

Summer 2017
A publication of *The Urantia Book Fellowship*



So
Many
Worlds
to See!





2017 Fellowship International Conference

The Fellowship International Conference—IC17 is shaping up to be bigger, better and different from previous Triennial International UB Conferences! The dates will be July 19-23, 2017, with 2 pre-conference retreats starting on July 17, so put it on your calendars and spread the word!

Denver is the city we have chosen which is centrally located in North America with a big airport and cheap airfares. **The University of Denver campus** will be the site for our 2017 International Conference. DU provides a beautiful, economical, central location, with RTD light-rail which stops right in front and also travels to the airport, downtown, and to many attractions around Denver. There are plenty of extra lodging and dining choices very nearby, including camping with yurts and cabins as well. So no matter how you prefer to travel and stay, there will be options for everyone.



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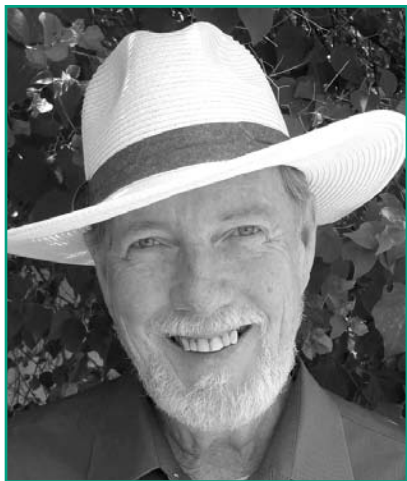
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URANTIA SPRING



By Joshua J. Wilson
Tempe, AZ.

FOUR URANTIA MOVEMENT SEASONS SO FAR

This historical essay contains a prophecy, or if you prefer, likely trends of a Urantia movement future of soul-satisfying and God-revealing potentials. If this interests you, and you don't like to read a lot of history and verbiage, you may go directly to part four. However, I think you'll get more out of it by reading from here.

We are encouraged by Jesus to view history, and the "now," and the future as a cycle, a whole. Cosmically minded persons report a sense of each moment as connected in a whole of time and experience.

Primitive man lived and died amid chaos—no event seemed related to anything else. Anything could happen, and he worked diligently over the millennia to wrest some sense and meaning from life.

Next, thinking man describes his life events and history as moving along a timeline—linear thinking. This helps him somewhat to grasp a picture of trajectory, of motion, but offers little toward the ability to attach actual meanings and values to the unfolding of segmented, seemingly disjointed successive events.

Ascending, progressing man is blessed with an enlarging view of cycles, related cycles, even perfectly related cycles within a whole.

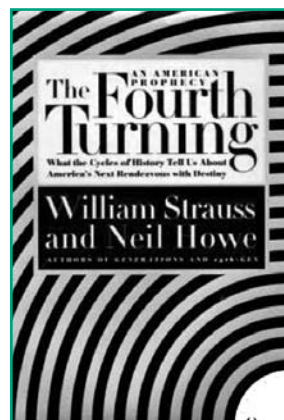
Although the cycle is displayed below, for convenience, as a spreadsheet, do not allow yourself to view it like a long tickertape of continuous numbers and dates. Rather, keep in mind the image of a clock, or tree rings, or the Earth orbiting the Sun, or a cross dividing four quadrants of concentric circles like the Truthseeker's pendant, or the Celtic cross. This will help you to view these events as

recurring, repeating cycles. Winter is welcomed here in the Southwest, and we're always happy when the hot summer is past. Each season of the year has its special offerings, and we look forward to them with anticipation. We all but forget the past seasons until they cycle around again. Spring will return. This is a comfort to us all.

Two men, William Strauss and Neil Howe, discovered and developed *Generational Theory*. They have analyzed 500 years of Anglo-American history and have found that it repeats in specific characteristic patterns every 80 to 85 years (equivalent to a long human life span), comprised of four generational periods, or seasons, of 20 to 22 years each, similar to the four seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter. You can read about it here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strauss-Howe_generational_theory

One of their books, *The Fourth Turning*, analyzes and discusses the current period, the fourth of four seasons that the United States is now experiencing, and compares our time with all eighty-year periods going back to the beginning of the U.S. as a nation. The echoing patterns of history are compelling.

This essay analyzes the history of the Urantia movement within an 85-year span—from 1939 to the present—based on the model of the four seasons, on the Archetypes (Prophet, Nomad, Hero, and Artist), and the Moods (High, Awakening, Unraveling, and Crisis and Opportunity).



Season	Archetypes	Mood	Years	Significant Events
1. Spring	Prophet (Idealist)	High	1939–1960	The “seventy” is formed; founding of Foundation and Brotherhood; first printing of the book
2. Summer	Nomad (Reactive)	Awakening	1961–1980	Growth of study groups and societies; restrictions on name, symbol, promotion, and quoting
3. Fall	Hero (Civic)	Unraveling	1981–2002	Snowmass Conference; Family of God Foundation peaks; disenfranchisement, law suits, resignations; new Foundation trustees appointed
4. Winter	Artist (Adaptive)	Crisis & Opportunity	2003–2024	Surge in translations and international presence; Youth Committee of Fellowship begins; cooperation between Fellowship and UAI and “?”
1. Spring	Prophet (Idealist)	High	2025–	The institution-building future

FIRST SEASON

Spring. Prophet (Idealist). Mood: High; 1939–1960

The key figure in this period was initially Dr. Lena Sadler. Her patient was the contact personality for the Urantia papers. She believed that the revelation was



authentic, and it was Lena who collected the first funds to print the book. She and her husband, Dr. William Sadler, had been personally prepared for decades by studying psychiatry abroad, ministering to the sick, teaching, and writing, and conversing with beings from other spheres—all before the first paper came through.

The heading “Prophet” as used by Strauss and Howe

is not meant to apply here in a direct sense; but it was the Sadlers’ *idealism*, complemented by the support of many “soldiers of the circles,” that energized the pivotal early efforts to bring forth the Revelation. During this season, or generation, the study group of the Seventy was formed, the Urantia Foundation and the Urantia Brotherhood were created under Dr. William Sadler’s supervision, and *The Urantia Book* came into print. The mood was high, very high, as the teachings of celestials were finding their way

into the hands of individual students around the world, study groups, and the first new societies.

Strauss and Howe describe this generation as a time when,

“institutions are strong” and the group “is confident about where it wants to go,” although those “outside the majoritarian center often feel stifled by the conformity.”

This seems an appropriate insight, as the defining characteristic of this period in the Urantia movement was indeed the formation of Urantia institutions. If Egypt had kept to the one-God concept, it could have been the location of Michael’s seventh bestowal. No doubt other



persons were considered for their role besides the Sadlers. It is the divine purpose in historical cycles that is essential, not the places or persons.

Dr. William S. Sadler, MD
(Credit: *Urantia Book Historical Society*)

SECOND SEASON

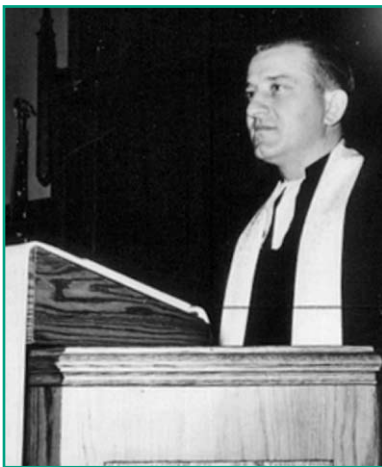
Summer. Nomad (Reactive). Mood: Awakening; c. 1961–1980

In nature, summer is the time of greatest sunshine and substantial growth. Farmers and the animals of field and forest are on the move. We are awake. The fruits that budded in the Spring now require constant attention. In the Urantia movement many new study groups and societies came online. There were regional conferences and special study sessions. Secondary works were published, and leaders were learning how much effort is involved in translating the Book into other languages. But gatherings were also occurring that were not completely under the purview of the new institutions.

Attempts were made to somehow control these individuals and small groups in various ways, including asserting the ownership of trademarks for the word “Urantia” and the symbol of three concentric circles of blue on white. Both the institutions and the individuals/small groups found themselves going into reactive mode.

Strauss and Howe describe a Reactive generation as follows:

“This is an era when institutions are attacked in the name of personal and spiritual autonomy. Just when society is reaching its high tide of public progress, people suddenly tire of social discipline and want to recapture a sense of self-awareness, spirituality and personal authenticity.”



Dr. Meredith Sprunger was a significant voice during this Awakening period. He was a Christian minister and college president who came to know the Sadlers as a result of his sincere interest in the Revelation. Meredith embarked on a decades-long project of sharing it

with the Christian community, and served closely with the movement in a number of posts.

As part of this awakening, Dr. Sprunger advocated greater openness:

The more open phase of our work will begin when we effect a more structured plan integrating activities and communications among all study

groups and societies along with techniques and encouragement in finding and attracting people, who are ready, to *The Urantia Book*.

The more open phase of our work will begin when we work systematically in colleges and possibly later in theological schools in a quiet, conservative, objective, and largely personal contact of students and organize study groups in college communities.

(<http://urantia-book.org/archive/history/doc250.htm>)

Toward the end of this period, due to their mutual interest in college ministry, Dr. Sprunger corresponded with the young Vern Grimsley.

THIRD SEASON

Fall. Hero (Civic). Mood: Unraveling. c. 1981–2002

In 1981 the international triennial conference of readers was held in Snowmass, Colorado. I and many others felt like heaven had come down to earth. We had a Revelation and the happy, shining people of God to share it all with. A most inspiring preacher, Vern Bennom Grimsley, was the keynote speaker. Vern had a radio broadcast in all fifty states and some stations outside the country, as well as on the Armed Services radio network.



He fit the definition of a hero archetype, and this made matters all the worse when things went badly for him, and us.

Vern began receiving “messages” and warned, in apocalyptic terms, of the soon outbreak of World War III on American soil. At first many thought, “Maybe he’s on to something. Maybe he knows.”

After all, it had not been that many years since the Cuban Missile Crisis. It did not take long for many in the movement to think it over and then turn away; and when the predicted war did not occur, Vern’s Family of God Foundation and his radio ministry collapsed.

The Urantia movement had swallowed whole something it simply could not digest. In times past, when a grave policy decision loomed, the early leaders could arrive and pronounce that the midwayers or some celestial persons had spoken, and that promptly closed the matter. But in 1983 this sort of leadership style did not fly. The members of the Contact Commission had all died. That

was then, this was now. The movement had to determine whether “messages” were now the way of guidance or not. And they decided against.

In this period the Teaching Mission came under the same scrutiny, for the same reasons. Their key belief was that the case against Lucifer had been adjudicated and completed, which would mean that the planetary communication quarantine had been lifted, thus opening the way for transmissions from supernal beings to be received.

This season was indeed an unraveling. The community was hit with a twofold punch. Vern Grimsley was lost as a charismatic and inspiring, successful leader on the very brink of even greater strides. And Martin Meyers, Foundation trustee, contributed to a dysfunctional Foundation governance, harassing a number of creative individuals and organizations. The atmosphere became exceptionally acrimonious, and the result was that the brotherly relationship between the Foundation and the Urantia Brotherhood was shattered—the Brotherhood was de-licensed and disenfranchised, largely over trademark issues . . . and who knows what else. Readers in France resorted to photocopying the French translation of the Book to keep their readership supplied, as if it were the underground days of the French Resistance. The copyright of *The Urantia Book* was lost to the Foundation, and came into the public domain after extended and costly legal battles.

David Elders, then president of the Fellowship, welcomed attendees at the 1990 International Conference at Aspen, Colorado, the largest conference up until that time. Mo Siegel brought in singer-songwriter John Denver for a fabulous evening concert, where John sang live, in duo with Russian singer and counterpart, Alexander Gradsky, who was on recorded video. The moving selection was “Let Us Begin (What are we making weapons for?)” <https://youtu.be/IOXzigSimKg>

The first Urantia scientific symposiums were held. The premier website Truthbook.com came online during these years. *Urantia Book* Fellowship conference attendance peaked in 1996 at a wonderful gathering at the university campus in Flagstaff, Arizona. In this Hero era, thirty-two Planning Committee members worked for three years in preparation for the conference under the direction of Janet Farrington as IC96 Conference Chair. A fun, full-fledged 1940s style Country Fair was enjoyed. But conference attendance lessened in the years following.

Mo Siegel and Gard Jameson, members of the Fellowship’s Executive Committee, became Urantia Foundation trustees in 1998, and they with the other

trustees and staff set about unwinding the many and messy difficulties of the Foundation and setting it upon a better path. Mo brought considerable social and business acumen to the fore, and Gard brought a spiritual sensibility gained from his experience and depth of religious insight. Not all were immediately pleased with the direction and policies of the Foundation Board of Trustees, but gradually goodwill began to replace discord. Successful translation efforts grew considerably.

Strauss and Howe describe the Unraveling generation in these terms:

“The mood of this era is in many ways the opposite of a High: Institutions are weak and distrusted, while individualism is strong and flourishing. Highs come after Crises, when society wants to coalesce and build. Unravelings come after Awakenings, when society wants to atomize and enjoy.”

I think Strauss and Howe manage to hit the mark once again, correctly describing this kind of era. Atomization is defined as a process of breaking down into essential, atomic, individual components. Dick Johnson and his Arizona friends set up the Agondonter Fund to help Kristen Maaherra, formerly of Tucson, with her legal battles regarding the copyright suit brought against her for distributing the Urantia papers digitally. An Agondonter is one (an individual) who can by faith believe without seeing, and persevere even when isolated. A number of ad hoc, independent organizations formed, and numerous individuals and small groups decided to just hunker down, keep plowing when possible, and wait for the storm to pass.

Although a number of persons could be mentioned, at least three individualists typify this era: Vern Grimsley, a strong and gifted individual who unfortunately succumbed under a sophistry; Martin Meyers, dangerously ultraindividualistic; and Kristen Maaherra, a sincere individual who stood for her conviction against all odds.

So, in this time of the Hero and Unraveling, two things happened. The institutions, hard won during the preceding two generations, were preserved and reformed; and the importance of the individual was revealed and seen.

There were heroic efforts and achievements in both directions, institutional and individual, during this evolutionary struggle for growth.

God is both our source and our destiny. We have relative free will within prescribed finite limits. God is the author of history, and we are the players and, in a sense,

coauthors, as the storyline twists and turns according to our temporal decisions. The progressions toward destiny, even final destiny, are played out in universe ages, planetary mortal epochs, the march of civilization, and the lives of nations, churches, organizations, families, and individuals.

I would even go so far as to say that our personal and group history is, in a way, predestined. That is an interesting, rare word that appears in the Revelation [110:2.1] (P. 1204). Our Adjusters begin their work with a foreordained plan for our ideal lives. It is our choice to accept or reject any or all of the plan. Is it possible that our Urantia community under seraphic supervision also has a model plan?

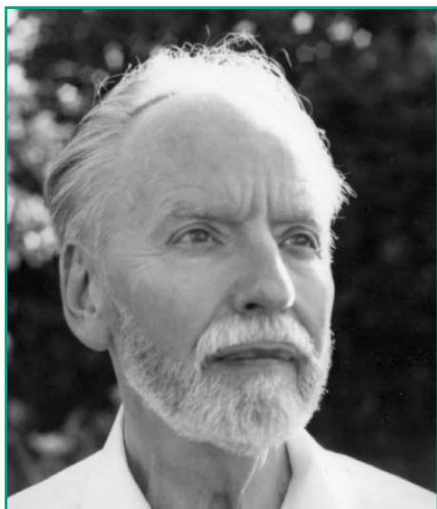
Generational Theory is a starting point for considering this idea. The goal of a good historian must be to make astute observations of the patterns of history. By making such inquiries, we can better understand our past, present, and potential future within the fabric—the warp and woof—of the material and the spiritual. This is the substance of our evolving lives, both individual and group, in our finite universe experience.

FOURTH SEASON

Winter. Artist (Adaptive). Mood: Crisis and Opportunity. c. 2003–2024

Winter puts the plant and animal world into crisis. Resources are scant, and stored reserves are essential for survival. The adaptive artist plies his craft whether or not the hierarchy is able and willing to help. He writes his symphonies alone by candlelight. She paints on a lonely hillside, capturing the contours of the waving wheat. The writer makes his observations and quietly commits them to paper. The dancer cannot help but dance. Lack of income or resources may perhaps only spur them on to

creativity. One day, their work may be read or performed to throngs of admirers or viewed in galleries or in the media, but who knows? And sometime a real musician may appear and forever change the course of world history for good.



The concert pianist from Germany, Urs Ruchti is a good example of an artist who made an important difference during this season. He was the chief translator of *The Urantia Book* into the German language, heading up the team that brought us *Das Urantia Buch*.

In the Urantia community, new ties and fellowship are being fostered in many countries, and the Urantia Association International (UAI) makes plans, travels, and visits new believers around the world. It is simply the work that must be done. A surge of new and pivotal foreign translations are completed or are underway. The new Fellowship committee, YaYAs (Youth and Young Adults) has been formed, and the youth are engaged. Truthseekers has introduced many young people to love and caring in a fun environment. New websites are online. A profusion of movies, soundtracks, and media enterprises have been undertaken, mostly as independent efforts.

Musician Cristina Seaborn informed me that the things that conference attendees reported on questionnaires as “most important” to them were meeting fellow believers and friends old and new, and the music. The artist can inspire worship, transforming an ordinary gathering into a time of spiritual communion.

