, such as Peter walking on the water, seems to be discredited. Others will be disappointed that a miracle story, such as the feeding of the five thousand, is verified. Some will lay the book aside after reading about the nature of the Trinity or the Creative Mother Spirit because it differs from the literal Biblical picture. Others will criticize the book for its reference to God as the Universal Father because they regard such references as sexist. Ministers can find a multitude of reasons for not seriously evaluating the *The Urantia Book*. They miss one of the greatest opportunities for spiritual enlightenment and growth available to this generation.

In summary, some of the reasons why many ministers don't read *The Urantia Book* are: a lack of energy, time, and motivation; fear of heresy, change, and criticism; and uncertainty about the book's authorship, orientation, and language. It takes a hunger for truth, courage, commitment, honesty, and humility to read this imposing document. It requires attentiveness and concentration to discover the basic foundations which underlie the sometimes complicated, but always forthright, teachings contained in its 196 papers.

Once we are wholeheartedly dedicated to evaluating the book on its internal merits—assessing its message of truth as it relates to our inner spiritual experience—a new vision of reality will open and an explosion of enthusiastic wonder and joy will startle the mind and expand the heart with spiritual insight that brings forth a marvelously dynamic understanding of who we are and what our destiny is. If you are a minister, take a bold faith-risk and read *The Urantia Book*. *Your life will never be the same!*

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*The Rev. Dr. Larry Austin is a Presbyterian minister in the Detroit area and founder of Day Spring Ministries, which provides Church Consulting, Pastoral Care, and Educational services. .*

# Writing Styles of Papers in *The Urantia Book*

Ken Glasziou

*The Urantia Book* purports to be a revelation given to mortals by celestial beings. When first introduced to the book, I assumed it had been written by a committee of well-meaning academics on a save-the-world mission. On becoming more familiar with the content of the book, I was impressed not only by the quality and consistency of its message, but also noticed material of a scientific nature that could only have been guesswork at the time the papers were received. It did not make sense that a group of obviously knowledgeable and talented authors would risk jeopardizing acceptance of their work by including contentious prophetic material, particularly since the book could easily have earned recognition as a philosophic and religious work of great merit.

There have been suggestions that various single authors wrote *The Urantia Book*—Dr. William Sadler, Wilfred Kellogg, Carl Jung, H. G. Wells, and Robert Millikin being among those named. There are many ways in which investigators have attempted to verify or refute the authorship of documents. For example, the Epistles attributed to Paul in the New Testament have long been a subject for investigation. One of the methods of investigating authorship is based on style analysis, as authors tend to stamp their personal idiosyncrasies on documents they write. A method that was used to examine the Pauline letters was based on the number of sentences having zero, one, two, or more occurrences of the Greek word “Kai” (Morton, 1965).

Recent advances in computer technology and the existence of excellent search programs have made possible the investigation of even lengthy works. The methods which I used to investigate *The Urantia Book* were largely dictated by the convenience of statistical facts which could be extracted from a database of the book.

The method chosen was to determine the number of occasions sentences commenced with a particular marker word, a method used by Mosteller and Wallace. The words chosen were: “how,” “when,” “and,” “but,” and “this.” A second study also used marker words described by Mosteller and Wallace<sup>1</sup> as function words, such as “also,” “an,” and “by.”

## The Method

Using a Folio Views search program, in combination with a *Urantia Book* database, will give the frequency of occurrence and position of any individual word in the entire book, the frequency and location of combinations of words in a paragraph, or the frequency and location of phrases in paragraphs. For example, to find a phrase such as “son of God,” the search command must be enclosed in inverted

commas, otherwise one obtains paragraphs in which all three words occur, but not necessarily as a phrase. This same method is also used to obtain the frequency and position of the occurrence of words that start or end a sentence. To locate sentences commencing with a particular word, one searches for a period followed by a space, then the required word. To find sentences that end with a particular word, the word followed by a period is adequate.