The Gen-Xers and the Millennials are the age groups who are maturing into their most productive years, and moving into position during this time of Crisis and Opportunity. They have a great relationship with and share many of the same interests as their Boomer parents, are highly adaptive, and are much more positive in their outlook than the generations that preceded them. Their pensive elders find this fact surprising, but see that it is nonetheless true.

If I mention Woodstock to a Millennial, it may mean little or nothing. They weren’t even born then. To them, the trials of the Urantia community in previous generations are a historical footnote, apparently important but events that happened a long time ago.

Strauss and Howe observe this fourth season in this way:

“**Artist** generations are born after an Unraveling, and during a Crisis, a time when great dangers cut down social and political complexity in favor of public consensus, aggressive institutions, and an ethic of personal sacrifice.”

“This is an era in which institutional life is destroyed and rebuilt in response to a perceived threat to the nation’s survival. Civic authority revives, cultural expression redirects towards community purpose, and people begin to locate themselves as members of a larger group.”

The improving efforts of *The Urantia Book* Fellowship and the Foundation's fraternal organization, the Urantia Association International, to cooperate in kingdom-building projects is a noteworthy example of *carpe diem*—seizing the day of opportunity during critical times. There is a great difference between the actions of various harmonized groups working together, and the specter of sectarian division. Just because two groups are distinct does not mean they are divided or must remain aloof. The Fellowship and the UAI can multiply their efforts even fourfold through cooperation, like the interplay of two partners, two countries, a man and a woman, or two fruit trees that pollinate each other. This is unity.

A man and a woman long to be unified in their purpose together. The romantic desire to return to a golden age when all was one may be a sentiment based more on myth than reality. We cannot return to the trumpet blasts of an earlier time; we must proceed from where we now find ourselves. Time will tell.

THE FUTURE

Finishing the current Winter (Artist-Adaptive, 2003-2024) and preparing for the next Spring (Prophet-Idealist, 2025 -)

Only eight years, from the time of this writing, remain in this current *Artist-Winter* cycle of 2003 to 2024. Strauss and Howe explain that some seasons may be shorter or longer, as seen in nature and in real life. My analysis of dates may not be exact, but I think it is reasonably close to real events that we have knowledge of. At any rate, in this model there appears to be a remaining window of time that will allow us to properly *process* in our thinking that which has come before, make currently needed adjustments, and prepare for the next season—one that will bring us again to an *Idealist-Spring* of new budding growth and development. There is enough time to accomplish what is now needed, but the time frame is not unlimited; it has bounds.

I truly believe that the divine is orchestrating our community's progress toward its destiny. We hope and pray that our leaders will lift the baton and faithfully conduct according to the divine musical score, and that each section will play its part without squeaking or losing tempo.

The entire 80-to-85-year cycle begins *again* in 2025 for the Urantia community. The Gen-Xers and the Millennials will take the helm of progress as they enter their more influential, productive time of service between 35 and 60 years of age. This new long cycle will return us to the beginning of the story, a circular simultaneity re-cycle of the *Spring Prophet-Idealist High* during which Drs. William

and Lena Sadler did their valuable work in the 1930s and beyond.

Interestingly, the Strauss-Howe analysis of the current U.S. eighty-year time-circle nearly matches the Urantia movement's time-circle I have described. By all accounts, the United States and Europe are heading into unsteady times. I would be remiss to not point out that our organizational *Crisis-Opportunity* season could, with increasing intensity, be experienced as actual and material, not merely philosophical! This time of institutional deconstruction and reformation is still underway. Our movement's progress happens in the context of U.S. and world development. The key global shift now is the movement from a unipolar world largely under U.S. direction to a multipolar world system. It seems that the universe rulers assist us to confront the very challenges necessary for our next stage of growth, even if they be difficult. Oftentimes the responses to our prayers and desires for change are most surprising to us when an answer suddenly arrives with powerful, sweeping motion on the scene of human events.

Will our new, future leaders create an educationally based movement of evangelistic enterprises, seminaries of a new type and order, new kinds of study groups and societies, new-concept churches, schools and gardens for children? Whatever they will do, my plea is that we prepare the soil for them to have the maximum freedom to follow the leading of the Spirit.

The Baby Boomer generation has taken its turn, and its leadership has been dominated by lawyers and businessmen. I do not say this by way of criticism. Their efforts have established our institutions, and that is part of a normal evolutionary progression. However, this generation and the next must move toward giving education over to teacher-philosophers and scientists.

Education recently passed from the control of the clergy to that of lawyers and businessmen. Eventually it must be given over to the philosophers and the scientists. Teachers must be free beings, real leaders, to the end that philosophy, the search for wisdom, may become the chief educational pursuit. [71:7.4] (P. 806)

The quality of our efforts over the next ten years will prove decisive in preparing for a new springtime of life and growth. There will be revival, but the only thing about it that I'm sure of is that it will come in ways unexpected but highly effective. Jesus said, "You hear the sound of the wind, but you know not where it comes from or where it is going."

SEEING, OBSERVING CORRECTLY

Especially in this fourth generation we're now in, the Artist, we would be wise to listen to what the artists have to say about seeing correctly. The author of the number-one how-to bestseller on learning art, Kimon Nicolaides, included in his classic book *The Natural Way to Draw*, the following insight:

“Correct Observation. The first function of an art student is to observe, to study nature. The artist's job in the beginning is not unlike the job of a writer. He must first reach out for raw material. He must spend much time making contact with actual objects.

Learning to draw is really a matter of learning to see—to see correctly—and that means a good deal more than merely looking with the eye.”

Prophets have also been called seers, which means “seers.” The prophet Daniel described the great kingdoms of this world as successive empires that he saw, or envisioned, as the statue of a man. Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar (ruling in Daniel's time, circa 600 B.C.) was described as the head of gold; the Persian empire as the breast and arms of silver; the Greek as the waist and thighs of bronze; and the Roman Empire as legs of iron, terminating in feet of unstable mingled iron and clay ([135:3.2] (P. 1498). In Daniel's vision, the world kingdoms, came to an end when a “rock from the mountain, not cut by human hands” struck the feet of the image, whereupon the state of the worldly kingdoms collapsed and God's everlasting kingdom was established in the earth. John wrestled to understand this image and vision, seeking to find his place in history, which he successfully did, as the forerunner of Christ.

According to the Book, rugged John the Baptist read this description of the statue in the Scriptures “a thousand times.” [Ibid] We should be willing to read it at least once. (See Daniel 2:32).

The defining quality that made both Daniel and John the Baptist prophets was their diligence and commitment to see and understand that which was available to anyone willing to look thoughtfully, and then to comprehend the spiritual meaning in the context of history.


Our exercise is precisely the same. I plead with you: let us follow Jesus' admonition to view time as unfolding in recurring and perfectly related circles, or cycles. Then prophecy is not a thing mystically not understandable, but rather is knowable under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth poured out upon all. Would you be willing to read the chart of Urantia movement periods on page 3 of this essay three or four times, and pray on it?

My prediction is that in the institution-building Spring beginning about 2025, new Urantia Revelation-based institutions, or their kernels will be formed. Some possibilities could include:

1. Seminars, some maturing into colleges and universities attracting students world-wide
2. Health initiatives, some maturing into clinics and hospitals
3. Family-formation and -support ministries
4. Garden projects (horticulture is the most human of all human activities)
5. Media companies, including arts and news, some with an evangelistic purpose
6. Charter schools for children's education
7. Churches and retreat centers
8. The unknown and unimagined

We must steel ourselves, brothers and sisters. To make the above a reality will require the recruiting of philosophers, scientists, ministers, school teachers, doctors, nurses, social service workers, horticulturists, media executives, artists, evangelists, school administrators, hospitality workers, webmasters, information specialists, businessmen, and philanthropists. Many are out there in our culture. Hundreds and thousands of them must be converted to the divine cause. There is no other way. Call it a prophecy or a challenge, as you wish.

It could be a most fulfilling and even thrilling time. This, I believe, is our next move.



Joshua J. Wilson is a pianist, composer, pastoral counselor, and essayist who writes on historical and scientific subjects harmonizing science, philosophy and spirituality. He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Decision Information Systems, specializing in Human Behavior in Organizations, and certificates in Not-for-Profit Management and Active Parenting Instruction. Hobbies include camping and hiking.

A MUSICAL METAPHOR



By Dr. Bruce Jackson,
Columbia, MO

What would happen if I were to stand before a convocation of *Urantia Book* readers and claim that I could lead us out of obscurity and turn our revelation into a new worldwide religion? I am certain that they would politely but quickly show me to the door. Some 200 years ago we would have become Mormons. What has happened?

Since the Twentieth Century the desirability of a “strong leader” has been seriously questioned. In business the top-down management style has been challenged by a flat “customer service” model. This well demonstrated management method respects and values all employees, encourages leadership to rise out of the group, and rewards team effort. Yet even though business schools have long taught the desirability of this approach in MBA classes, there are few academic institutions that actually practice what they preach as the hierarchal top-down micromanagement model remains firmly entrenched in higher education.

The flat management approach appears to better represent the universal model shared in *The Urantia Book*. “*The entire universe is organized and administered on the representative plan. Representative government is the divine ideal of self-government among non-perfect beings.*” [45:7.3] (P. 517)

The Heavenly Father envisions our future, then steps aside to enable his sons and daughters living at every level to take responsibility for enacting His will. Though humans may choose to go it alone, the spiritual kingdom facilitates our dedication to do God’s will through the assistance of our Thought Adjusters, our many Unseen Helpers, and the Spirit of Truth.

All human management models fall short of what is revealed in *The Urantia Book*. In understanding a more spiritual model of leadership and group dynamics, I believe that the music profession provides a useful teaching metaphor. It involves understanding the relationships between conductors, performers, and audiences in an experience of the transformative potential of music.

THE SYMPHONY CONDUCTOR AS A LEADERSHIP METAPHOR

Because of the visible nature of the symphony conductor it is easy for non-musicians to view conductors as authoritarian controllers of the orchestra. While there are plenty of examples of that, there is a higher model that has the potential to reach greater artistic heights. This spiritual experience of music is the very reason why there is a music profession (as opposed to mere craftsmen entertainers).

There are conductors who eschew the tyranny of top-down control. To understand this we need to back up to the beginning. All musicians, including conductors, require long years of training. Through this time school conductors serve as educators who assume a strong leadership role that enables young pupils to hone their technical skills, develop their cooperative listening abilities, and cultivate their experience of increasingly higher levels of musical expression. Even though conservatory conductor/educators must take charge, it becomes increasingly important for them to release that power as advanced music students develop into soloists, and performers fine tune their musical comprehension.

All musicians must continue to learn and grow. While conductors continue to educate the ensemble, their role significantly changes when working with professionals. Because of long training professional musicians generally understand the experience of music as a transformative force. They know that to reach musical heights there must be a relationship of trust, shared responsibility, and collaborative cooperation if the ensemble is to experience the process necessary to attain high art.

In the professional setting conductors are initially given permission to set the agenda and lead the process of rehearsal. If conductors are herding cats, the art suffers. Therefore, in consultation with the musicians the score is interpreted, changed, and developed into a unique interpretation. Throughout this process the conductor gradually relinquishes power as soloists are given leadership

responsibility. As the musical interpretation becomes understood and settled by the players, their different skill sets are empowered to express their best effort for the whole. As the performance nears, the conductor increasingly allows the players to lead together. In the performance itself the master conductor steps aside and is little more than a ballet dancer.

THE PERFORMANCE

While the conductor and performers have an evolving relationship throughout the practice cycle, performance is a vastly different experience because of the physical presence of the listening audience. If all are spiritually united in the performance, the music may be transformed into worship through the engagement of the Spirit, our Unseen Helpers, and all the Thought Adjusters. This is why high art is such a compelling experience.

... our Urantia movement must understand the spiritual dynamic of what we are doing. We must all be wholeheartedly committed to doing the will of God as a group.

There is a vast difference between performance of music as worship and entertainment. In our age this is little understood by many audiences. Many have become ear-dead as they listen incessantly to studio produced music without the encumbrance of a human presence. This has resulted in the audience expectation of familiarity without requiring listening effort.

Music as entertainment is inherently selfish as minds yack endlessly on thereby creating noise that drowns out the spiritual essence. While there is a place for entertainment, musicians have long been troubled by the increasing lack of audience cooperation willing to seek new and unique spiritual experiences. By insisting on hearing only the familiar, audiences resist the challenge of listening at a level that empowers the spiritual transformation of music into worship.

This transformation of music into worship is the responsibility of all the participants. When the conductor becomes a tyrant, he/she places the focus on oneself. When the players become obsessed with mistakes rather than spirit, mistakes multiply and dominate. When an audience demands only to be entertained, the deeper transformative experience is lost in the noise of the human mind. Indeed, what makes music significantly different from sports is that it is a total win-win situation when all endeavor to reach music's highest experiential potential—the worship of God.

APPLYING THE METAPHOR

The Urantia movement needs conductors, leaders who are just as willing to step back and relinquish authority as they are willing to assume leadership. Many tyrants have been the “reluctant” leader, but few despots are willing to step aside and allow others to emerge from the ensemble into positions of leadership. We do hope that our movement leaders reject egocentrism, power, and control. We pray that our leaders are centered on the Heavenly Father, live in the presence of the Spirit, willingly cooperate with our Unseen Helpers, and are fully under the guidance of their Thought Adjusters in seeking the Will of God.

While the Urantia movement will always need conductor/educators to train our young and “conservatory” students, and while some may claim that this world is still on spiritual training wheels, we must never limit ourselves into a perpetual cycle of training schools that will only

reach a “professional” level deep into some distant future. How will our “students” learn if they are unable to listen to professionals who are able to transform our “music” into worship? Our movement must have its own professional “symphony” that models spirit-led experiences. That ensemble is us.

The Urantia readers need to understand the importance of the orchestral player as well. While we may all be players taking home a paycheck (the benefits of spiritual living), our players must be united in a spiritual goal of achieving music that transforms into worship. To do that we have to coordinate a very wide variety of skill sets without looking down our noses at brothers and sisters who may express their talents in vastly different ways from our own. Indeed, we live in the Age of Diversity.

Each of us needs to understand the process of tuning our commitment into spiritual unity dedicated to the process of cooperative collaboration. As our ensemble strives to achieve a transformative level of music, our Urantia movement must understand the spiritual dynamic of what we are doing. We must all be wholeheartedly committed to doing the will of God as a group. Our unified prayer must ever be “not mine, but Thy will be done.”

In that commitment we must first be centered on the Heavenly Father, thereby actively engaging our Thought

Adjusters in our spiritual mission of cooperation and collaboration. As a spiritually united group blessed with a vast array of differing skills and gifts we should request that all our Thought Adjusters share in our work for the world; thus extending our spiritual experience far beyond ourselves. Equally important, we require the presence of the Spirit as that is the glue that binds us. In all our endeavors we should seek the assistance of our Unseen Helpers. Their work will be immeasurably important in the transformation of this world, demonstrating the full engagement of these spiritual forces is vitally important in this modern renaissance age.

Did you notice that I stated that the score will be changed? Though changing the Bible may horrify many Christians, it was the notion that an individual could read the Bible and have a personal understanding and relationship with the “Word of God” that was at the heart of the protestant reformation in the European Renaissance.

The Urantia Book is our score. While any suggestion of changing our precious book might trouble some of us, it is inevitable that our revelation will be interpreted differently by individuals, groups, and organizations. In describing the Fifth Epochal Revelation our authors remind us that “no revelation short of the attainment of the Universal Father can ever be complete.” [92:4.9] (P.1008) Even more importantly, after extended practice Jesus sent out the evangelists as follows:

Each of the apostolic teachers taught his own view of the gospel of the kingdom. They made no effort to teach just alike; there was no standardized or dogmatic formulation of theologic doctrines. Though they all taught the same truth, each apostle presented his own personal interpretation of the Master’s teaching. [148:1.2] (P. 1658)

Musicians are always changing, modifying, and adapting the scores of the masters to suit the ensemble, audience, and situation. Even so, rest assured that the scores composed by the masters remain true to their spiritual message. The symphony must interpret the score, but they do not compose it.

It is inevitable that differences of expression will happen, and sincere *Urantia Book* readers must not fear that process we should embrace it. The Melchizedek Director, his midwayer staff, and a vast host of Unseen Helpers will ensure that our revelation will be alive and well long after we are dead and gone.

We must consider the audience attending our performances. Many of us despair that so many modern religious audiences are seeking little more than spiritual

entertainment. It is as if musicians are perpetually required to play bad pop tunes in the mall rather than seeking the transformative experience of music. Even so, readers of the revelation need to resist disillusionment by thinking that our performance will only attain the level of entertainment. If we envision our service from the peaks of the mountain, the echoes of that effort will reverberate throughout society.

Finally, *Urantia Book* readers must always be mindful that the work of the symphony has never been about a single performance. It is about rehearsal then performance, rehearsal then performance, rehearsal then performance, and on and on. It is the repetition of this process that enables conductors, performers, and the audience to learn how to be attuned to the transformation of music into worship.