The Chi Square distribution was used for all statistical testing. This statistical technique gives a level of significance or probability (P) that a relationship does or does not occur by chance. A 0.1% probability level indicates that there is less than one chance in 1000 that the two comparisons being made are drawn from the same sample. In other words, a 0.1 % level of significance indicates that there is less than one chance in a thousand that the two samples had the same author. The 5% level is usually accepted as indicating a significant difference.

Initially, an approach was made to ascertain if there was a style difference between Parts I, II, and III, taken as a whole, and Part IV. The reason for this choice is that the papers in Parts I-III claim to be written by celestial beings, whereas the authors of Part IV are said to be “midwayers”—personalities not far in advance of human beings. When this analysis indicated that the two components were indeed significantly different, the research was extended to test each of the parts separately, some individual authors, and two additional studies.

It has been proposed that Dr. Sadler was capable of writing the scientific material describing the early history of the earth (Papers 57-62), the in-depth account of religion and theology (Part I and Papers 99-107), and Part IV (The Life and Teachings of Jesus). The second study was undertaken to investigate whether these papers were indeed written by a single author. In this case, marker words suggested by Mosteller and Wallace such as “an,” “also,” “upon,” “by,” “there,” and “this,” were used to test this hypothesis following procedures suggested by Kenny.<sup>2</sup>

A third study was conducted using a sample of Dr. Sadler’s writing, “The Evolution of the Soul,” a 1946 public lecture of about 6,000 words.<sup>3</sup> After eliminating verbatim quotations from *The Urantia Book*, the text was examined using a style analysis computer program (Readability Plus).

## Conclusions

When tested by use of the Chi Square distribution, the hypothesis that the Foreword, Parts I, II, III, and IV are all distinct works was highly significant for the words “when,” “where,” “and,” “but,” and “this.” No sentences in the Foreword commenced with the word “how,” but the use of sentences commencing with this word indicated that Parts I, II, and III were distinctly different from Part IV. Parts of the book attributed to Divine Counselors, Life Carriers,

*Writing Styles..., cont.*

Melchizedeks, and a Solitary Messenger were also found to be distinguishable.

The second study showed that Papers 57-62 differ from Papers 99-107 (P=0.010); Papers 57-62 differ from Part IV (P=0.001); Papers 99-107 differ from Part I (P=0.01); and Papers 99-107 differ from Part IV (P=0.001). These results show that the postulate of a single authorship for various combinations of this material is not supported.

The study comparing Dr. Sadler's lecture, "The Evolution of the Soul," with *Urantia Book* material clearly differentiated two distinct writing styles on the basis of sentence structure (P=0.005), sentence length (P=0.05), and the Flesch Reading Index (P=0.05). Besides indicating that Dr. Sadler did not write *The Urantia Book*, the results of this investigation add another dimension to the task of demonstrating claims that human agencies may have compiled *The Urantia Book*. It now becomes necessary also to offer a rational explanation on how the involvement of so many outstanding individuals in such a major task could have been kept totally secret over a period exceeding fifty years. A further problem is how the remarkable consistency of the material found in this book could be maintained by multiple human authors (or even a single author) working well before the days when computer search programs and data bases became available.

[Addendum: An additional study has been completed in collaboration with my son, Paul, a medical graduate with a Ph. D. in mathematics and statistics, who suggested that it would be possible to apply these same techniques to compare writing styles for single authors who are named as the writers of multiple papers in the book. A search of the index of *The Urantia Book* indicated the likelihood that at least five of the authors named had contributed four or more papers. This enabled a study to be made that included the variability between papers by the same author as well as variability between authors. This study has clearly distinguished between all five of the selected authors.]

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<sup>1</sup> Mosteller, F. and D. L. Wallace. "Applied Bayesian and Classical Inference. The Case of the Federalist Papers." Springer Verlag, New York, 1984

<sup>2</sup> Kenny, Anthony. *The Computation of Style*. Pergamon Press Ltd., 1982

<sup>3</sup> Sadler, William S. *The Evolution of the Soul*. Ayers Foundation, 1941, Good Cheer Press, 1990

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## *Psalms Today*

Help me, O God, to discern your will in the alternatives which confront me.

Your way is the process undergirded by eternal reality; yours is the Supreme pathway which prevails, even through defeat.

Guide me in the way everlasting; orient me as I stumble and fumble in my finite pilgrimage.

Deliver me from the deceptions of self-will and the illusions of generalization whereby I misconstrue your guidance for my decisions and pathway of service to also be your directions for others.

Enlarge my understanding of the complexity of universe reality; and teach me the values of pluralism in your kingdom.

Illuminate my spiritual insight so that I may understand that those working on alternate and conflicting courses of the dialectical nature of truth and service may each be following authentic aspects of your larger plan.

Lead me on the path of wisdom.

In my impatience I am tempted to short cut the evolutionary process of change and pressure the natural course of development.

Continue to teach me that good ends are not achieved through arbitrary, exploitive, or unethical means.

Open my awareness to the beauty of balance and the ugliness of extremes.

Your spirit of love speaks through personal contact and the fellowship of small groups.

Keep my soul warm with the personal touch.

I thank you, Heavenly Father, for your never failing guidance.

Your love is great, beyond measure; because of your indwelling presence, my life is filled with purpose and joy!

(70)

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*Culture and Values*

**Gender Differentiation in *The Urantia Book***

Byron Belitsos

*(This column is an excerpt adopted from a research paper which will be published by the Fellowship of Students of The Urantia Book.)*

Although *The Urantia Book* has many references to sex differences, we should like to direct the reader's attention to the following quotation for discussion in this column.

Each sex has its own distinctive sphere of existence, together with its own rights within that sphere...women's rights are by no means men's rights. Woman cannot thrive on man's rights any more than man can prosper on woman's rights...

Civilization never can obliterate the behavior gulf between the sexes. From age to age the mores change, but instinct never. Innate maternal affection will never permit emancipated woman to become man's serious rival in industry. Forever each sex will remain supreme in its own domain, domains determined by biologic differentiation and by mental dissimilarity.

Each sex will always have its own special sphere, albeit they will ever and anon overlap. Only socially will men and women compete on equal terms. (*The Urantia Book*, p. 938)

In the longer research paper, we have considered possible definitions of "domains determined by biologic differences..." and the more controversial issue of "domains determined by...mental dissimilarity." If we continue to follow the thread of the Book's argument about sex differences, we now arrive at a concept of gender even more controversial—the notion of complementary but distinctive "spheres" of gender-specific activity, along with an exclusive set of undefined rights belonging to each sphere. Whether you agree with it or not, this appears to be *The Urantia Book's* master concept of gender.

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One may ask whether it is wise to confer upon this terse theory of sexual spheres the status of "pure revelation." Some will argue that it represents only the highest point of evolutionary thought in the 1930's; others will accept it as the last word on the issue. I prefer to treat any sociological statement in the Book as a working hypothesis and an indispensable starting point. In this column, I treat the spheres theory "as if" it is revelation. I believe that the burden of proof for an alternate view should fall to the reader.

Let us turn to exegesis. Note the use of a three-dimensional spatial metaphor—"spheres of existence." Apparently, Creator design has reserved for each of the sexes a substantive "gender-world"—an expansive realm in which it "reigns supreme."

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*Note the use of a three-dimensional spatial metaphor—"spheres of existence." Apparently, Creator design has reserved for each of the sexes a substantive "gender-world"—an expansive realm in which it "reigns supreme."*

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We observe that these gender-spheres are not merely conditioned by biology and psyche; they are "determined" by inherent physical and mental characteristics. What guidance do the revelators give us concerning how to recognize woman's distinctive sphere? Literally speaking, it seems there are only two passages: one on moral and spiritual leadership, and one on "spheres of charm and grace."