Even though this musical metaphor suggests how the *Urantia* movement may transform itself through its focus on the will of God thus inviting the world’s audience to join us in worship, we must ever keep this in mind the truth of this profound revelation:

With the limited range of mortal hearing, you can hardly conceive of morontia melodies. There is even a material range of beautiful sound unrecognized by the human sense of hearing, not to mention the inconceivable scope of morontia and spirit harmony. Spirit melodies are not material sound waves but spirit pulsations received by the spirits of celestial personalities. There is a vastness of range and a soul of expression, as well as a grandeur of execution, associated with the melody of the spheres, that are wholly beyond human comprehension. [44:1.1] (P. 499)

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THE TEMPLE OF SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD AND THE GREATER MEANING OF STUDY GROUPS



By Charles Laurence Olivea
Santa Fe, NM
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Great trees possess a majestic presence, such as the Grizzly Giant of the Sequoia Forest in Yosemite, California. It is quite interesting, even instructive, to reflect upon the fact that they begin as small seedlings, emerging as saplings, and over a **long** period of time grow to become nature's monarchs.

Likewise, study groups are establishing roots for a great movement, whose aim over time is to disseminate *The Urantia Book* and its teachings, having a transformational influence on the world. Study groups may very well constitute the primary engine to achieve the necessary momentum toward human planetary destiny. But to be successful this movement must be nourished by living spiritual virtues of truth, beauty, and goodness. Then the world, someday, will be able to see a majestic fraternity of men and women who exemplify the principle of universe unity made possible by higher teachings of God's light and life. We, students of *The Urantia Book*, past, present, and future have been given the opportunity to **help** make this possible.

The socialization or spread of the Fifth Epochal Revelation through a growing network of study groups will depend on what participants bring to such gatherings and by what they take from them. The interactions between persons, when done in a revelatory search for God, can tap into the spirit of his grace, thereby, raising human consciousness. Remember, the search for God is nothing less than the search for the source and center of all things and beings. What's more, an Archangel of Nebadon reassures us that, "*Knowledge is possessed only by sharing; it is safeguarded by wisdom and socialized by love.*" [48:7, 28] (P. 557)

A Solitary Messenger reinforces this point by the generalization that "*Personality cannot very well perform in isolation. Man is innately a social creature; he is dominated by the craving of belongingness.*" [112: 1.16] (P. 1227)

To know others who share kindred minds and souls **is** the great immediate benefit of study groups. The thesis offered in this essay concerns the living rationale for individual persons to meet in study on a regular basis seeking God intellectually and spiritually.

A RECOMMENDATION FOR NEW WINESKINS

In that spirit, I would like to suggest we think of each study group as a "school." Then, we may consider the educational potential in every study group as a kind of informal process of "schooling." But it is an educational experience that strives to draw a straight line between Paradise and Urantia. Logically, if we view study groups in this light, the authors of the Urantia Papers, may be thought of as the "faculty. The "pedagogy" consists mostly of "**intelligent conversation.**" The text of the book will make up the "curriculum." Lastly, our "mission" has the benign audacity of attempting—long term—the rehabilitation of our home planet.

We go beyond the role of being merely readers of the book; we are more in the role of students looking for Living Water and the Bread of Life. A student in this context may be defined as an attentive, systematic observer, who is engaged in mind and soul as a cosmic citizen growing with the Supreme.

A new viewpoint of old facts or on a conventional perspective can constitute a "new wine skin." That is what is proposed here. The usefulness of a different viewpoint was explained by an Archangel, while referencing statements of human philosophy for instructional purposes on the First Mansion World.: "*Only a poet can discern poetry in the commonplace prose of routine experience.*" [48: 7, 22] (P. 557)

This designation of study groups as "schools" with all the educational implications contained therein opens up the act of study as a higher, more dignified, loftier concept—given their revelatory character and (potential) planetary significance. It deepens and broadens one's **universe** perspective of them, hence, the "new wine skins."

Furthermore, the person-to-person make-up of study groups can serve as the means to maximize the dynamics of group study. I believe that relationships between fellow mortals dedicated to revelatory study extend to the Universal Father, Michael of Nebadon, the Supreme and the angels. It is worth reflecting on what a Solitary Messenger has told us concerning the vitality of relationships among persons. *“Everything nonspiritual in human experience, excepting personality, is a means to an end. Every true relationship of mortal man with other persons—human or divine—is an end in itself.”* [112: 2, 8] (P. 1228) With this observation in mind, schools (study groups) may be understood in terms of the major facets in the interactions between persons: heart-to-heart; mind-to-mind; soul-to-soul.

THE NATURE OF STUDY AND ITS MORONTIA SIGNIFICANCE

The term, to study, appears to have originated in the English language sometime during the Fourteenth Century. It may be defined as “a state of contemplation...application of the mental faculties to the acquisition of knowledge...in a particular field...or to a specific object...careful **extended consideration**...or analysis of a phenomenon...or question.” The modifying term, in-depth, was coined in 1965 and may be defined as “comprehensive...thorough...and in-depth study.” (*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*) (Emphasis added)

The Urantia Book is designed for study in my opinion. This is evident in the way facts, meanings, and values are presented. Over the years I have heard many persons comment that as questions are raised in one paragraph they are often answered in the following paragraph. There is a logical progression from the general to the particular. It is the nature of the revelation to **invite** some level of inquiry: From whence have I come? Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going?

A Divine Counselor has noted that *“The religious challenge of this age is those farseeing and forward-looking men and women of spiritual insight who will **dare** to construct a new and appealing philosophy of living out of the enlarged and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe, and divine goodness.”* [2: 7, 10] (P. 36) (Emphasis added) Study (complemented by service) is a profoundly important feature of the challenge. Anyone really committed to the Fifth Epochal Revelation will take study seriously.

To learn from the text of *The Urantia Book*, studying, then, is a must. An in-depth study of the revelation would

be necessarily comprehensive and thorough. Another way to illustrate this point, either individually or collectively, can be found in synonyms, listed here:

best effort	trial and error	expect
one’s utmost	inquiry	digest
discover	examine	dig
question	cross-question	cross-reference
propose an idea	fact finding	open for discussion
meticulous	precise	detailed

(*Roget’s International Thesaurus*, 7th Edition)

Certain inferences may be drawn from these terms concerning the nature of study. The importance of the **art of listening** comes to mind. Jesus placed a supreme value on active (engaged) listening. He paid very close attention to what was (and what was often not) being expressed. He taught the most when he said the least. Another implication of the synonyms is the necessity to contribute to the **flow of conversation** with thoughtful, logical ideas and/or questions. Showing a **respect for facts** must be in play. It is vital to group study to make the distinction, when disagreeing with others, **not to be disagreeable**. The reader is left to draw still more inferences from this list.

Thinking about study groups as revelatory schools can enhance the spiritual and cosmic dignity of them, investing them with universe-capital. It deepens and widens the context of these gatherings. They are not social get-togethers, although friendly social ties should always be encouraged. This revelation entails some rather heavy lifting. The long view indicates that the destiny of civilization on Urantia and the future of the religion of Jesus hang in the balance between human imperfection and prospects for eventual light and life.

With a nod to the Divine Counselor, we ought to study in the way the writing of *The Urantia Book* is constructed and arranged, that is to say, use the same pedagogical principles—go from the complex to the simple, i.e., from the long view to the moving present, utilizing the perspective of origin, history, and destiny applied to contemporary affairs. [19: 1, 5-6] (P. 215) With this idea in mind, it would be profitable to determine how the Morontia culture prioritizes the practice of study. What “universe value” is assigned to studying?

First of all, we learn that when most pilgrims of time attain the Fifth Mansion World, *“Study is becoming voluntary, unselfish service natural, and worship spontaneous.”* [47: 7, 5] (P. 537) Isn’t it interesting, of all the different behaviors or norms the Brilliant Evening Star could have focused on, study, service and worship were emphasized.

The first develops mind (mota); the second exercises the soul (to borrow a phrase); and the third communes with God (the supreme joy of personality existence). What grand priorities! But there is more.

It remains my sense that characterizing human study groups as “schools” is hardly farfetched.

An Archangel has given us a vivid description of the priorities of Morontia culture on Jerusem, our planetary system capital. *“The activities...are of three distinct varieties: work, progress and play. Stated otherwise, they are service, study, and relaxation.”* [46: 5, 22] (P. 526) (Emphasis added) Interestingly, study is equated with progress and service equated with work. These Morontia norms, sketched by the Archangel, must reflect the central aims of the schools of thinking, feeling and doing. This Archangel continues by noting that, *“Those things which you might have learned on earth, but which you failed to learn must be acquired under the tutelage of...faithful and patient teachers.”* (48: 5, 7) (P. 551)

Indeed, schooling is a universal concept and practice. We learn from the Brilliant Evening Star that *“The entire universe is one vast school.”* [37: 6, 2] (P. 352) The Archangel elaborates on this point: *“If the Gods designed merely to take you on one long and eternal joy excursion, they certainly would not so largely turn the whole universe into one vast and intricate practical training school, requisition a substantial part of the celestial creation as teachers and instructors, and then spend ages upon ages piloting you, one by one, through this gigantic universe school of experiential training.”* [48: 8, 3] (P. 558)

Study, service, and worship are a multi-sided jewel. Again, one may observe the greater dignity of characterizing study groups as “schools.” Study groups ought to be recognized for their universe-value, the contribution they can make to implement God’s command for ascending mortals eventually to become perfect even as he is perfect.

STUDY GROUP STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

It may be useful and valuable here to provide some suggestions or guidelines about study group management. What follows is a kind of “bottom-up,” practical look at the working dynamics of study groups. The ideas in this section are largely empirically based.

There is no centralized authority over study groups. The original Urantia Brotherhood envisioned a relatively democratic system. This de-centralization is an antidote to the development of an ecclesiastical authority, a ruling clergy. There appears to be a consensus among devotees of *The Urantia Book* to keep it this way.

Generally speaking, two different approaches have emerged over time as to how folks organize study groups: one emphasizes more reading and less discussion; the other values conversation over mainly reading. Participants in the latter approach are expected to read assigned material prior to a meeting. A more intense, closer mode of study would seem to favor the latter.

Concerning the latter approach, people need time to ponder questions and/or issues, hence assigned study. It can be structured in a number of ways. Some include studying the papers in the order they are presented from first to last, or, a particular topic or theme may be picked. A question can serve as the central focus of discussion. Maximizing opportunities for *each* person to contribute to an intelligent conversation should be a key priority. It is important to have more light than heat in the conversation. Effective leadership exemplifies respectful listening. The point here is to strike a balance between what an individual says and how the others interact as a group. Staying centered on the scope and depth of the assigned study is a major priority. Participants for the most part would be expected to keep their comments within the assigned text. They should avoid bringing up outside sources since other members probably would not have had any opportunity to read and think about extraneous material beforehand.

This approach encourages and respects a certain kind of discipline, adding to the cohesion of the group. The overall aim is to have minds engaged, exchanging ideas.

Keeping a group on task is an executive function, although each participant shares responsibility as well. The leader of a study group would be wise to act in the role of tutor. A tutor guides, makes suggestions, presents questions to keep the talk more focused, sets a friendly tone by a humorous anecdote, and leads generally by good example. Ideally, the role of tutor could be rotated, at least from among those who are willing to so act. But not everyone is comfortable in such a role. But someone has to keep the group centered on the subject at hand.

Time ought to be set aside for announcements and the like. Keeping in touch with particular members of the study group is a good thing to do. A kind word may be necessary if someone is in crisis, including situations between meetings if the need arises. We all should remember that friendship can add greatly to the connecting substance of the group. The desire to do good should always be tempered or balanced by graciousness by being tactful and courteous while bearing good intentions. Proper leadership of any study group carries with it an important social dimension.

On the last point, the role of the host may or may not

overlap with the role of leader. Stronger social or emotional ties have their place in the scheme of things. When it comes down to what really matters, the first priority is to try to discern God's will. We are all **fellow** mortals on the same broad path as pilgrims of time ascending the pre-ordained levels of universe reality.

We have seen how the Morontia culture prioritizes study and service. It does appear that studying runs as a norm throughout the universes of time and space. I believe the process of starting and keeping study groups going contributes directly to the Supreme.

Lastly, consideration might profitably be given to group prayer and worship. For example, prayer can be used to open and close a meeting. Seeking the Father's indwelling spirit or Michael's Spirit of Truth can be a powerful way to help a gathering be more cogent and yet calm at the same time. I always invite Jesus to "join" us. The act of study is augmented when the Spirit of Truth is openly welcomed into the group's midst.

We can aspire to be effective **instruments** in the search for truth, but the Father and the Creator Son are always the **inspiration**. I so like what was said by the Mighty Messenger about the Spirit of Truth, the greatest gift Michael gave to Urantia, besides his actual bestowal: *"Having started out on the way of life everlasting, having **accepted the assignment** and received your orders to advance, do not fear the dangers of human forgetfulness and mortal inconstancy, do not be troubled with doubts of failure or by perplexing confusion, do not falter and question your status and standing, for in every dark hour, at every crossroad in the forward struggle, the Spirit of Truth will always speak, saying 'This is the way.' "* [34: 7, 8] (P. 383) (Emphasis added)

It seems to me that the Spirit both clarifies and comforts. The Spirit is very helpful to study and service. Trying to start a study group may be daunting; serving as a leader can be problematic. Why not form a habit of accessing some of the spiritual resources given to our world. The Chief of Urantia Midwayers has something to say on this. *"Group or congregational praying is very effective in that it is highly socializing in its repercussions. When a group engages in community prayer for moral enhancement and spiritual uplift, such devotions are reactive upon the individuals composing the group; **they are all made better because of participation.**"* [91: 5, 2] (P. 998) (Emphasis added)

Even study needs a measure of courage to face issues or questions that intimidate many others. It takes even

more courage to discuss them with a group of people whose perceptions differ considerably. Hearts can be made calmer and intellects clearer if the participants are willing to pull together in a common petition, or, to commune together in worship, with a higher power. It is important to remember that this should be done without pressure or coercion. Still,

the spiritual cohesion of a group may realize broader, deeper revelatory insights. In all such efforts, **trust** God.

GOD THE SUPREME AND THE MASTER SERAPHIM

While living on Urantia as creatures of time and space, we are also cosmic citizens. The Mighty Messenger points out that, *"With God the Father, sonship is the great relationship. With God the Supreme, **achievement** is the prerequisite to status—one must do something as well as be something."* [115: 1, 0] (P. 1260) (Emphasis added)

We have seen how the Morontia culture prioritizes study and service. It does appear that studying runs as a norm throughout the universes of time and space. I believe the process of starting and keeping study groups going contributes directly to the Supreme. The universe-value of studying is naturally linked to the Supreme. It is something for us to be conscious of. The Supreme is actualizing our potential in the ascension scheme of universe achievement even while we reside on earth. Down here, as evolutionary creatures, we can add to the gradual, unfolding development of Orvonton, our superuniverse, in reciprocity with the finite God, the God of evolution. This reciprocity is inherent by design in the relationships of Supremacy. It is a high and noble task (actually a cosmic, moral duty) to be contributors to universe building. The Universal Father has delegated to us something important to do.

To perform our role as cosmic citizens in a worthwhile and useful manner, we need to **possess a deeper and broader knowledge** of the origin, history and destiny of many aspects of universe reality. In turn, that knowledge helps us to sort or identify essential facts, meanings and values of time and space—the function of study. On the other side of the coin, service can be rendered more precise and appropriate to those whom we would serve. Thus, study

and service work together as we attempt to do our share in the growth of the Supreme.

But to bring this line of reasoning directly to our home planet, we should be mindful of the Master Seraphim of Planetary Supervision. Working with the angels is crucial to the success-potential of study groups. I do not think this is superstitious; rather it is a suggestion grounded in the long view of intelligent faith and inspired by sincere prayer. There is a lot to pray for. For instance, petitions may be directed to the angels for assistance in organizing and maintaining a study group. The angels and the divine spirit can be solicited to guide or encourage individuals to consider joining one's study group.

The Angels of Enlightenment come to mind. According to the Chief of Seraphim, our world *"is now receiving the help of the third corps of seraphim dedicated to the fostering of planetary education. These angels are occupied with mental and moral training as it concerns individuals, families, groups, schools, communities, nations, and whole races."* [114: 6, 11] (P. 1256) (Emphasis added) Is it farfetched to suggest that our study groups fit neatly within their sphere

As knowledge about the book spreads, its reputation in the public mind may largely be determined by its association with these kinds of connections. So, as our movement breaks into the public's consciousness, we hope many will say something like this, "Oh, I know her. She reads that book. She is my neighbor and is a normal person; or, he works in my office and is an okay guy. I found out he has been reading that book for years." Social recognition of such a caliber can only evolve from excellence in thought and a strong, positive and intelligent living-faith in God. Modern men and women are seeking to find individuals or groups who demonstrate intellectual integrity and spiritually affirmative lives.

If our gatherings acquire such a reputation, then the Fifth Epochal **Revelation** may be seen as less strange and appreciated more for its content and quality in a growing number of social and religious circles. At least, that is an outcome we can hope for. The revelation, then, can really start to have a transformational effect upon society at large. But we must be well grounded in knowledge of its teachings in order to be at-the-ready to address the many questions

Humanity will probably have to settle down and be somewhat calmer before wider reception of these revelatory teachings occurs.

of interest? The Urantia Papers as the subject of group study seem to correlate directly to these angels' area of responsibility.

If this is so, we might consider this framework of our relationship as part of the new wine skin of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. This idea also applies to our philosophically organic connection with God the Supreme. These key ties to unseen friends and allies and to the finite God ennoble the routine tasks of those who gather to study. The appeal of this perspective on our labor in the evolutionary vineyards is one of universe-romancing.