In constructing the first of these, it appears that the revelators ranged far and wide in the written record of planetary thought in search of "a highest existing human concept" that might apply. The result is a fragment from an 1865 poem by William Ross Wallace, a minor poet of the nineteenth century who was a close friend of Edgar Allen Poe. The poem is entitled, "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle Is the Hand That Rules the World," and the original stanza is as follows, with my italics added:

Blessings on the hand of woman!  
 Angels guard its strength and grace,  
 In the palace, cottage, hovel,  
 Oh, no matter where the place;  
 Would that never storms assailed it,  
 Rainbow ever gently curled;  
 For the hand that rocks the cradle  
 Is the hand that rules the world.

These lines appear to be translated into the following passage, one of the most vivid in the entire Book:

Women seem to have more intuition than men, but they also appear to be somewhat less logical. Woman, however, has always been the moral standard-bearer and the spiritual leader of mankind. *The hand that rocks the cradle still fraternizes with destiny.* (U.B.p. 938) [Italics added]

*Gender Differentiation, cont.*

She leads in spirituality and in upholding moral standards. This is the domain in which she has reigned supreme. Does she still? The revelator's next move is a leap to the concept of her instinctive mother-love. Yes, the mother of the species gives birth to, and "fraternizes" with, the child's destiny. Of course, *fraternize* is a weaker term than Wallace's sentimental notion of "ruling" the world. Still, this passage presents a strong image of leadership.

Let's not ignore the previous context of this line. We can also see in this cogent passage a connection between what *seems* to be a mental dissimilarity—"more intuition" and "less logic"—and the sphere in which she reigns supreme. The use of "however" strongly implies that moral and spiritual leadership do not require logic so much as intuition; in contrast to logic activities more specific to the male sphere.

In the final analysis—and this is key—women's right to leadership in the moral/spiritual domain is derived from her motherhood, and the biological and mental capacities that accompany it. As the poet Wallace would have it, this supremacy is symbolized by her nurturing hand, whose "strength and grace" is guarded by angels.

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The distinguished anthropologist Ashley Montague argues this case in his beautiful book, *The Natural Superiority of Women*, especially in a chapter entitled, "The Genius of Woman as the Genius of Humanity":

The maternalizing influences of being a mother have, from the very beginning of the human species, made the female the more humane of the sexes. The love of a mother for her child is the basic patent and model for all human relationships. Indeed, to the degree to which men approximate in the relationships with their fellow men the love of the mother for her child, to that extent do they move more closely toward the attainment of genuine humanity. (p. 182)

For Montague, this mother-love is paradigmatic of the highest form of human love. Men participate in this love as a child, but increasingly depart from it as they leave childhood behind. Because of their "greater competence" in loving and cooperative relationships, women are naturally superior to men in the moral and spiritual realm. Indeed, Montague concludes the argument with an allusion to Wallace's famed poetic line!

It is in this of course, that women can realize their power for good in the world, and make their greatest gains. *It is the function of women to teach men how to be human.*

Women must not permit themselves to be deflected from their function by those who tell them that their place is

in the home, in subservient relation to man. It is indeed, in the home that the foundations of the kind of world in which we live are laid, and in this sense it will always remain true that the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world. (p.183)

As Montague points out here and throughout the book, men's historical response to this natural "rule" of women in the sacred work of creating human beings is tragically reactionary. In its most extreme, it drastically exalts the male sphere—the cold object-world of industry, the brute logic of the market, the violence of the battlefield—over the spiritual values of the home and the spiritual benefits derived from mother-love.

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Professor Camille Paglia, writing in *Sexual Personae*, provocatively argues that this vindictive seizure of power was motivated by man's primitive terror of woman's procreative powers.

Male bonding and patriarchy were the recourse to which man was forced by his terrible sense of woman's power... Reason and logic are the anxiety-inspired domain of Apollo, premiere god of the sky-cult. The Apollonian is harsh and phobic, coldly cutting itself off from nature by its superhuman purity.... Apollo's great opponent Dionysius is ruler of the chthonian whose law is procreative femaleness. (p. 12)

On its positive side, male Apollonian reason produced the material and cultural achievements of Western civilization; its negative manifestation was an all-pervasive, oppressive patriarchy.

Patriarchy acted out its fear and disdain for female power, not only by devaluing it as a realm of "soggy emotionalism and bristling disorder," in Paglia's terms, but by invading woman's domain in order to control it with Apollonian logic. This violated her basic rights. A great imbalance was set up, since Apollonian abstraction seeks to cut itself off from feeling and intuition.

Reactions and counter-reactions have followed throughout the history of the sexes. The most secular variant of ideological feminism reacted to patriarchy by adopting the assumptions of Apollonian reason. In one rendition, it has exalted the values of careerism and of the marketplace over the values deriving from the mother-child bond. Montague sees this as a colossal error.

But if women ever come to believe that...being a mother is somehow inferior to being a career woman, they will have betrayed themselves, and reveal how profoundly they have been brainwashed into accepting the mythology that males have imposed upon them. For the truth is that being a mother is the most important career anyone can be called upon to follow. (p. 187)

*The Urantia Book's* presentation is more subtle, however, than this formulation. The Book recognizes that woman's work at home—conveniently delegated to her because this is where her children are—is nothing less than domestic drudgery.

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At least this was so before the industrial revolution. In the section on “Women Under the Developing Mores,” the author celebrates the fact that science has “emancipated woman.” The modern factory set women free from “the confines of the home.” Material progress has tended toward “women's liberation from domestic slavery.” These passages clearly distinguish the material requirements of home maintenance from the moral and spiritual challenges of child-rearing, which *do belong* to woman's sphere and her sexual constitution.

In addition, this *material* liberation has opened up another distinctive quality of her sphere, according to the Book:

Once a woman's value consisted in her food-producing ability, but invention and wealth have enabled her to create a new world in which to function—*spheres of grace and charm*. Thus has industry won its unconscious and unintended fight for women's social and economic emancipation.(U.B. p. 937) [Italics added]

Here's a puzzling passage for feminists concerned about equal pay for equal work. Woman's “economic and social emancipation,” won by industry, does not automatically lead her *into* industry to compete for equal terms with men as an emancipated woman. Rather, it enables her to create a new and quite separate world of, shall we say, enchantment and elegance. *This* is what industry unconsciously aimed at in its “unintended fight.” This is the evolutionary gain that “even revelation failed to accomplish.”

Spheres of charm and grace...Bilingual beauties spotted in uptown cafes after a long day of translating UN speeches? Future Madonnas enchanting millions with erotic spectacles? Southern belles in lace waiting for their beaux? A wife whose simple smile at the door is the only memory her husband has of the previous day? A quivering poetess who holds the world spellbound with transporting

images of spiritual beauty? Delighted mothers tossing beach balls with laughing children on a spring afternoon while their men ride jackhammers at work? A superbly dressed docent leading tourists through a Degas exhibit at the Louvre? Grandma's rhubarb pie cooked to perfection just arriving at the Thanksgiving dinner table while the extended family of 18 looks on?

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I will leave further definition of “spheres of charm and grace” to others. But the benefits that mother-love confer on civilization are well understood to all who have enjoyed healthy relationships with their own mothers.