A LIGHTHOUSE IN A WORLD-WIDE CULTURAL FOG

Notwithstanding the present confusion, sometime in the future, there will likely be a growing number of people who, while not being readers themselves of *The Urantia Book*, will know persons who do read and study it. Perhaps in many (most) cases, the latter will be a family member, a close friend, an acquaintance, a neighbor, co-worker or even an approachable stranger. Typically, those studying the revelation will probably be persons of average socio-economic status and live and work in ordinary circumstances.

people will naturally have. Questions (including objections) will range from ones that are straight forward or basic to complex subjects, even vexing issues.

In the meantime, study groups can continue to operate under the "radar" of the modern media and all of its mixed, uncertain scrutiny. Our study groups, conferences, and other projects are "below" the cultural eye of today's mainstream. We live in a time of confrontation between science and religion, nationalism versus internationalism, political/moral ideologies run amok causing physical wars and wars of words, to cite a few examples. Many people lead hectic lives and are frequently in a hurry, scurrying around almost as flotsam and jetsam. Humanity will probably have to settle down and be somewhat calmer before wider reception of these revelatory teachings occurs.

However, because of this time delay we have an on-going opportunity to mature for the day when people of all backgrounds will bring their questions of the meaning of life to the surface.

Our movement has, therefore, a strategic advantage! The time delay will test our patience as we study and serve unobtrusively in a kind of private ministry. This has something in common (in principle at least) with the

approach Jesus' ministry took as he prepared for the Gospel to be publicly proclaimed. If we grow quietly, collecting the riches of the mind and the joys of the soul, we will not only survive modernity's vicissitudes of this age, we can realistically hope to emerge—as a cause—successfully.

Our teachings can serve as a “lighthouse” whose beacon will shine brightly to a world that will begin to tire of the fog of anxiety and mayhem. I believe that when the time is ripe, God's grace will influence our fellow mortals to want something better. Without necessarily (fully) realizing it, many will want the clarity and comfort of something called life and light. The “lighthouse-effect” will come if we possess a respected reputation—an image derived from the substance of a dignified, **unified**, spiritually fragrant, and intellectually vibrant network, symbolized by three blue concentric circles and/or the name, “Urantia.”

Can we not **unite** around this hoped for outcome as a common goal of our movement?

Would not the logical means to achieve such an end be the evolution of “thousands of study groups?”—“Schools” meeting in people's living rooms. The “lighthouse effect” of these “schools” may be thought of in two ways: each study group could become a light house on its own or the light of the benign coalition of thousands of study groups in the aggregate on a planetary scale. Or, perhaps both ways on two different levels at the same time!

Achieving all of this depends of the quality and the extent of combining mind and spirit in an evolutionary effort. A great teacher earlier in the history of *The Urantia Book* noted that this revelation speaks profoundly to **both** mind and spirit, unlike so many philosophies and religions. Our movement to disseminate its teachings must be God-centered. We need to be humble. We did not write it; it was written for us. The Fifth Epochal Revelation falls under the authority of Michael of Nebadon. Hence, our loyalty, friendship and respect should be directed first toward him and then to each other.

CONCLUSION

The humble act of studying *The Urantia Book* is a noble endeavor. It is noble when there is a sincere, intelligent attempt (animated by living-faith) to align as cosmic citizens with the Supreme as it develops the grand universe of time and space.

I allude to the loving reciprocity of Supremacy as explained by a Mighty Messenger: “*In the present universe age this dual motion is revealed in the descending and ascending personalities of the grand universe. The Supreme Creator Personalities and all their divine associates are*

reflective of the outward, diverging motion of the Supreme, while the ascending pilgrims from the seven superuniverses are indicative of the inward, converging trend of Supremacy.” [115:6. 5] (P. 1265)

In addition to all of this, we benefit right now as children of the Universal Father—true brothers and sisters—foretasting in time the truth, beauty and goodness of eternal meanings.

For sure, we ought to love our fellow mortals as Jesus loves us. We may sensibly hope that someday, at a later time, “thousands of study groups”—“schools”—will come to connote a brotherly and sisterly fraternity, world renowned, knitted together and inspired by the divine spirit and the angels. The real means of success will be in the **appeal** of our growing reputation to individuals and (potentially) to civilization itself, drawn to teachings of light and life that will illuminate the intellect and delight the soul.

Charles Olivia first encountered *The Urantia Book* in 1965 and became a lifelong member of the revelation three years later. When a high school adolescent, he made a firm decision to live his life according to the search for truth. The Fifth Epochal Revelation satisfied that desire by offering light over shadow. Over the years he have given lectures, sermons, workshops, seminars, along with published essays on a wide range of topics, including race, angels, education, and the like. To his lasting joy, he re-discovered Jesus (Michael) through *The Urantia Book*. Charles have had two careers: professionally as a teacher of history and one in the pursuit of revelatory knowledge and wisdom. He has been married for 50 years and has two sons and two grandsons.

WHAT WILL WE FIND IN OUTER SPACE?



By William Sadler, Jr.
Mansonia #?

Transcript of a tape recording of Bill Sadler at a study group

Let's explore what we may find in outer space.

How are they going to run it? In the first place, the grand universe is going to change. Some beings who are stationary may not remain stationary. We know about the orders of stationary citizens. Sons. For example, midwayers are called stationary citizens. You know, they don't count us as citizens. We don't live here long enough. But the midwayers live on Urantia a long time. But even they eventually move. Adamites are stationary citizens of Jerusalem. But after a long, long, time, they, too, move. A very few are commissioned as planetary Adams. Some serve as non-reproducing assistants to planetary Adams in the era of light and life. Some finally get permission to start the Paradise journey direct from Jerusalem.

There are natives of the Father's worlds. Havona has its natives. Paradise has two kinds of citizens: Those who are born there, and Adjuster-fused ascenders who lack planetary experience. Status is going to change at the end of the present universe age.

Listen, there are a billion Universal Censors in Havona, one on each world. They haven't had a doggone thing to do since they were created. They're there, probably, in anticipation of the needs of a future universe age.

Well, what happens out in outer space? First of all, we've got two Trinities acting and interacting. We've got the Paradise Trinity functioning in functional relationship to the First Experiential Trinity. Secondly, we've got the Supreme Being functioning as the sovereign of the grand universe and as a super all-mighty functioning in outer space.

I think the Seven Master Spirits will still be functioning. Whether they'll operate in connection with the seven superuniverses or not, I don't know. But I'm sure they'll be operative in outer space. Remember, these Master Spirits are not only Supreme, they're Ultimate expressions of Deity. There may be two or three types of Creator Sons in outer space. More about this later.

We'll be out there. And one of our jobs will be to compensate outerspacers for the fact that they can never experience evolutionary growth such we have experienced.

I believe there will still be finite reality, because there's finite reality in Havona, but evolutionary, experiential growth will no longer be attainable. Absonite growth will begin. That's a rough inventory.

What will these outerspacers be like? Listen. Can you imagine two Havona natives speculating on what superuniverses are going to be like, before Grandfanda ever got there? They know about the superuniverses, but they've never seen an imperfect being. All they've seen was born in perfection. And I don't believe a Havona native could imagine an imperfect being. He had to meet one. I don't believe that we can imagine the nature of an outer spacer.

Well, let's do some thinking. We know that there are exactly 700 thousand Unions of Days. One is created to function as the Trinity ambassador at the court of a Creator Son. We know that the plans of the Architects of the Master Universe provide for precisely 700 thousand local universes, because we're told that each local universe embraces 1/100 thousandth of the power charge of the superuniverse.

The exact number of inhabited worlds is a little indeterminate. But the number of local universes is not inexact. It is precise. But we've got more than 700 thousand Creator Sons. We've got well-nigh a million of them. And there's absolutely no indication that they're a fixed number.

I don't see that the Universal Father and the Eternal Son ever will stop conceiving identical thoughts, and every time they do, another Creator Son is born, and another Creative Spirit differentiates within the Infinite Spirit. So, there isn't enough room for all the Creator Sons in the seven superuniverses, is there?

And this means that when we go into outer space, there are two kinds of Creator Sons who are going into outer space: there are master Michaels, who have had

the experience of functioning as creators in the present universe age, and there will be Creator Sons who will have their initial function as creators in the next universe age.

And there may be two kinds of these Creator Sons. Consider, type one: a Creator Son, now in existence, but who is destined not to be able to function as a creator in the present universe age. Type two: a Creator Son who is born in the next universe age, and who also functions in the next universe age.

So we can have three types of Creator Sons. Those who were born in the present age and who function as creators in the present age. Those who were born in the present age, who have personal memories of the present age, but who did not function as creators. And those who were both born and function as creators in the next universe age.

How big is the first outer space level? Well, it's just beginning to wind up now. They're pouring concrete out there. Haven't opened up the subdivision yet. Just laying sewers.

And already there are 70 thousand aggregations of matter—each one is bigger than a superuniverse. They're going to become tremendously bigger. If there are 70 thousand aggregations of matter, and 700 thousand Creator Sons, it suggests to me that each one of these aggregations will have assigned to it 10 thousand Master Michaels.

I think of these Master Michaels as being senior to and supervisory of those Creator Sons who have never yet functioned. I can see the two levels of creator activity. All Michaels are the same in nature, as all Thought Adjusters are identical in divinity. But the Sovereign of Nebadon is something different than what he was when he came out from Paradise. His nature has been augmented by experiential additions, right? It is in this respect that the pre-Supreme Michaels will forever differ from the post-Supreme Michaels. Whatever experience the post-Supreme Michaels have, it will not involve participation in the growth of the Supreme Being. We will have two different kinds of Michael Sons not different in 100 original divine nature, but quite different in acquired, experiential nature. Does this make sense?

If the Creator Son and Creative Spirit of Nebadon sometimes trinitize an equal creator, this being will be expressive not only of their Paradise divinity, but also of their experiential growth, right?

These post-Supreme Creator Sons and Creative Spirits who never function as creators in the superuniverses may sometime also 110 trinitize a being, but it will be a different kind of a being, won't it?

Let's follow a local universe Mother Spirit out into the first outer space level. She and her Creator consort have been commissioned to function as creators out there. Can she create seraphim? Because she's no longer working within the growing Supreme Being. Universe potentials have changed.

She is the same as the Creative Spirit of Nebadon. But what she's got to work with is different. I think she'll create ministering beings, but I don't think they'll be seraphim. I question that seraphim will be create-able after the present universe age.

You see how different it's going to be? We blindly assume, for example, that things which we see are universal, and they aren't, any more than air is universal. We know that if we go far enough off the surface of the earth, we run out of air. But we accept the Supreme Being as being a universal reality much as we accept the planetary atmosphere as being a universal environment.

The personalization of the Creative Spirit will be somewhat different out there than in here. She'll go out into outer space as a second stage spirit becoming a third stage spirit when she gets out there. But her achievement of personality must be something different from what it was in the present universe age. Her nature is the same; the environment is radically different, hence the experiential factor of growth will be radically different. I sometimes wondered if God the Sevenfold will remain God the Sevenfold. Or will God the Sevenfold articulate additional levels. Will God the Sevenfold become—let's just speculate boldly—God the Tenfold. Who knows?

How many levels of Creator Sons will there be? At least two, possibly three.

This seventh level of total Deity function is formidable, isn't it? Do you notice how this level sort of starts real absolute and swings down and comes back real absolute? Can you think of anything that's parallel to that?

Let's take a look, just for comparison, at universal, non-spiritual, energy systems—physical energies. This thing starts out with something which they call absoluta, space potency. And then it evolves into something called segregata, primordial force. And then it evolves into something called ultimata, emergent energy. And then it evolves into something called gravita, or universe power. That's matter as we understand it. Then it begins to swing back towards something absolute, because in Havona, they speak of energy as triata. And up on upper Paradise, in connection with the transcendental peoples, there is a form of energy known as tranosta. And then, the energy of Paradise itself is known as monota, and it's pure energy.

Of course you well know there's an eighth level that isn't listed here. That's the absolute level. Let's consider how big is this master universe.

I wanted to figure out how big the first outer space level was. I'm intrigued by the fact that they have ten times as many Architects as they do for the seven superuniverses. But if you take the number three in relation to the number seven, you don't get a true estimate of the difference between the size of Havona and the size of the seven superuniverses, do you?

I know that there's 70 aggregations of matter out there, but they are already each one of them larger than the superuniverse. It's more than 70 times as big, isn't it? It's bigger, and more than 70 times bigger. All right.

What do the papers give us that we can reason with? On page 360 they give us the radius of Orvonton. It's 250 thousand light years. That's not the absolute radius. It can be off somewhat. But it's the distance from Urantia to Uversa. And we're told that we're out on the edge of Orvonton. So I'm going to assume that we're at the edge, knowing full well that we're not quite. But close enough for this calculation. I'm going to assume that if it's 250 thousand years in from the outskirts of Orvonton to Uversa, it must be another 250 thousand years from Uversa in to the inner margin of Orvonton. What I'm seeking for is the transverse diameter of a doughnut. Do you follow me? Where the hole is Havona. So, I'm going to assume that the transverse diameter of the doughnut, which is the seven superuniverses, is a half a million light years. And for conceptual purposes, I want to give that a scale value of one inch. I can't think of a half million light years. Gee whiz, the distance between the earth and the sun is what—15 light minutes. These are years!

Visualize the doughnut. I got a doughnut that is an inch thick through the dough. Now **Gee whiz** pardon me, I've got to read this, because otherwise I can't remember, it's too intricate. The question is, I want to know what is the diameter of the whole doughnut? I've got the transverse diameter of the doughnut, but how big is the hole? We have no information on this subject. So I raise this question: Can we ignore the hole, or not? I think we can't, because I think Havona is very small as compared to a superuniverse. Let's reason now. Havona has got to have enough volume and space to contain one billion worlds. Forget the 21 satellites, and the dark islands. But the seven superuniverses have seven thousand billion inhabited worlds. There are seven thousand times as many inhabited worlds in the superuniverses as there are in Havona. And this completely ignores uninhabited spheres—suns, dark

islands, architectural spheres.

Gee whiz, just for example the number's worked out in here: *"If all the projected local universes and their component parts were established, there would be slightly less than 500 billion architectural worlds in the seven superuniverses."*

There are five hundred times as many architectural worlds in the superuniverses as there are in Havona. I'm referring to Jerusems, Edentias, Salvingtons, Uversas. Five hundred billion architectural worlds, just slightly less. Listen. In case you think these inhabited worlds are any criteria of how many space bodies there are, at the end of the paper on the seven superuniverses, on page 182, they make this statement: *"The grand universe number of your world, Urantia, is five trillion, 342 billion, 482 million, 337 thousand, 6 hundred sixty six."* That is the registry number on Uversa and on Paradise, your number in the catalogue of the inhabited worlds."

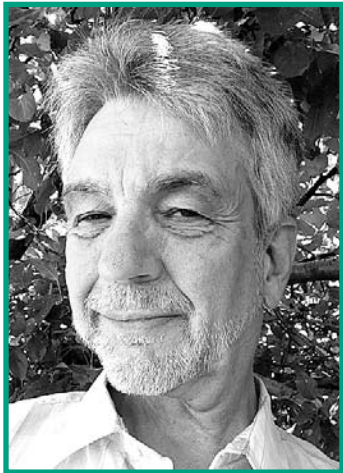
And I suspect they're registered in frequency, just as they are in Satania. We are six hundred six of the system of Satania, which means, six hundred five worlds developed human life before us. We were the six hundred sixth on which human beings evolved. That determined our number.

Now, that's a big number, isn't it? But listen to the next statement: *"I know the physical-sphere registry number," in other words, they've got all physical space bodies registered, inhabited or uninhabited "but it is of such an extraordinary size that it is of little practical significance to the mortal mind."* [15:14.8] (P. 182)

It's an altogether bigger number. So when I reason here that the seven superuniverses, based on inhabited worlds, are seven thousand times as big as Havona, that is a major understatement. They're altogether much bigger, aren't they? And these worlds aren't moving at random. They're moving in the linear procession of seven circuits. It takes more room out here for the helter-skelter motions of Orvonton as compared with the regular, orderly motions in Havona. I have the belief that the central creation figures in at probably 1/100th of one per cent of the total volume of the grand universe. One one hundredth of one per cent. Or, the relationship on one penny to a hundred dollars. I think such a small percentage of such a large volume can be cheerfully ignored. I think the hole in the doughnut is so small that we can calculate without worrying about it. So, I'm going to assume that the diameter of the whole grand universe is twice the transverse diameter of Orvonton.



THE LOCATION OF UVERSA



By Tom Allen,
Oklahoma City, OK

In the end, we really cannot say just exactly where Uversa is located. It has an indeterminate central location, but interpretations of the language used leave a plethora of cosmographical possibilities. Speculation must be exhaustive in order to guess correctly about the location of Uversa, but even then it is just a guess. In the following quotes, the bolded and underlined areas are for emphasis, and because these are the words we must mostly consider in comprehending the location of Uversa. This discussion will require looking back on these words repeatedly and carefully analyzing their meanings and diction interpretations. These are all of the references to the location of Uversa in *The Urantia Book*.