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*Byron has been a journalist and television producer and is presently a consultant in the telecommunications industry.*

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“To ‘follow Jesus’ means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master's life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.” (2090:4)

“Modern religion finds it difficult to adjust its attitude toward the rapidly shifting social changes only because it has permitted itself to become so thoroughly traditionalized, dogmatized, and institutionalized. The religion of living experience finds no difficulty in keeping ahead of all these social developments and economic upheavals, amid which it ever functions as a moral stabilizer, social guide, and spiritual pilot.” (1088:1)

## On Elbows and Equality

*Sermon based on Ephesians 5: 22-23: "Wives, be subject to your husband as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church."*

Of all the texts of Scriptures that strike controversy, I suppose none are more so than those verses we heard from the fifth chapter of Ephesians. You might recall that this is the same lesson that was read last week. In looking it over and considering the topic for preaching I was delighted to pass it up in favor of the Gospel lesson which seemed so appropriate in regard to recent events. Then one of you came up afterwards and said, "That was OK, but I'd like to hear you speak on that text from Ephesians some time."

Well, normally the next scheduled round for that text would be three years from last Sunday, so I could pencil it in for then. But then I also couldn't see any reason for not going back and picking up on it. While I believe in the value of using a lectionary, I also consider it more as a guide and reasonable discipline than a law from which one never varies.

So, with some reluctance, I decided to explore this text with you—some reluctance, because, quite frankly, being single I'm somewhat reticent to speak about marital relationships with the same authority as some other matters. (Although I'm not sure that married people can necessarily speak with much authority either.) On the other hand, Paul was single, and he wasn't reluctant—apparently favoring inspiration over experience. I figure I can at least comment on Paul's observations.

I don't think Paul is above criticism, even if his words are now a part of Scripture, and I'll explore this. But I also think that there may be some unexpected insights if we give him a fair hearing. So before you either applaud or walk out upon hearing this text, I hope you'll consider it with me.

The crux of the controversy comes down to this verse: "Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord; for the man is the head of the woman, just as Christ is also the head of the church. Christ is, indeed, the Savior of the body; but just as the church is subject to Christ, so must women be to their husbands in everything."

*Are you still there?* How are we to talk about this?

It will be helpful, I think, to remember the kind of world Paul lived in. For Jews in the first century, being a woman meant being a second class citizen in about every respect. It was indeed a male dominated society. Girls were given very little education unless it was in the home. They were not accepted in the synagogue school as boys were, let alone given the chance to go to the advanced schools of the rabbis in Jerusalem.

In a society dominated by religious custom and regulation, women were clearly on the periphery. They were excluded from the main courts of the synagogue as well as those of the temple. They were required to stay in the balconies or outside the main courts. They were not even allowed to take part in the discussions of the elders regarding religious questions and the interpretation of the law. "Better," said the rabbinic teachings, "that the words of the law be burned than delivered to women."

Paul was simply following this tradition when he suggests it is unseemly for women to be involved in public meetings. It is a shocking thing, he said, that woman should address the congregation. If there is something they want to know, let them ask their husbands at home.

But even this hardly suggests the low esteem in which women were generally held:

- No self-respecting man would ever speak to a woman in public; he wouldn't even greet his own wife in public.

- Women were not allowed to sit with men in public banquets.

- The witness of a woman was not considered valid in a court of law.

- Many people were still not sure if women had souls.

- The pharisee in his daily prayers would often give thanks to God that he was not born a woman, a leper, or a gentile.

All this was not peculiar to the Jewish people, of course, it was rooted in thousands of years of the evolution of the human race. Since men were nearly always physically stronger and more aggressive, they dominated the relationship, at least in public.

For ages women were considered the property of the man to do with as he pleased, including the right to kill her at will if he became angry. Did you know that in some South American countries today it is still considered acceptable, with the courts simply looking the other way?

In many agricultural societies woman were little more than beasts of burden doing most of the labor, and that is also still true today in many places. The role of women in the gross national product in many third world countries exceeds that of the men by far. We may have "come a long way baby," but there's still a long way to go.

When I was in Egypt, my guide pointed out that the emancipation of women took place there in 1923, when wearing a veil was outlawed. She pointed to the fact with pride. However, in the most rural areas, as well as many parts of Cairo, you still see women completely covered in black, even on the hottest summer days, the residue of their Arab customs. And has it really been that long since women were finally given the vote in this country?

The least we can say is that the Jewish attitude toward women in Jesus' day was not that different from other countries, and probably superior to most.

Paul, being a pharisee of pharisees, was thoroughly conditioned to such ideas. If you're offended by the text from Ephesians, read again I Corinthians 11: "If a woman is not to wear a veil she might as well have her hair cut off.... A man has no need to cover his head, because man is the image of God and the mirror of his glory, whereas woman reflects the glory of man."

Further: "...man was not created for woman's sake, but woman for the sake of man. Therefore it is a woman's duty to have a sign of authority on her head, out of regard for the angels."

*Are you still with me?*

I'm sharing this so that on the one hand we might realize the kind of world in which Paul was raised, and therefore also consider just how radical Jesus' attitude was toward women.

*With Jesus came the true emancipation proclamation of women.* It has been said, and I think fairly, that the most radical thing Jesus taught and demonstrated was his attitude toward woman.

Most of his teachings about love, and even Fatherhood of God, were not without parallel in the Jewish tradition; these were simply raised and focused to new heights and given the sanction of divine authority. But with regard to woman the change was radical and dramatic.

Jesus offended the sensibilities of every male and the traditions of the elders by unself-consciously speaking with women in public—the most dramatic example being, of course, when he spoke with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well.

As a teacher he accepted the company of woman in his presence and he honored their questions, and he honored their faith by granting requests for healing. There is a significant part of the story of Mary and Martha we often miss. Mary's inquisitive nature about religious matters was rewarded while Martha's traditional role in the home was given second place.

You may also recall that the Gospels indicate that the first resurrection appearances were to women, apparently reason enough for the male disciples to remain skeptical.

Early on women were allowed into the core of teachers and evangelists and leaders of the church, Paul's attitudes notwithstanding. The early church became a crucible and testing place for woman's liberation.

Do we need to point out the prominent role of women throughout the history of the church since, right up to today, even though the structures are still male dominated?

And we still continue to wrestle over whether or not women can minister on a level equal to men?

*Are you still with me?*  
Fall, 1993

Was Paul, then, simply expressing his own prejudice and that of his day when he admonished woman to be subject to their husbands in everything? I think so, at least in part.

Elsewhere, on similar matters, Paul says that when he is speaking about such things he is not speaking on behalf of Christ, but has simply been given permission, as it were, to speak on his own. In other words, he's not trying to claim divine authority for his views on all such matter.

A couple of more things can be said. Going back to the passage from Ephesians, the statement that women should be subject to the man is prefaced by this statement: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ," and more, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for it.... In the same way men are bound to love their wives as they love their own bodies. Each of you must love his wife as his very self." (Ephesians 5)

I recall some time back a friend talking with me about her relationship with her husband, and she said "I simply demand that he love me unconditionally. I demand it, *and he gives it.*" And their relationship is, I believe, an exceptional one.

Here, I think, is a key. It may be mainly the momentum of evolution and tradition that suggests that man be the head of a household (I suspect it is). But if this so, it may therefore, for that reason alone, be something couples need to consider for the sake of harmony. If both are aware of this and understand it, then let them arrange their own lives with freedom and grace and equality.

Paul's concern was how to bring peace and harmony in the church, how all Christians should strive to live in harmony. The whole letter of Ephesians is about how people ought to live at peace with one another, beginning with the family unit of man and wife.

*So where does this leave us?* Are men and women equal or not? And what does this mean? It seems to me that equality as persons does not mean equality in every endeavor and role in life.

Let me give an example. A few years ago when the woman's liberation movement was coming to the forefront, I heard a speaker say that a woman could do anything as well as a man could—regardless. To that I took issue. First of all, it simply isn't true. It may be that in most endeavors some women can match or even exceed the performance of most men, but *on the average* a woman will not be as able to do some things as well as men.