*The **whirl** of the ten major sectors, the so-called star drifts, **about the Uversa headquarters** of Orvonton. [15:3.13] (P. 168)*

*While each superuniverse government presides **near the center of the evolutionary universes of its space segment**,... While **sharing the light of near-by suns**,... These headquarters worlds belong to one of the **greater systems situated near the astronomical center of their respective superuniverses**. 15:7.1] (P. 174)*

Uversa is favorably situated for the work of this colony, not only because of its central location, but also because there are no gigantic living or dead suns near at hand to disturb the energy currents. [30:3.2] (P. 338)

*The Satania system of inhabited worlds is **far removed from Uversa and that great sun cluster** which functions as the **physical or astronomic***

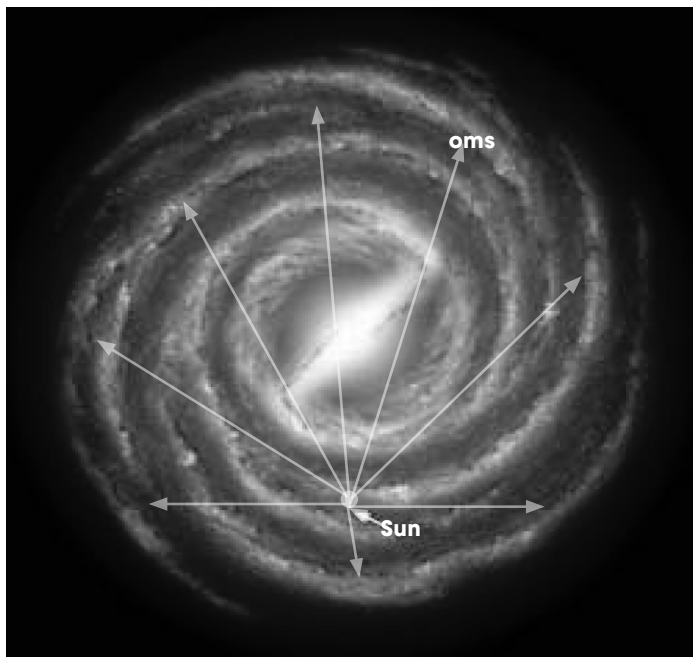
*center of the seventh superuniverse. From **Jerusem**, the headquarters of Satania, it is **over two hundred thousand light-years** to the **physical center** of the superuniverse of Orvonton, far, far away in the **dense diameter** of the Milky Way. Satania is on the periphery of the local universe, and Nebadon is now well out towards the edge of Orvonton. From the outermost system of inhabited worlds to the center of the superuniverse is a trifle less than **two hundred and fifty thousand light-years**. [32:2.11] (PP. 359–360)*

Using the model that Orvonton is comprised of the local group of galaxies, at least three possible solutions as to the location of Uversa can be drawn from the clues given in these quotations.

BARYCENTER SOLUTION

A barycenter is an astronomical term to denote the specific location where the common center of mass around which two or more bodies revolve. The local group has a barycenter in an unknown location. It is conceivable from these quotes that Uversa is “near” the “astronomic center”, or barycenter, “of the evolutionary universes of its space segment”. The barycenter could be the location of Uversa if a “greater system” or “that great sun cluster” is “near the center.” At the center of the Milky Way it is believed that there is situated an immense black hole estimated to be the mass of four million suns named Sagittarius A*. If SagA* can be described as a gigantic living or dead sun, then Uversa could not be located there, especially since the center of the Milky Way is only about twenty five to thirty thousand light years away from us, not over two hundred thousand light years. The physical center, which would be the barycenter, is in the direction of the dense diameter of the Milky Way and could be two hundred thousand light years in the direction of center of our galaxy, or to anywhere in the direction along the diameter from perimeter to perimeter in the line of site on the plane of the Milky Way. The “dense diameter of the Milky Way” is one hundred thousand light years wide. Notice that it does not say “densest.” Thus the dense diameter can be conceived as area spanning 360° around Monmatia.

Uversa is “near” the center, but how near? The barycenter is an undetermined place that lies somewhere around the Milky Way and the rest of the local group. The



Possible directions toward the barycenter all through the “dense diameter” of the Milky Way, with speculation that the direction of the dense diameter is most likely south west, south east or due south toward Andromeda from the current Monmatia position. This is because oms (outermost system) is 50,000 lys away further away than Jerusem. These arrows can be conceived in three dimensions with the arrows pointing in all directions up or down as well.

word, “near” is so nonspecific that many interpretations are available. The barycenter solution is one of them, depending on how far “near” is. If the barycenter of the local group is two hundred thousand light years in some direction along a one hundred thousand light year dense diameter from Jerusem, and if a great sun cluster is identified along that line of sight, then Uversa would be “near” that cluster. The barycenter solution works conceptually for now, but if the barycenter is well demarcated in the future and is not at the center of a “greater system,” or in the direction of the dense diameter of the Milky Way, then this conclusion must be ruled out. But finding the location of the barycenter is a daunting task.

Members of the local group are still being located and the mass estimates will long be suspect and uncertain in the near future. Much research must be completed before further revelation will be available. The barycenter would probably be to the south in the picture above if the barycenter is intuitively closer to Andromeda and Triangulum which are in this direction. This is because the “outermost system” (oms) is another fifty thousand light years away. In about one hundred and twenty five million years, oms will be nearer the barycenter than Jerusem and

we will be two hundred and fifty million light years from Uversa provided the barycenter and Uversa are somewhat south of the Milky Way.

What did the revelators mean with the term “dense diameter?” The above illustration gives any number of directions such a diameter can take relative to our sun’s location. Of course it is densest in the direction of Sagittarius, but there is lessened density still in the opposite direction and toward Andromeda.

More evidence that Uversa is possibly located at the barycenter is the analogous fact that Salvington is located “at the exact energy-mass center of the local universe. But your local universe is not a single astronomic system, though a large system does exist at its physical center.” [32:2.4] (P. 359) If the Salvington model resembles a similar location for Uversa, then the superuniverse capital could also be located at the exact energy-mass center, or barycenter, of the local group, as is Salvington. The energy-mass center for the Virgo supercluster is not even remotely calculable.

The “outermost system” of inhabited worlds is two hundred and fifty thousand light years away on the far side of the Milky Way, away from the direction to Uversa and the barycenter. Because the Milky Way is in rotation, or whirling, in about one hundred million years, we will be on the other side of the galaxy and we will perhaps be the outermost system of inhabited worlds. So if the outermost system is fifty thousand more light years away today, the direction toward the barycenter would be more likely in the southerly direction as depicted in the above picture.

HYPOTENUSE THEORY

Some may insist that the physical center in the dense diameter of the Milky Way cannot be interpreted any other way than as the absolute center of the Milky Way, or the location of SagA*. This theory is not likely, but consider that Uversa is directly above or below, “near,” this physical center. This concept is obtusely akin to the barycenter solution but gives another specific direction for the location of Uversa. If the physical center of Uversa is located in a “greater system” directly above or below the center of the galactic bulge, then the hypotenuse of the right angle from Jerusem to Uversa would be 200,000 light years. The distance to the center of the Milky Way from Urantia is about thirty thousand light years. (Jerusem is probably not relatively far away from Urantia.) The vertical value would be 197,000 light years above or below the galactic bulge. Boötes Dwarf I is presently nearly vertical to the center of the Milky Way and is estimated to be 197,000 light years away.

Only two or three “greater systems” have presently been identified to lie within 200,000 light years (± 10). They are Boötes Dwarf I, Small Magellanic Cloud, and Ursa Minor Dwarf.¹ This solution is not very likely owing to the fact that these dwarf galaxies seem to be rotating around the Milky Way awaiting amalgamation therein, but is interesting to contemplate, pending true direction estimates of rotation and more specific location and proper motion measurements. Another problem with this location, is that SagA* periodically erupts with incredible volumes of cosmic rays which project vertically to the plane of the Milky Way. This “seffert flare” of X-rays, gamma rays, radio waves probably directly hit the Magellanic clouds around two million years ago with scars of ionization and hydrogen streaming.² This is probably not a very stable place for Uversa to be situated. But perhaps Uversa is well insulated from such catastrophes. Of course these greater systems may not be gravitationally bound to the Milky Way and conceptually the Milky Way is revolving around this “great sun cluster.” This theory is likely to be easily dismissed, but at least it is an imaginable solution.

DIVERTING DISTANCE THEORY

The two hundred and fifty thousand light year distance to Uversa can be explained by diverting the distance to the Orvonton capital. Suppose you were to travel from San Francisco to New York City. If you decide to fly, as the crow flies, you would board your plane and about two thousand five hundred miles later you would arrive. Instead, you decide to drive. At the end of your journey you notice you have driven about three thousand miles. This is an 18% difference in distance. This distance would even be less if you drove through an imaginary tunnel that ran in a straight line through the earth’s crust to New York. Perhaps the distance to Uversa is similar in distance measurements. If you went directly to Uversa as the neutrino flies through uncurved space, it may be a significantly shorter distance than if you had to get there through the many routes through our well organized but dispersed superuniverse. Today we know that the distance to the physical center of the Milky Way is approximately twenty five to thirty thousand light years.

Whatever the “physical center” of the superuniverse of Orvonton turns out to be, barycenter, SagA*, or somewhere else, the distance to the central location of Uversa can be measured differently by imagining that the distance to Uversa as described by the revelators is the route taken by celestial beings, not in the line of sight, but rather diverted around the spiral arms of the Milky Way from Jerusem

through Edentia, Salvington, Ensa, and Splandon to Uversa, all of which adds up to over two hundred thousand light years. Such thinking “outside the box” is plausible and cannot be ruled out pending further revelation.

SO-CALLED STAR DRIFTS

The first quote above apparently does not define the location of Uversa as being central to the Milky Way. If the so-called star drifts, as detailed in Chapter 16, are imbedded within the Milky Way and if they whirl about the Uversa headquarters of Orvonton, then the barycenter solution is still the most plausible of all solutions. The whirling could be conceived as the age long orbiting of all the major sectors within the rotating Milky Way, whirling around the barycenter which is near to where Uversa is located. The major sectors of the Milky Way would thus whirl around the SagA* as they all make their way around the more distant barycenter. Of course the location of Uversa is “near” the center, so again, what is the relative definition of “near?” Someday in the distant superuniverse ages of light and life, when Orvonton has completed its growth, the barycenter will perhaps be at the center of the star drift whirl. Does our revelation project such a condition even when the barycenter is presently afar off? Only further revelation has the final answer to these probing questions, although future scientific evolution will be needed to make revelation available.

Critical interpretation can thus come up with these alternative speculative conclusions as to the location of Uversa if the local group is the model for superuniverse number seven. If the Virgo supercluster is the model for the superuniverse, then the two hundred thousand light years number as the distance to the physical center of Orvonton is exponentially too low. It is very difficult to conceive that analogy can be used to reconcile the huge difference in distances. If Uversa is in the Virgo cluster, then it is estimated on average to be about sixty million light years away. In spite of probable distance miscalculations, the Virgo supercluster is estimated to be one hundred to two hundred million light years in diameter.^{3,4} Therefore those who believe that the Virgo supercluster is Orvonton must assume that these distances are fairly reliable, since the papers reveal that spectroscopic estimations are fairly reliable among our superuniverses. [12:4.14] (P. 134) We could make the supposition that the other six superclusters, which in this model would logically make up the grand universe, are approximately as large. This would extend the grand universe to a circumference of at least seven hundred million to fourteen hundred million light years making the

diameter at least two to five hundred million light years. *Urantia Book* numbers are at strong variance. Even the first outer space level which is assumed to be much larger than the grand universe is revealed to be only about fifty million light years in depth beyond the grand universe.⁵ [12:1.14] (P. 134)

Local groups closest to us, which are feasibly our associate superuniverses, are from ten to thirty million light years away. These are the distances which seem to be fairly reliable. Comparing the size of superclusters with the specific dimensions given in the *Urantia* papers, the difference is enormous. Two hundred thousand versus sixty million is not reconcilable outside of analogy, thus believing that the revelators were deliberately in error. Could analogy seek to set up a ratio which if properly analyzed would supply an accurate distance solution? Only the space contraction distance measurement theory could begin literally to compensate for these huge discrepancies. (Chapter 7) True, the English usage is not clear, but it is not unreasonable. Supercluster as superuniverse advocates could agree that distance estimates are grossly in error, but by this huge magnitude?

Irwin Ginsburgh speculated that because of the current distance estimates of distant galaxies, the Great Attractor, and the small diameter of the first outer space level given in the papers, that the numbers in the *Urantia* papers are technically wrong by error or by design.⁶ This is how he settles his concept of the Milky Way as minor sector. He concludes that these quotes were actually meant to be increased by a factor of one thousand. The two hundred and fifty thousand light year number should have read two hundred and fifty million light years. The twenty-five million light year activity extending into the first outer space level should have read twenty-five billion light years. [12:1.14] (PP. 129–130) He contends that with current distance understanding, we should just figure out that this is what they meant, but could not tell us. Instead they gave a figure easily transposed to the higher number by a factor of one thousand to make us guess at their analogy with the knowledge that these numbers will bear out satisfactorily in the future.

Is this the shadow of a hair turning or is it ethically reasonable and responsible for the revelators to have done this? And why? This is a convenient conclusion, but obviates the possibility of conclusively determining true distance cosmology from the numbers given. How many other times would the revelators have done this with the myriad of other numbers given in the papers? The apparently inaccurate one million light year Andromeda

distance gave a then humanly perceived value that could be verified in the future as incorrect. No human is saying that we are two hundred thousand light years from Uversa. This does not need to be corrected from inaccurate human calculation. We could not trust any number given in the papers if it is incorrect. If it suited our paradigm, we could say the revelators meant that there are more than one trillion suns illuminating and warming Orvonton instead of more than ten trillion, or Andronover was initiated a billion years ago instead of a trillion. We must work with the numbers we have and not be tempted to rewrite them.

The following quote indicates that advanced local universes reside in the great central buldge, and may give a hint as to the location of Uversa:

The local universes are in closer proximity as they approach Havona; the circuits are greater in number, and there is increased superimposition, layer upon layer. But farther out from the eternal center there are fewer and fewer systems, layers, circuits, and universes. [15:3.16] (P. 168)

This difficult paragraph could be interpreted as follows. The “approach” to Havona is experienced not in physical distance, but in a figurative way. This tells us that the “closer proximity” is in the manner of approaching the relative perfection of Havona. These advanced local universes were the earliest local universes in Orvonton and accumulated near the center of the Milky Way’s watchlike center. These local universes have “increased superimposition.” This is a good description of the center bulge of the Milky Way. Untold local universes, many in light and life, probably abide there.

If one considers the diverting distance theory to Uversa explained in Chapter 9, and one believes that Uversa is near the center of the Milky Way, then this quote makes sense in terms of physical distance.

If Uversa is at the center of the Milky Way, one would need to subscribe to the diverting distance theory postulated in Chapter 9 to overcome the two hundred thousand distance problem which is the distance from Jerusalem to Uversa. If Uversa is near the middle of the Milky Way, then all the highly evolved local universes superimposed upon one another would be closer to Havona, because the only way to enter Havona is by going from Uversa.

Analogy can only say that these superimpositions are behavior from the watchlike clumping of galaxies about the Virgo cluster. But if one believes that the Milky Way is a minor sector, then why did this paragraph not mention minor sectors rather than local universes? The last use

of the term “universes” probably means local universes, but analogists could interpret it as minor sectors as well. Analogists must postulate that the thousands of Virgo supercluster galaxies are minor sectors. But, of course only one thousand minor sectors are projected in Orvonton. The idea that the thousands of Virgo supercluster galaxies are minor sectors is either inconsistent with the concept of supercluster Orvonton, or an amalgamation theory must be surmised among the many galaxies within the Virgo supercluster.

A conclusive search to find Uversa will be finalized when we find a “great sun cluster” that is more than two hundred thousand light years away in the direction of the local group barycenter and through the dense diameter of the Milky Way.

FOOTNOTES

1. <http://www.atlasofheuniverse.com/galaxies.html>
2. <http://arxiv.org/pdf/1309.5455v1.pdf>
3. http://heasarc.nasa.gov/docs/cosmic/local_supercluster_info.html
4. <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-the-virgo-supercluster.htm>
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Publications Plea

Have you ever thought of writing an article about your experiences with *The Urantia Book*? How about an announcement of readership activities in your vicinity? The Publications Committee of the Fellowship serves the community of readers in three different ways:

1. The monthly Mini Messenger—announcements of current Fellowship activities
2. The Mighty Messenger—twice yearly newsletter with more extensive reports of Urantia community activities in the U.S. and abroad
3. The Herald—annual magazine with in-depth studies on widely varied topics by readers who may have special interests in Urantia Book related areas.

We invite you to participate in any or all of the above. If you wish we can help you develop your ideas for publication. For further information, contact the Fellowship office at fellowship@urantia-book.org.

WHAT IS INTERFAITH?



By Michael Painter,
Plainfield, IN

Have you ever observed two strangers who meet for the first time? There is a common process that they go through. Each asks questions of the other. The usual topics are whether they are married or single, do they have children, what kind of work they do, where they grew up, etc. The purpose of this mutual query is to try to find some common ground. Why? When we have something in common with another person, we feel a connection to them. We want to continue the conversation to get to know them better to see if there is a possibility for friendship at some level. Conversely, when we don't find any areas of commonality, we feel alienated from that person. The affective symptoms of not connecting with someone are tension, uncomfortableness, wanting to distance ourselves from them, and even fear to varying degrees. As an example, consider how difficult it is to engage even in civil conversation, let alone develop a friendship, when you meet someone whose political views are opposed to yours. It takes a real effort for both people to remain civil and try to find some common ground. Why bother? Aren't they just a misguided, immature, or uninformed person who refuses to see the truth when you present it to them?