There are studies that indicate, for example, that the shoulder and elbow of the female is shaped somewhat differently that a man's and is not as well adapted for throwing. That doesn't mean that a female pitcher can't strike out a whole side of male hitters, it just means that *on the average* they will not throw the ball as hard. *On the average* they are not as tall and fast and can't dunk a basketball as easily as men.

*On Elbows and Equality, cont.*

(Does that mean that woman's sports is less valuable than men's?)

Her point was not only untrue, it was irrelevant. It does not get at the issue of *meaningful* equality. Men *on the whole* do not have the instincts for family and nurture that women have. Does that mean that men are incapable of nurturing and affection and the appreciation of family values?

Different roles do not necessarily mean inequality. Isn't it more to the point that both men and women should be free to pursue roles that they are comfortable with, in the home and outside the home, without the prejudice of society saying, "No, you can't."

It seems to me the thing that really counts is equality as persons, and that means equality before God. And in light of the Gospel, I believe one thing is absolutely certain, and that is that men and women are equal before God, and therefore equal in all matters relating to the the kingdom of God—period.

Hasten the day when this is simply assumed and we can affirm and celebrate our differences without degrading the other (something both sides are good at), and can allow each to pursue their own lives to the maximum, and in maximum harmony with each other.

It is the same Paul who, more inspired I think, said that there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ. *You can't get a more radical statement of equality than this.*

If this has not been fully realized in society and in the church, then it simply reflects, on the one hand, our backwardness as a civilization, and on the other, our shame as a church in failing to live up to Christ's teachings.

Should the man still be the head of the household? In light of this knowledge, you decide— *with grace and freedom and the assurance of equality.*

**Let us pray:** Eternal God, Mother and Father of us all, may we come to know ourselves and all others as your dear children. May we rejoice to know them and celebrate their gifts and their place in your family—as you have shown us, in Christ our Lord. Amen.

-Merlyn Cox

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## Urantia Book Resources

The rich mine of universe knowledge and spiritual wisdom found in the 2097 pages of *The Urantia Book* tends to overwhelm the reader with its encyclopedic profusion. A detailed table of contents helps make the book manageable, but one soon realizes that reference tools are needed to find information hidden in its pages.

Clyde Bedell (1898-1985), a widely recognized author and speaker in the field of advertising, over many years compiled an index-concordance of words, concepts, ideas, topics, and themes found in *The Urantia Book*. He published the first edition of the *Concordex* in 1971. The third edition came out in 1986 and has over 110,000 references. The *Concordex* is an indispensable research tool for finding passages and studying topics in *The Urantia Book*.

*The Urantia Book* reader also discovers information in many sections of the book which parallels Biblical material. Numerous young friends of the editor did not become interested in the Bible until they read *The Urantia Book*. The two books are mutually enhancing. Recognizing this close relationship, Dr. Duane L. Faw, Professor of Law emeritus of Pepperdine University School of Law, spent six years compiling a parallel and harmony of *The Urantia Book* and the Bible. The *Paramony* was published in 1986 and contains 25,000 cross-references revealing the similarities and differences between the facts and concepts of these two great books. Dr. Faw has been a teacher of adult Bible classes for 40 years and a certified lay speaker in the United Methodist Church for over 25 years. The *Paramony* is an essential reference tool for studying relationships between *The Urantia Book* and the Bible. A long time scholarly reader of *The Urantia Book* describes the *Paramony* as, "a well-structured volume, indispensable for those engaged in serious hermeneutics, particularly of the gospels." The *Concordex* and *Paramony* can be purchased from The Good Cheer Press, P. O. Box 18764, Boulder, CO 80303.

An exhaustive *Urantia Book Concordance* was published by the Urantia Foundation in 1993. If you local bookstore does not carry *The Urantia Book* or *The Urantia Book Concordance*, they can be orderd from the Urantia Foundation, 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614. The Urantia Foundation also publishes French, Spanish, and Finnish editions of *The Urantia Book*.