This scenario can become even more intolerant when we discover they have different religious beliefs. Why? I would suggest that the level of fear is greater in religious differences than political, cultural, sexual orientation, and gender differences. I remember reading a study from Princeton University that showed that people are more afraid of a "cult" member moving next to them than they are of different racial groups or other categories. As you know, any religion that people know nothing about is often labeled as a cult.

So, what can we conclude from these observations? My point is that if you engage in any form of interfaith activity from the Parliament of the Worlds' Religions to meeting your new neighbor with the attitude and intention of converting them, you will do damage to the purpose of interfaith. This is not to say there is not a time and place for proselytizing your beliefs. It is to say interfaith events are not the time and place for proselytizing. Why not? Because these fellow believers already have a religion, a set of beliefs, or a view of reality that they are comfortable with. They will resent your arrogance in assuming your religious views are superior to theirs and not be interested in engaging, sharing, or dialoguing with you. If, then, an interfaith event is not an appropriate venue for proselytizing, what is the point of attending such events?

There is a great amount of good will that can be enhanced at interfaith gatherings. It is an opportunity to build positive perceptions, trust, and further the growth of a true brotherhood/sisterhood among all believers. At an intellectual/theological level, the focus is on what religions have in common rather than their differences. We humans are far more inclined to discuss differences than similarities. What are the affective results of focusing on our differences from others? It makes us feel different, alienated, separate, and fearful. If we could adjust our mode of thinking to more synthesis (what do apparently different things have in common) than analysis (what are the differences between things), we could better see what we have in common with other religionists.

I'm often puzzled when I hear people say, "Well, you know we're all different!", as if that is a conversation ender. Of course we have uniqueness, and let's thank our Creator for this gift. However, this is only half the story. It is equally true that we humans are all alike. We call this human nature. Thinking, feeling, seeking friends, seeking love, working jobs, etc. are all common to humans. So, why do we humans tend to focus so much on our differences rather than our similarities? You fall in love with someone and you love your children. Can you really say that your love for your partner or your children is qualitatively superior in your culture or belief system than someone's of a different culture or belief system? Love is love no matter what the culture or belief system. Therefore, how would you know if your love for the Ultimate Divine Reality, whatever name a belief system gives to it, is any lesser or greater than some

other religionist's love for the UDR because their culture or beliefs are different?

So, what are the attitudes and intentions we need to bring to interfaith events and encounters? First and foremost, we need to have a respectful attitude toward other religionists' desires to seek the UDR in their own way. As *Urantia Book* readers, we are well aware that the same spirit of God, the Thought Adjuster, indwells each human and is doing its best to lead them Godward. This most important fact means every spiritually seeking human is part of the spiritual brotherhood/sisterhood of our planet, Urantia. This is true no matter how misguided you think

different paths climbing to get to the same mountain top. The common elements of these different paths are a fuller understanding of the UDR as expressed in the different theologies, a way to help guide us on our climb as seen in the moral codes and rituals and ceremonies, a way to find greater happiness in this life expressed as the comfort of having faith and the surety of some ultimate justice for our struggles, and a way to feel connected to the spiritual brotherhood/sisterhood of all seekers as expressed in the universal teaching of the Golden Rule. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but hopefully it presents enough similarities to explain this intellectual realization of the

Imagine your fellow seekers as different notes and different instruments. Enjoy the experience of this great symphony and chorus of fellow seekers.

their doctrines may be. Imagine that you are speaking to their Thought Adjuster when you address them. Would you be disrespectful or disdainful toward their views? I would hope not! Jesus said we should love the sinner but hate the sin. By analogy, you can dislike a person's beliefs or actions but not disrespect the person. Should a teacher disrespect his/her students because they don't know as much as the teacher? Accept that they are pursuing the UDR in the best way that they know. All of our human understandings are partial, limited, and colored by our culture and education. Seek to understand, understanding leads to compassion, and compassion leads to loving all—even our enemies!

Relish the fact that you are in the company of fellow spiritual seekers. Ask them to share the wisdom and insights they have gained from their spiritual path. Imagine your fellow seekers as different notes and different instruments. Enjoy the experience of this great symphony and chorus of fellow seekers. Realize what a blessing you have been given to share this experience with others. The right intention, then, is one of sharing religious/spiritual experience as opposed to converting or proselytizing. Seek first to understand and then to be understood as Stephen Covey suggests.

There are two ways in which this more mature attitude toward interfaith experiences can be accomplished. One is by intellectually understanding it which results from the already mentioned recognition of the common elements of all religions. It produces a perception of the universal nature of all religions. This universalism allows us to see value in and have respect for all religions as we see them as

universal quality of religions and religious belief.

A second way to realize this more mature attitude toward interfaith is by "going within." In making this inner journey, a person can "feelingly experience" the connectedness of all humanity. Whether you call it the "presence of God" or the "at-one-ment", the feeling and experience is similar in its result. The result is the experiential feeling that all humans, as children of God or a part of the Universe, are equally loved or are an equal part of the whole. While this feeling of connectedness is subjective and each person must experience it on their own, it is undeniably real to those who experience it. *The Urantia Book* explanation of this phenomenon would be feeling the presence of God resulting from communion with God and recognizing that each person is indwelt by a fragment of God. How could you not feel connected to others and treat them with respect if you truly realized you were standing in the presence of God each time you interact with another person?

In summary, the purpose of interfaith encounters, whether on a large scale or one-on-one, is for sharing rather than converting. How do you know the difference? You discern whether the other person is satisfied with their belief system or whether they are still searching for a better way. How do you know if they are still searching? Sense the intent of their questions. If the questions are only to gain information or knowledge about your beliefs, then they are primarily interested in mutually sharing beliefs. If their questions are more about "why" than "what", then they may be still searching for wisdom and deeper insights. If you are

unsure, ask your inner spirit to give you guidance as to how to interpret their questions or comments.

Interfaith experiences can occur any time. They are not all grand venues like the Parliament of the World's Religions. Any time you encounter someone with set beliefs and who seems content with those beliefs, you are engaging in an interfaith experience. When you interact with someone whether in relationships, political discussions, or religious dialogue with the attitude of you are right and they are wrong, you are likely to encounter a defensive reaction. No one likes to be told that what they believe is wrong. The more likely truth and reasonable approach is that there is some truth in both perspectives. Seek to build on what you have in common and can agree upon. This is the method Jesus used on his Mediterranean Tour. What makes it possible to endure the frustrations of having different views? In relationships, it's the love that is the glue, and in politics it's the sense of unity as Americans first and Democrats or Republicans second. In religion, it is the sense of the unity of our spiritual connection to other religionists and the intellectual understanding of the universalism of religious elements while the different doctrines/theologies become of secondary importance.

The purpose of interfaith is a classic example of "unity, but not uniformity." We are unified in spirit but do not all think alike, and that is perfectly fine. The greatest barrier to interfaith dialogue is the unfortunate belief that all religionists must think alike and this has turned much of religion into being about "right belief" instead of "right spirit." *The Urantia Book* is a revelation designed to expand and correct some of our conceptions of truth, but it is still partial and incomplete. Let's not make our human "need to be right" get in the way of sharing our fruits of the spirit with our fellow religionists in interfaith experiences!

Michael Painter lives in Plainfield, IN and is teaching Philosophy part-time at a Junior College. He has two sons and three grandchildren. A reader since 1972, he has attended, presented, and helped plan conferences over the years. As a member of the Orvonton UB society, he currently serves as President. Also, he is a member of the General Council and was recently elected to the Executive Committee as Chair of the Interfaith Committee. He welcomes your comments and feedback on this article. You can contact him at: mpainter913@gmail.com.

WHO SAID THAT?

The following are examples of questions or statements made by different apostles. Can you identify the speaker?

1. Can any such good thing come out of Nazareth? [137:2.6] (P. 1527)
2. Do you speak this parable to us, your apostles, or is it for all the disciples? [165:6.1] (P. 1824)
3. Why did he resist me and so readily lend an ear to you? [141:6.2] (P. 1592)
4. I went to see a man who was teaching in your name and even proclaiming to cast out devils. Now the fellow has never been with us...therefore I forbade him to do such things. [159:2.1] (P. 1764)
5. Master, my brethren do not comprehend your deep sayings. Are you speaking to us in parables? [158:7.2] (P. 1759)
6. What shall we say to these gentiles? [143:1.2] (P. 1607)
7. How can a new believer in your teachings really know, really be certain, about the truth of the gospel of the kingdom? [146:3.3] (P. 1641)
8. How shall we learn to see alike and thereby enjoy more harmony among ourselves? [141:5.1] (P. 1591)
9. Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? (159:1.4) (P. 1763)
10. Woman, you are a Greek speaking gentile. It is not right that you should expect the Master to take the bread intended for the children of the favored household and cast it to the dogs." (156:1.4) (P. 1735)
11. Why are some persons so much more happy and contented than others? Is contentment a matter of religious experience? [149:5.1] (P. 1674)
12. Master, I would like to inquire whether spiritual beings are concerned in the production of strange and extraordinary events in the material world..." [166:4.1] (P. 1830)

Answers: 1. Nathaniel, 2. Peter, 3. Simon Zelotes, 4. John, 5. Andrew, 6. Philip, 7. Thomas, 8. James, 9. Peter, 10. Simon Zelotes, 11. Simon Zelotes, 12. Thomas

THE SHROUD OF TURIN AND THE URANTIA PAPERS



By Dennis Marshall,
Fort Wayne, IN

First of all, let me declare that I enter this discussion without prejudice. For though I was raised a Roman Catholic, I left the church around age sixteen and never had put much stock in virgin births, visions of Mary, or the Shroud of Turin.

A religious metamorphosis led me through atheism, agnosticism, Buddhism, and a flurry of other “isms” culminating in an epiphany that suggested I check out “that Jewish carpenter”. Included in the experience was an understanding that incense, canons, rote prayer, priests, relics, and saints were not necessary to understand, believe, and act upon what I would thus learn.

Several years afterward, in 1971, I happened upon the Urantia Papers and they have since remained my go-to source for all things “Jewish carpenter”.

However, around 1980 I came across a *National Geographic* magazine at a friend’s house dedicated to a scientific study of the Shroud of Turin (STURP). They gathered forensic scientists, professional art investigators, professional skeptics, and experts in fabric, paint, and photography. I read the issue and was quite surprised that, while they couldn’t scientifically prove that the Shroud was genuine, they were equally unable to certify that it was not authentic. The team’s conclusion was that radiocarbon dating was recommended.

In spite of the glacial pace of the Vatican bureaucracy, in 1988 permission was granted to radiocarbon date portions of the Shroud by three separate institutions. The results gave dates ranging from AD 1260 to AD 1390. This certainly took the air out of many sails and appeared to settle the issue for good. It wasn’t long before criticism of the radiocarbon dating process began, but for those of us with pretensions of being scientific, radiocarbon dating was

trusted, especially when the results from three separate and credible institutions were relatively consistent.

Myself, I was in a quandary. The radiocarbon dating, though convincing, didn’t explain the inability of the equally scientific *National Geographic* study to come to a conclusion about how the Shroud was created. So, I decided to let the question of the Shroud’s authenticity rest while I busied myself with other interests.

Because I remained torn between two seemingly irreconcilable scientific positions, I tried to keep abreast of any new research of the Shroud that might help clarify the situation, but none of the explanations altered my uncertainty regarding the two seemingly contradictory scientific studies.

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE SHROUD

At some point I read an account about how Dr. Raymond Rogers, one of the principal participants and skeptics of the STURP study, had changed his mind about the credibility of the original radiocarbon dating. Apparently, two French investigators who work with fabric realized that the tested section of the Shroud was actually an amalgam of different materials. If you look at the Shroud’s full-body frontal view, the area that the sample was cut from was the bottom left of the Shroud (bottom left of image). Perhaps those in charge thought it was the least damaging area to remove from the Shroud, but as you look at the image you can see that nothing fluoresces in that lower section of the Shroud. It is essentially a data free section of the data rich Shroud.

What Shroud researchers Joseph Marino and Sue Benford noticed was that the lower left section of the Shroud appeared to have mended the original linen/flax material with the addition of dyed cotton material by a method known to textile experts as a French Weave. This process involves unraveling both the original fabric and its intended patch. Their respective threads are then re-woven into a seamless result. This means that portions of both fabrics are intermingled for a substantial area between the two separate fabrics. The researchers suggested that perhaps this was why the material samples were differentially radiocarbon dated from AD 1260 to AD 1390. They further suggested that if the replacement material was medieval, the radiocarbon dating results should suggest a more medieval date the further each sample was located from the main body of the Shroud.

Well, Dr. Rogers went ballistic. More nonsense, he thought. But since he still retained parts of the original samples, he arranged another radiocarbon dating test that he was certain would confirm the original testing results. However, it turned out that the French weave premise was valid, and Dr. Rogers penned an apology along with his results, setting the Shroud world on its head yet again.

However, this new testing didn't really prove anything except that the original radiocarbon dating tests were unable to be accepted as uncompromised. The good news is that there are charred segments of the Shroud that were saved in AD 1534 when the Poor Clair nuns patched the Shroud after it was saved from a burning church. These charred pieces from the center of the Shroud had been saved in small boxes and could be made available for radiocarbon dating, thus avoiding any further compromise to the remaining Shroud. This is fortuitous because before anything can be radiocarbon dated, it is first burned to pure carbon before it is tested. So...if and when the Vatican gets around to releasing some of the charred pieces to be tested, you and I will be unable to decide which (or both) scientific studies seem to be the truth.

URANTIA BOOK ADMONITIONS

Urantia Book readers will find several admonitions that advise against the leaving on Urantia (Earth) of anything materially related to Jesus that could wind up being worshiped.

Advice of Immanuel to Michael (Jesus)

*To the end that you may not unnecessarily contribute to the creation of subsequent stereotyped systems of Urantia religious beliefs or other types of nonprogressive religious loyalties, we advise you still further: **Leave no writings behind you on the planet. Refrain from all writing upon permanent materials; enjoin your associates to make no images or other likenesses of yourself in the flesh.** See that nothing potentially idolatrous is left on the planet at the time of your departure.* (my emphasis)

*While you will live the normal and average social life of the planet, being a normal individual of the male sex, you will probably not enter the marriage relation, which would be honorable and consistent with your bestowal; but I must remind you that one of the incarnation **mandates of Sonarington forbids the leaving of human offspring on any planet by a bestowal Son of Paradise origin.*** (my emphasis) [120:3.7–8] (P. 1330)

Planning for Public Work

*The first thing Jesus did after thinking through the general plan of co-ordinating his program with John's movement, was to review in his mind the instructions of Immanuel. Carefully he thought through the advice given him concerning his methods of labor, and that he was to **leave no permanent writing on the planet.** Never again did Jesus write on anything but sand. On his next visit to Nazareth, much to the sorrow of his brother Joseph, Jesus destroyed all of his writing that was preserved on the boards about the carpenter shop, and which hung upon the walls of the old home.* (my emphasis) [136:4.2] (P. 1514)

The Crucifixion

...Meanwhile the four soldiers assigned to the Master's crucifixion, as was the custom, had divided his clothes among them, one taking the sandals, one the turban, one the girdle, and the fourth the cloak. This left the tunic, or seamless vestment reaching down to near the knees, to be cut up into four pieces, but when the soldiers saw what an unusual garment it was, they decided to cast lots for it. Jesus looked down on them while they divided his garments, and the thoughtless crowd jeered at him.

*It was well that the Roman soldiers took possession of the Master's clothing. Otherwise, **if his followers had gained possession of these garments, they would have been tempted to resort to superstitious relic worship.** The Master desired that his followers should have nothing material to associate with his life on earth. He wanted to leave mankind only the memory of a human life dedicated to the high spiritual ideal of being consecrated to doing the Father's will.* (my emphasis) [187:2.7–8] (PP. 2023–24)

These passages make it clear that if the Shroud is genuine then it is a genuine mistake. Since the ministering spirits had to seek permission to remove Jesus' body, I think it's safe to say that they didn't have carte blanche to interject as they pleased and were powerless to remove the burial cloths. There are many instances in *The Urantia Book* where the ministering spirits were not permitted to remediate problems in the mortal realm (the frog story), especially when the free will of humans was involved.

It is also clear that Immanuel's concern was well founded in as much as even the uncertified (by the Catholic church) Shroud has still resulted in cathedrals, adoration, and much relic worship that focuses attention and energy not on the message of Jesus but towards what is essentially a piece of cloth.

URANTIA BOOK REFERS TO THE BURIAL CLOTH

Urantia Book readers will find in the book twelve mentions of Jesus' burial cloth that do not seem to contradict the circumstances necessary for the creation of the Shroud.

The Burial of Jesus

*They carried the body into the tomb, a chamber about ten feet square, where they hurriedly prepared it for burial. The Jews did not really bury their dead, they simply embalmed them. Joseph and Nicodemus had brought with them **large quantities of myrrh and aloes**, and they now wrapped the body with bandages saturated with these solutions. When the embalming was completed, they tied a napkin about the face, **wrapped the body in a linen sheet**, and reverently placed it on a shelf in the tomb.* (my emphasis) [188:1.4] (P. 2013)

The Material Body of Jesus

*The tomb of Joseph was empty. Not because the body of Jesus had been rehabilitated or resurrected, but because the celestial hosts had been granted their request to afford it a **special and unique dissolution**, a return of the "dust to dust" without the intervention of the delays of time and without the operation of the ordinary and visible processes of mortal decay and material corruption.* (my emphasis)

*The mortal remains of Jesus underwent the same natural process of elemental disintegration as characterizes all human bodies on earth except that, in point of time, this natural mode of dissolution was greatly accelerated, hastened to that point where it became **well-nigh instantaneous**.* (my emphasis) [189:2.7–8] (PP. 2007–8)

Discovery of the Empty Tomb

*...in the recess of stone where they had laid Jesus, Mary saw only the folded napkin where his head had rested, the bandages wherewith he had been wrapped lying intact and as they had rested on the stone before the celestial hosts removed the body. **The covering sheet lay at the foot of the burial niche**.* (my emphasis) [189:4.6] (P. 2026)

The Women in the Tomb

*They had been by themselves over the Sabbath, and they conjectured that the body had been moved to another resting place. But when they pondered such a solution of their dilemma, **they were at a loss to account for the orderly arrangement of the grave cloths**, how could the body have been removed since the very bandages in which it was wrapped were left in position and apparently intact on the burial shelf?* (my emphasis) [189:4.9] (P. 2026)

Peter and John at the Tomb

*John, being younger than Peter, outran him and arrived first at the tomb. John tarried at the door, viewing the tomb, and it was just as Mary had described it. Very soon Simon Peter rushed up and, entering, saw the same empty tomb with **the grave cloths so peculiarly arranged**. And when Peter had come out, John also went in and saw it all for himself, and then they sat down on the stone to ponder the meaning of what they had seen and heard.* (my emphasis) [189:5.2] (P. 2027)

Peter and John Ponder

*Peter at first suggested that the grave had been rifled, that enemies had stolen the body, perhaps bribed the guards. But John reasoned that the grave would hardly have been left so orderly if the body had been stolen, and he **also raised the question as to how the bandages happened to be left behind, and so apparently intact**. And again they both went back into the tomb more closely to examine the grave cloths.* (my emphasis) [189:5.3] (P. 2027)

The Tomb is Cleared of the Sindon

*Nicodemus and the others doubted their story, doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead; they conjectured that the Jews had removed the body. Joseph and David were disposed to believe the report, so much so that they hurried out to inspect the tomb, and they found everything just as the women had described. And they were the last to so view the sepulcher, for the high priest sent the captain of the temple guards to the tomb at half past seven o'clock to remove the grave cloths. **The captain wrapped them all up in the linen sheet and threw them over a near-by cliff**.* (my emphasis) [190:1.2] (P. 2030)

WHAT IF THE SHROUD IS AUTHENTIC?

If it turns out that the Shroud is authentic, what will it mean to readers of the Urantia Papers? Actually very little. Even in this very paper, we have already been admonished to eschew the adoration and worship of material artifacts whether they are Bibles, Qurans, *Urantia Books*, relics or whatever, and focus on the truth in the message such objects contain.

Dennis Marshall discovered *The Urantia Book* in New Orleans in 1971. He is now retired after thirty years teaching Architectural Engineering Technology at Indiana University/Purdue in Fort Wayne Indiana. He is currently serving as president of the study group begun by Meredith Sprunger.

QUESTIONS ABOUT BEING HUMAN



By Michelle Klimesh,
San Ramon, CA

I opened the atlas and asked,
“Where does it hurt?”

And it answered

Everywhere
Everywhere
Everywhere

CS Lewis described the earth as enemy-occupied territory. There is no doubt that Urantia is a tough neighborhood. Lucifer’s betrayal was followed by Adam and Eve’s default, which was followed by the torture and murder of our Creator Son... clearly, this is not a normal planet.

We face horrific problems.

War, terrorism, refugee displacements

Racial, economic, and sexual abuse

Corruption in politics and business

Environmental destruction

Failure of education

Crime, drug addiction, human trafficking

Do you notice that everything on the list springs from human behavior?

We know that difficulties are inherent in the evolutionary process. In [2:5.8] (P. 39) a Divine Counselor says, “*When I observe the Creator Sons and their subordinate administrators struggling so valiantly with the manifold difficulties of time inherent in the evolution of the universes of*

space, I discover that I bear these lesser rulers of the universes a great and profound affection.”

God decided that it was a good idea to create imperfect beings, operating in imperfect universes. What was he thinking?

We should not underestimate the near-complete strangeness of the human creature. Living the human experience, we may be lulled into imagining that ours is a normal state of being, but think about it dispassionately. We live in bodies made of meat and bone, bodies evolved from fighting animals. Into this primitive, fragile vehicle, God has downloaded a pure spirit fragment. Animal imbued with spirit is the nature of our species.

The animal part of us comes equipped with survival mechanisms that help protect us in dangerous situations. But when we try to protect ourselves by separating from others, by ostracizing people who are different, by staying away from other races, religions, and cultures; then our animal selves are at odds with our spiritual development.

Our human fears try to protect us by building walls around our hearts, our thoughts, our homes, and even our neighborhoods. But the walls between people, the walls built by our fears, are precisely what created the problems we now face. Instead of protecting us, the walls perpetrate distrust and animosity that endangers us all.

Anything that tends to move us toward separation from each other, even our own human instincts, should be suspect. The influence from these animal defense mechanisms is powerful and pervasive; it should not be underestimated.

Why did God set things up this way? I don’t know. Paper [3:5] (PP. 50–52) describes how evolutionary life is beset by certain inevitabilities—hardships, error, predicaments, social inequalities—challenges that help us develop into the creatures God needs us to become. Since God allows us to struggle with this phase of development, we must assume that our participation in the system accrues to some permanent spiritual value. The difficulties we face here are the fodder for our own spiritual growth.

As depressing as it sounds, the fact that our problems are caused by people is good news. If humans have the power to cause these problems, we also have the power to solve them.

Here’s more good news. We already know these problems will be eradicated, because we know that the destiny of our world is to be settled in light and life. Paper

55 provides an alluring vision of the future. Imagine such a time on Urantia; a time when poverty has vanished, the races are blended, and the sexes work in partnership. Insanity has been eliminated. Economics are ethical, and people are essentially self-governing. Science, industry, and arts flourish. Armies no longer exist because wars are something studied in history books.

We know this is where we're headed.

It is crucial for us to focus on the future toward which we are progressing instead of imagining that our current problems are permanent. People on our planet will live in light and life, and those of us who know that should keep a laser-like attention on the time when people have already solved the problems we face today.

Then the question becomes, "How do we get there from here?"

As you may imagine, Jesus has something to say about it:

Then came forward one of the groups of the Pharisees to ask harassing questions, and the spokesman, signaling to Jesus, said: "Master, I am a lawyer, and I would like to ask you which, in your opinion, is the greatest commandment?" Jesus answered: "There is but one commandment, and that one is the greatest of all, and that commandment is: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second commandment is like this first; indeed, it springs directly therefrom, and it is: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these; on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." [174:4.2] (P. 1901)

The evening before he was killed, Jesus amended his instruction:

After a few moments of informal conversation, Jesus stood up and said: "When I enacted for you a parable indicating how you should be willing to serve one another, I said that I desired to give you a new commandment; and I would do this now as I am about to leave you. You well know the commandment which directs that you love one another; that you love your neighbor even as yourself. But I am not wholly satisfied with even that sincere devotion on the part of my children. I would have you perform still greater acts of love in the kingdom of the believing brotherhood. And so I give you this new commandment: That you love one another even as I have loved you. And by this will all men know that you are my disciples if you thus love one another. (180:1.1) (P. 1944)

First, we are to love God with our whole hearts and souls and minds and strength. Second, we are to prove it by

loving each other. How do we do that? Back to the book:

In the mind's eye conjure up a picture of one of your primitive ancestors of cave-dwelling times a short, misshapen, filthy, snarling hulk of a man standing, legs spread, club upraised, breathing hate and animosity as he looks fiercely just ahead. Such a picture hardly depicts the divine dignity of man. But allow us to enlarge the picture. In front of this animated human crouches a saber-toothed tiger. Behind him, a woman and two children. Immediately you recognize that such a picture stands for the beginnings of much that is fine and noble in the human race, but the man is the same in both pictures. Only, in the second sketch you are favored with a widened horizon. You therein discern the motivation of this evolving mortal. His attitude becomes praiseworthy because you understand him. If you could only fathom the motives of your associates, how much better you would understand them. If you could only know your fellows, you would eventually fall in love with them. [100:4.5] (P. 1098)

You cannot truly love your fellows by a mere act of the will. Love is only born of thoroughgoing understanding of your neighbor's motives and sentiments. It is not so important to love all men today as it is that each day you learn to love one more human being. If each day or each week you achieve an understanding of one more of your fellows, and if this is the limit of your ability, then you are certainly socializing and truly spiritualizing your personality. Love is infectious, and when human devotion is intelligent and wise, love is more catching than hate. But only genuine and unselfish love is truly contagious. If each mortal could only become a focus of dynamic affection, this benign virus of love would soon pervade the sentimental emotion-stream of humanity to such an extent that all civilization would be encompassed by love, and that would be the realization of the brotherhood of man. [100:4.6] (P. 1098)

Honestly, the solution to our list of problems is that we need to fall in love with each other. We need to get to know, really know, people who are not like us. We need to deeply listen to them so well that we fall in love with them. We need to stop listening to our animal instincts and start obeying the commandment to love each other the way God loves us.

We need to trust God, the same God who set up the system that allowed us to be born onto this strange planet with all of these horrible problems and difficulties. We need to trust God completely, enough that we're willing to trust people who are not like us. Even if they are a different color than we are. Even if they are a different gender, practice a different religion, or register with a different political party; even if they aren't perfect; even if we aren't perfect.

The only way we are going to activate the “benign virus” is to go outside of our natural comfort zones, and get close enough to be infected. Once infected, we need to return to the people with whom we identify, and help convince them of the value of the people who are different than we are.

Humans will solve these problems as soon as we learn to love each other so well that the whole world is infected with the contagious virus of love. It’s obviously easier said than done. We may as well get started.

This article is a written reflection of a presentation given to the Urantia Book Society of Los Angeles in September 2016.



as I read it through the first time, that my prayers had been answered more thoroughly and marvelously than I ever could have imagined has never left me.

I can’t remember a time in my life that I didn’t love God and Jesus. We often find fault with the faith we are born with, but all things considered, it gave me a real foundation for a sublime acceptance of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. However, only the revelation helped me truly know God. It is forever true in my experience, “*Human things must be known in order to be loved, but divine things must be loved in order to be known.*” [102.1.1] (P. 1118)

My passion for sharing the Urantia revelation has not dimmed from the first moment I picked it up. Quite the contrary, it has continued to grow and get stronger. Joining *The Urantia Book* Fellowship was an amazing opportunity for me. I joined the Fellowship in 1982, started doing public outreach in 1983, and began traveling nationally to do Urantia outreach in 1989. All along the way the Fellowship and members of the Fellowship were my constant support in these efforts. If you have a passion for outreach, scholarship, community, art, writing, music, and a host of other endeavors, and if you are willing to work, you may find, as I did, that the Fellowship will gladly help you.

The Fellowship helps readers every day, in so many wonderful ways. We help readers to find the book and each other, to study and understand the book, to contribute their unique gifts, to grow in community, to work on great projects with others, to build bridges to other faiths, to promote their own sincere efforts, to spread brotherly love around the world, and to be a part of a brotherhood of believers who believe in all the wonderful things *The Urantia Book* brings into each of our lives. We have done this faithfully, to the best of our ability, for 62 years.

This is why I support *The Urantia Book* Fellowship and why I hope you will too!

If you want to do something for the revelation, please consider helping us. We will gratefully receive you’re a contribution of your heart, your hands, your thoughts, and your financial support. Come serve with us! Send your donation by check to *The Urantia Book* Fellowship, PO Box 6631, Broomfield, CO 80021. Or go online to: www.urantiabook.org and select “Donate” from the center navigation menu.

- Full video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6DoEUq1fEc&t=1124s>
- The condensed version : <https://vimeo.com/187755204>
- Thich Nhat Hanh: “Compassionate Listening” interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyUxYflkhzo>
- Elizabeth Lesser: “Take the Other to Lunch” initiative https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_lesser_take_the_other_to_lunch

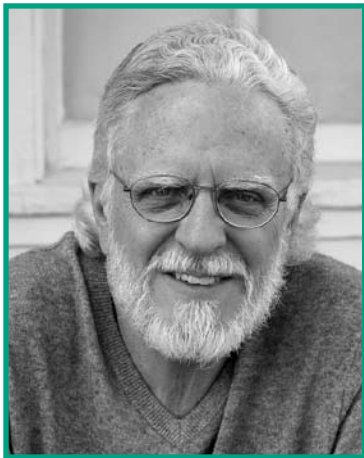
Michelle Klimesh, past President of the Fellowship, author of *The Story of Everything*, has been reading *The Urantia Book* since 1974. She is a member and past President of the Golden Gate Circle; attends study groups in San Ramon and Walnut Creek; and resides alternately in San Ramon, California and Spillville, Iowa.

What is your spiritual story? What were the chain of events that brought you seek and find *The Urantia Book*? Do you remember with great clarity the first time you ever opened the book, where you were, who you were with, what you were doing? Can you imagine what your life would be like had you never found it?

Do you remember the first time you engaged in fellowship with other *Urantia Book* readers? How about the first time you participated in a study group, retreat, or conference?

I remember exactly how I felt when I looked up from the book and said aloud, “I need to read this book.” The cathartic realization,

WHAT DOES THE URANTIA BOOK TELL US NEEDS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED?



By David Kantor,
Boulder, CO

It is very instructive to set aside all that we have learned about the origin of the revelation and the conjectured intentions of its authors and look at what the book itself has to say about the most important tasks at hand. If we go through the book and note every point where the authors suggest that we do some particular thing, we find ourselves with a list of tasks which can be divided into three major categories:

1. Tasks related to personal spiritual growth.
2. Tasks related to addressing the spiritual needs of our world.
3. Tasks related to the improvement of world political and social conditions.

The first category of tasks—those related to personal spiritual growth—are found throughout the book and are characterized by such quotes as:

“God-knowing creatures have only one supreme ambition...” [1:0.3] (P. 21)

“The great goal of human existence is ...” [110:3.4] (P. 1206)

“The transcendent goal of the children of time...” [1:0.3] (P. 21)

Because the Fellowship is primarily dedicated to the tasks in Group two, I will not list Group one tasks. Neither will I list Group three tasks, many of which may be found in 52:6, 81:6, throughout Papers 70 and 71, and elsewhere in the text. Following are some of the Group two tasks noted in *The Urantia Book*. Had I included all of Jesus’

exhortations to the twelve the list would have been much longer.

“Of all human knowledge...” [196:1.3] (P. 2090)

“If Christianity persists in neglecting its spiritual mission...” [195:9.4] (P. 2082)

“One of the most important things in human living...” [196:1.3] (P. 2090)

“The overstressed and isolated morality of modern religion . . . would rehabilitate itself if...” [2:7.9] (P. 43)

“A new and fuller revelation of the religion of Jesus...” [195:9.2] (P. 2082)

“The real purpose of all universe education is...” [2:7.12] (P. 43)

“Paganized and socialized Christianity stands in need of ...” [195:9.2] (P. 2082)

“Religion does need new leaders...” [195:9.4] (P. 2082)

“The religious challenge of this age...” [2:7.10] (P. 43)

“To “follow Jesus” means...” [196:1.3] (P. 2090)

“Some day a reformation in the Christian church...” [196:2.1] (P. 2091)

“The ultimate goal of society’s most advanced achievement can never hope to transcend ...” [196:2.11] (P. 2093)

“The quickest way to realize the brotherhood of man on Urantia is...” [52:6.7] (P. 598)

“All Urantia is waiting...” [94:12.7] (P. 1041)

“The common people heard Jesus gladly and they will again respond ... if...” [196:1.4] (P. 2090)

“The hour is striking...” [94:12.7] (P. 1041)

“The world needs more firsthand religion...” [195:9.8] (P. 2083)

“What an awakening the world would experience if...” [195:9.8] (P. 2083)

“..the religion of Jesus stands as the unsullied and transcendent spiritual summons...” [195:9.9] (P. 2083)

“If the Christian church would only dare...” [195:10.10] (P. 2085)

“..what is now most needed is Jesus...” [195:10.1] (P. 2084)

“The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth...” [195:10.1] (P. 2084)

“Modern culture must become spiritually baptized...” [195:10.1] (P. 2084)

“...when Jesus becomes thus lifted up...” [195:10.1] (P. 2084)

“...mankind languishes and stumbles . . . because...”
 [195:10.5] (P. 2084)
 “The call to the adventure...” [195:10.6] (P. 2084)
 “High-gear spiritual performances must await the new
 revelation...” [195:10.18] (P. 2086)
 “If Christianity could only grasp more of Jesus’ teachings...”
 [195:10.19] (P. 2086)
 “The hope of modern Christianity is that it should...”
 [195:10.20] (P. 2086)
 “The great hope of Urantia...” [195:10.16] (P. 2086)
 “Mortals in all stages of spirituality ... may find in the
 personal life of Jesus...” [196:2.4] (P. 2092)
 “Let all mankind benefit from...” [178:1.11] (P. 1931)
 “...you are commissioned to preach this gospel...” [178:1.11]
 (P. 1931)
 “...your mission among men is to proclaim the gospel...”
 [193:0.4] (P. 2052)
 “That which the world needs most to know...” [193:0.4] (.
 2052)
 “The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth...”
 [195:10.1] (P. 2084)
 “Modern culture must become spiritually baptized...”
 [195:10.1] (P. 2084)
 “...when Jesus becomes thus lifted up...” [195:10.1] (P.
 2084)
 “The time is ripe to witness...” [196:1.2] (P. 2090)
 “Jesus of Nazareth must not be longer sacrificed...”
 [196:1.2] (P. 2090)
 “What a transcendent service if, through this revelation...”
 [196:1.2] (P. 2090)
 “...the religious revisions of Christian civilization would be
 drastic and revolutionary if...” [196:1.2] (P. 2090)
 “If Christianity persists in neglecting...” [195:9.4] (P. 2082)
 “The hour is striking...” [195:9.5] (P. 2083)
 “This good news . . . must be carried to all the world...”
 [193:1.2] (P. 2053)
 “Serve your fellow mortals even as I have served you...”
 [193:5.2] (P. 2057)
 “Go to all the world proclaiming this gospel...” [190:3.1] (P.
 2033)

Pray	Love
Serve	Go
Proclaim	Be wise
Give	Publish the good news
Go	Trust your brethern
Bravely go forth	Joyously go forth
Meet new experiences	Reveal
Open eyes blinded by tradition	
Draw close	Lead
Serve	Proclaim
Love	Go
Feed my lambs	Minister to the sick
Serve	Forgive
Follow me	Serve me
Go	Proclaim
Preach the love of God and the service of man	
Carry this good news to all the world	

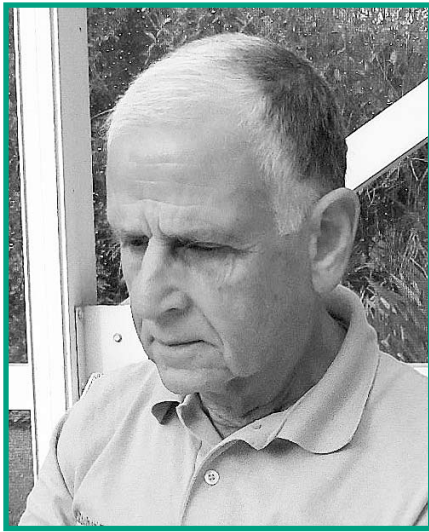
Could the major hope and concern of the revelators be any clearer? It should be obvious from the foregoing that the authors of *The Urantia Book* place a very high value on the spread of the religion of Jesus in our world as quickly as possible. Over and over again it is indicated to us that this is a critical priority. It should also be noted that this exhortation was the major theme of nearly all of the Master’s post-resurrection appearances.

David Kantor has been a reader of *The Urantia Book* since 1966 and active in Urantia reader community affairs 1972. He has served on the General Council as well as the Executive Committee of the *Urantia Book* Fellowship. Between 1995 and 2014 he worked to create a presence for the Fellowship and the revelation on the Internet. In 2014 he started *Urantia Book Films*, focusing solely on a more aggressive promotion of the book through film, video, and social media. He produced and directed the feature-length film, *Re-Imagining Jesus*, which has been viewed by thousands of people.

It is instructive to review the comments made by Jesus in his post-resurrection appearances. The emphasis was always on the proclamation of the kingdom. If we go through his post-resurrection appearances and extract the action verbs from his comments, we end up with this list:

Proclaim	Confirm
Minister	Strengthen
Go	Proclaim

TWELVE WAYS I HEAR FROM GOD



By Richard Rosen,
Sebastian, FL

Hearing from the Divine may seem mysterious, abstract of something that just happens to you, but we have control. There are principles by which we hear from God. These are the ones that work for me. Each of us, because we have a unique relationship with God, will differ in how he hears the divine voice. These are here to stimulate your thinking.

TALK OVER DECISIONS

I talk over decisions and problems I'm facing. I ask for wisdom in making decisions. I quiet my mind and emotions so I'm better able to hear my Father's voice. I listen for his thoughts.

During my real estate career I sent out a series of mailings to people whose properties had failed to sell. I began with some lightly edited examples that others had used, but in time a couple of them no longer felt right. But I was unable to see the changes I should make (which is unusual for me). I asked God for insight. It didn't come right away; it took several weeks. That's how it is at times; answers need time to coalesce and become conscious thoughts. Answers are also conditioned by your capacity to receive them, and in accordance with the scope and nature of the request.

By the way, this is an example that nothing is too small to ask of God. It helps to form the habit of God-mindedness.

UPSTEP MY THOUGHTS

God always attempts to upstep my thoughts into better ones. I know they are his when they have the symmetry of beauty, the ring of truth, and an aura of goodness.

REMOVE EMOTIONAL POISONS

Removing emotional poisons, like anger, envy, self-pity, and so on, clears my thinking. Doing this over a long time makes it a habit. It then becomes fairly easy to recognize hurtful feelings and unfruitful thoughts. I refuse to indulge them.

FOLLOW GUIDANCE

By faith, I follow God's guidance and inspiration. He sees to it that all will turn out right because I do my best to do what he wants—even if I make a mistake.

Steve was offered a job by a friend, which he accepted. However, his current employer offered an increase in position and salary to stay, which he did. His friend felt badly that he reneged on his commitment, especially after going to bat for him.

His current employer ran the company in a heavy-handed, you could even say, toxic manner. It wasn't long before Steve realized how great a mistake he made.

What Steve hadn't learned about life yet is that relationships govern all things—that having a company owner and management that treat their employees caringly is more important than position and money. He needed this experience to learn this lesson. So while the decision was a "mistake", to spiritually "see" it was necessary. It's "learning the hard way" as my mother used to say. But some things are like that; you need a life lesson to make a particular truth your own. Steve hopefully will not repeat this mistake (error in judgment).

CORRESPONDENCES

The natural world, a material shadow of reality, can be considered somewhat representational of the spiritual world. Thus, my mind, guided by my indwelling Spirit, interprets natural events spiritually.

I had a map of the world on my wall that I used for business. Realizing I no longer referred to it, I decided to put up posters of the universes that reflect the paradise journey we will make. It was then the thought came to me that God is expanding my frame of reference from this world to that of the cosmos. Most encouraging. Thank you Father.

PATTERNS OF COINCIDENCE

Patterns of coincidence are sometimes God's way of directing me. He uses repetition to confirm his direction. It is particularly important for decisions of import such as

marrying or taking a job. This scripture says it well. “At the mouth two..or..three witnesses, shall the matter be established” (Deut. 17:6) The account, earlier in the book, of God leading me to find him illustrates this point. Here’s an example:

We almost didn’t purchase our present home. The house is adjacent to a couple who worked in the same real estate office as we did. They told us about it, and we went to see it; although we liked it we were not ready to make a decision. Well, a month later they told us that someone had seen it and was interested, and urged us to reconsider. We saw it again and realized that this was indeed the home for us. We bought it, recognizing it is where God wanted us to live.

God is not unmindful of our temporal welfare, in this case having a proper place to live. Also, spiritual welfare is enhanced by living where God intends. In fact, few decisions are purely material without a spiritual overtone.

It may take time to receive new thoughts and act on them. God knows this and establishes his direction through a pattern of confirmation.

Here’s another example of circumstances that are more than mere chance.

I studied in Strasbourg, France for a year during college. I decided to hitchhike to Munich in Germany and buy a used Volkswagen. On the way, a local police officer stopped and offered a ride to the next town. I told him the purpose of my trip to Munich. He said he knew someone in town selling a Volkswagen and off we went to see it. But I declined, being set on my plan and inflexible to a change of direction. It took me some time to become flexible in my thinking as opportunity presented itself.

Looking back, I recognize what may well have been a celestial arrangement of circumstances. If I had purchased the car locally, who knew what people I may have met and what may have ensued.

By the way, two months later the engine died. It did make me think I had missed the boat on that first opportunity I was given. (Fortunately, in those days it was simple for a mechanic to swap out a Volkswagen engine for a rebuilt one, so it wasn’t nearly as costly as replacing a modern engine.)

Notwithstanding those occasions when repetition establishes a direction or action, first thoughts or opportunities are at times the correct ones. (As you can see, there is no scientific formula to discerning God’s will; we each develop discernment unique to our experience of walking with God.)

SEEK COUNSEL FROM SPIRITUALLY MINDED PEOPLE

My wife and I employed a secretary in our property management and real estate business in Connecticut. We were having problems with her, and we didn’t know how to deal with them. So we asked a spiritually minded man we greatly respected because we wanted more than just a natural answer; we sought a spiritual perspective.

He immediately put his finger on the problem, the core of the issue. She is usurping authority. She’s not the owner and she’s making decisions, acting as if she were. She thinks more of herself than she ought to. You must clearly tell her the limits of her position, put her in her place as it were.

This we did. Hmm, was she displeased! Nonetheless, she withdrew from overflowing the banks of authority and worked within the channel we defined. Hopefully, she dealt with the inflated opinion of herself. We couldn’t tell. But that’s between her and God. Her indwelling Spirit is well able to take this situation and use it to her advantage—if she is willing.

PATIENCE

I am patient when making important decisions. I wait upon God. Revelation of God’s will is progressive—step by step.

After my work in the software industry had ended I sought work in our local job market, mostly retirees and quite limited in the availability of the work I sought. Eve suggested I return to real estate with her, but I was quite hesitant. So I told Eve, “Let’s see first what doors God opens before making that decision.” We gave ourselves two months to see what might happen.

I knocked on plenty of doors, but none opened. So I re-entered real estate sales and it’s turned out to be the right decision. It’s often only after you’ve made a choice and time has passed that you can recognize the value of a decision.

Even with small decisions, such as comprehending a concept sufficiently for this book, it may not come right away. It requires time for thinking to evolve and thoughts to coalesce, then suddenly understanding appears. At times it requires greater capacity—intellectual, spiritual, or both—which comes only by life experience, in which case it may be months or even years, or perchance the next life, before you can with authority deal with a matter.

DREAMS AND VISIONS

My divine Monitor attempts to register spiritual concepts, but I’m on guard because my subconscious thoughts and emotions can distort them. The Spirit of

Truth validates their content. Do they contain truth, beauty, and goodness?

While living in the backwoods of Maine, I had this experience in the night seasons, more than a dream—let's call it a vision; I've not had one since. At this time of my life, I was intensely seeking an answer to what lies beyond this natural world. The vision was an answer to my soul quest.

The scene opened in Israel with myself seated upon a horse on the top of a hill, with my hands tied behind me, a noose around my neck. There I was, calmly saying to those about to slay me, "Don't do this, not for my sake, but yours." Alas, they heeded not my plea, and the horse went from beneath me. The next moment I was flying over vividly beautiful valleys, like superman. And I clearly thought, "So this is what it's like when you die." I awoke with the loveliest sense of serenity and assurance. I knew there was indeed life beyond death.

COMMON SENSE

Human wisdom or common sense is a great aid. I put aside theory and profound thinking and say to myself, "What makes sense?" It has become a mainstay in my spiritual decision making. It anchors the spiritual and mindal to the material plane. These must all be in balance.

I recall times profoundly thinking through a problem, so much so that I'd end bewildered with the many thoughts swirling in confusion. Definitely no connection to the divine here. I'd finally recall my common sense rule and say to myself, "This is crazy." If a sensible answer didn't come to mind, then I'd put it all aside and come back to it later when I'd usually see it simply and clearly. And if not, then it wasn't time for a decision. "In your patience possess your souls."

PERCEPTION

Perception is like hearing God's voice clearly—not that I actually hear a voice. It's more like clearly receiving a thought that makes my soul come alive. It is a connecting with the cosmic mind. You know it when your thinking is sharp, clear, and quick. You foresee events, meaning what will result from decisions and solutions to everyday problems.

John approached me, having *heard* me drop a handful of purpose, saying that I am a student of life after death and know well what happens. He asked if I would tell him more, but it not being convenient then I suggested we meet and discuss it over breakfast, to which he assented and asked if he could bring Sam, whom I also knew. It was our second

get-together that it *became clear to me* that Sam, while enjoying the conversation and our camaraderie, lacked the interest of John. He was content; he lacked the drive to delve more deeply. In this case, I *discerned*, meaning it wasn't clarion clear, but nonetheless held the conviction of certainty.

Where does this enlightenment and confirmation of truth come from? The Spirit of Truth saying *Amen!* I think of it as a truth Geiger counter. It may also emanate from the soul in contrast to the human mind; the growing soul develops spirit mindedness, akin to the expression, "Think from the heart." As the soul matures it comes to dominate the human mind, which in turn dominates the material environment.

There are gradations of "knowint" or truth sensitivity:

- understanding (comprehension of fact)
- discernment (human consciousness, its component parts unified)
- perception (super consciousness, the reservoir of the higher mind counter-parting acquired cosmic meanings and spiritual values into the fabric of the soul)
- auto-revelation (the work of the indwelling Spirit)

These conditions reflect the growth of spiritual consciousness. Of these, revelation is most direct and potent.

SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION

Auto- or personal revelation (spiritual illumination) delights your soul. It is personal, just between God and me. Although direct communication with our Thought Adjuster rare, it doesn't mean that we cannot augment the conditions that are favorable to his illuminating our minds. Such illumination is perceptible, deliciously real. And some highflying souls attain to readily receiving Adjuster illumination.

This example took place when Jesus with his father Joseph went up to Jerusalem at around age 13.

On the day before the Passover Sabbath, flood tides of spiritual illumination swept through the mortal mind of Jesus and filled his human heart to overflowing with affectionate pity for the spiritually blind and morally ignorant multitudes assembled for the celebration of the ancient Passover commemoration. [124:6.15] (P 1376)

Another example: Jesus asked his apostles "*But who say you that I am?*"...Simon Peter, springing to his feet, exclaimed: "*You are the Deliverer, the Son of the living God.*"...(Jesus) said: "*This has been revealed to you by my Father.*" [157:3.5-6] (P. 1746)

And a personal experience: Having scant remembrance of my human father after he died when I was seven, I keenly felt the lack of a father's watch care. What longing I had for a loving father's guidance. With this background I recount a pivotal morning years ago.

I was deeply reflecting in my study loft, my haven, on who the Father is and his nature. It was then that I received the *revelation* of my spiritual Father, how real he is, how concerned he is with my welfare, how assured I can be in his loving, wise, and all-knowing guidance. It was powerful and sure knowing.

Oh, how I talked with him, pouring out my heart and thanking him for being my own—my very own—Father. And from that time forth began a deepened relationship: two walking together through life, the divine and the human uniting more and more until that perfect day. It brings a Mona Lisa smile as I write this.

And yet there is another way. As you become aware of the spiritual nature that lives within you, take time to enter into the conscious practice of sharing your inner life. Practice stillness to quiet the incessant thoughts of your mind—and listen. As you align more and more with our spiritual nature, Spirit will speak, and you will hear. Expect to receive the goodness of the universe. While he will not make decisions for you, he will offer options, anticipated results of each course, its ramifications, and its effect on others. And when making important decisions, withdraw from the busyness around you to commune with your spirit.

In summary, these are ways in which I hear and am led. There are yet to be revealed others. Communication with the Divine evolves. This quote from *The Urantia Book* illustrates this:

From such vantage points of high living, man is able to transcend the material irritations of the lower levels of thinking—worry, jealousy, envy, revenge, and the pride of immature personality. These high-climbing souls deliver themselves from a multitude of the crosscurrent conflicts of the trifles of living, thus becoming free to attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit, of spirit concept and celestial communication. [160:3.5] (P. 1778)

Harry McMullen, at a *Urantia Book* conference, presented his view of discerning God's will. Here's one paragraph to give you a taste (see footnote for the reference to his talk; it's worth reading.)

"Occasionally, we become faced with big decisions: to move to another town, to change our employment, to go into a new business, to marry, and so forth. In such cases,

we don't want any possibility of error; we want to be certain that we have a correct reading of the Father's will. In such situations we can expect God to confirm his guidance to us by repetition. Different episodes of his guidance will complement and intersect with each other. We get an inner feeling on the matter, then we ask the counsel of spiritually minded friends. From the human perspective, we see that the decision makes good common sense. We feel at peace with God about it. Finally, circumstances may open up in such a way as to facilitate the endeavor. We are not out of line to ask God for his clear, unmistakable guidance before we make a radical change in our lifestyle, and we should not be in a hurry about it. He will use different witnesses to confirm his will to us."

McMullen III, Harry. *Principles of Knowing God's Will*. From the 1981 Urantia Brotherhood Conference, Snowmass Colorado. (<http://www.urantiabook.org/archive/readers/knowning-Gods-will.htm>)

Richard Rosen has been a seeker of truth since his teens when he did not know if God existed, but knew there had to be more to this life. During his 25 years of intense involvement in fundamentalist Christianity, he came across *The Urantia Book* in 1985 (by virtue of Bill Rocap), and his relationship with God has since reached a place he did not think possible. He has authored several books designed to make the truths of the revelation more practical and personally applicable in everyday living. (<http://bit.ly/AuthorCentral-Rosen>). Richard lives in Sebastian, Florida, with his wife of 44 years, Eve, an avid lover of God.

A Confederate Soldier's Prayer

Author Unknown

(Attributed to a battle weary CSA soldier near the end of the war)

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;

I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey

I asked for health, that I might do greater things;

I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.

I asked for riches, that I might be happy;

I was given poverty, that I might be wise.

I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men;

I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;

I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for, but everything I hoped for.

Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.

I am among all men most richly blessed.

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“The enlightened worlds all recognize and worship
the Universal Father, the eternal maker and infinite upholder
of all creation.” [1:0.3] (21.3)