

Spiritual Fellowship Journal

Volume 11, Number 2

Fall & Winter, 2001

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Interface: *A New Urgency?*

The Spiritual Fellowship of Students of *The Urantia Book*

A Journal Established to Promote Theological, Philosophical, and Polity Discussions Germane to An Appropriate Symbolism and Socioreligious Expression of the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

Guiding Principles (See page 966 of the *Urantia Papers*)

An Appropriate Symbolism and Socioreligious Expression of the Fifth Epochal Revelation Should:

1. Be based on the Fatherhood of God and the brother-sisterhood of humankind.
2. Be the outgrowth of love.
3. Foster sentiment, satisfy emotions, and promote loyalty.
4. Facilitate spiritual progress through cosmic meanings, moral values, social development, and personal living.
5. Provide supreme goals of living that are both temporal and eternal.
6. Be based on the biologic, social, and religious significance of the family.
7. Symbolize the permanent in the midst of unceasing change.
8. Glorify that which respects and unifies the diversities of society.
9. Promote higher meanings, beautiful relationships, and the highest values.
10. Embody some masterful mystery and connote some worthwhile unattainable.
11. Be meaningful and serviceable to both the individual and the group.
12. Serve as the skeletal structure for dynamic personal experience.

The Purpose of Religious Institutions is to:

1. Dramatize the loyalties of spiritual experience.
2. Magnify the lures of truth, beauty, and goodness—supreme values.
3. Enhance the service of unselfish fellowship.
4. Glorify the potentials of family life.
5. Promote religious education.
6. Provide wise counsel and spiritual guidance.
7. Furnish and promote group worship.
8. Encourage friendship, neighborhood welfare, and moral values.
9. Spread the gospel of eternal salvation.

Religious Institutions Should Avoid Dangers, Such As:

1. Fixation of ritual and theology.
2. Developing vested interests and secular involvement.
3. Serving the institution instead of serving God and ministering to people.
4. Forming competitive sects and developing a “chosen people” attitude.
5. Developing authoritarianism, dogmatism, and false ideas of sacredness.
6. Venerating the past while ignoring present needs and timely spiritual interpretations.
7. Failing to hold the interest of youth and grow with the times.
8. Losing sight of spiritual ministry and the saving message of salvation.

Central Objective

The central objective of a group of people interested in initiating a new religious organization based on the teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation should be to create a polity with maximum flexibility that would function with small groups or large congregations, utilize lay leadership and/or ordained clergy, have crosscultural adaptability, and broad theological inclusiveness.

Such an institution would be “a gathering of persons who have accepted a common purpose, and a common discipline to guide the pursuit of that purpose, to the end that each involved person reaches higher fulfillment as a person, through serving and being served by the common venture, than would be achieved alone or in a less committed relationship.”¹

¹Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, Paulist Press, New York, 1977, p. 237,

The Spiritual Fellowship Journal

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"I am done with great things and big plans, great institutions and big successes. I am for those tiny, invisible, loving human forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water; yet, if given time, will rend the hardest monuments of human pride."

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"Christ tells us: 'You are commissioned to preach this gospel of the kingdom...and you must not allow anything to divert your devotion to this one duty. Let all mankind benefit from the overflow of your loving spiritual ministry, enlightening intellectual communion, and uplifting social service; but none of these humanitarian labors, nor all of them, should be permitted to take the place of proclaiming the gospel.' [1931] Isn't it high time we start proclaiming the gospel?"

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"We bring a child into the world. A simple and ordinary thing, but wonderfully complex. Whether we know it or not, we have now become engaged in the supreme responsibility of human existence."

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"I believe that contained within the pages of *The Urantia Book* is the kernel that is needed to give the modern renaissance direction and focus: a complete description of ascendant life. No other single piece of information has the potential to change the human condition on a massive scale."

A Sincere "Spiritual Attitude" = "Positive Doing" *Nancy Bigelow*

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"What do you say to a four or five year old who looks up into your eyes and asks: 'What does God look like?' I think the worst possible response is: 'I don't know.'"

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"'Brother Nash, I want to ask you a question. In view of the exposition you have just given the class, do you believe that Mrs. d'Arcambal can be saved?' The question hit me as would a blow planted squarely between the eyes. Up to that moment, possibly, I had never ventured on a really independent thought in the whole course of my life."

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"The founding of The Spiritual Fellowship is a milestone in the Urantia Movement. It is the first clearly religious organization of any magnitude to be associated with the Urantia Papers."

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Editorial

“Invisible, Loving Human Forces”

William James wrote, near the beginning of the last century: *“I am done with great things and big plans, great institutions and big successes. I am for those tiny, invisible, loving human forces that work from individual to individual, creeping through the crannies of the world like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, yet, if given time, will rend the hardest monuments of human pride.”*

It has been said, and written, that the Urantia Movement is a fragmented, inbred, visionless failure. This would be true, perhaps, if you accept the premise that human organizations are directing the Revelation. However, I suggest that humans only appear to be in charge of, and to have authority over, one aspect or another of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. The real work is not so visible nor so heralded.

A Revelation is something that takes place while the prideful and the entitled posture and debate about it. A Revelation is taking place now, as I write. It is the genius of the people that drives the invisible, loving human forces that will shape the destiny of our planet.

Too many great Urantians, those who are the part of the gathering power of a great new Revelation, have never been asked to speak at conferences, nor written about in Urantia publications, nor seated at “official” meetings in which the fate of the Revelation is pondered. They do not claim to have special spiritual connections, or spiritual privilege. Rather, these folks, unknown and unheralded, simply do the works.

Indeed, it is not mortals, but the angels who are directing the mighty spiritual enterprise that is at hand. From their transcendent vantage point, surely they see the magnificent tapestry of light, the tenuous connections reaching from Urantian to Urantian. The Celestial Architects strive to make and strengthen those connections between the kindred spirits who are doing the real work. Surely those angelic beings are not striving to contribute to the polite deceit of social graces, but rather to augment the most powerful energies in the universe: spiritual power and unselfish service.

Having read this, one might be moved to ask: why then do we need another human organization such as The Spiritual Fellowship? Because, it is my fondest hope, The Spiritual Fellowship will occupy itself in serving the people, and in helping the genius of the people function and connect. In the same light, it is my

hope that the Spiritual Fellowship Journal will continue to be a journal of action, recording service and outreach activities and triumphs, not simply theories and expositions and rhetoric about a Book. It is my hope the Journal will attract the attention of Urantians who have not been heard from. Who have turned sadly away from controversy and politics, and who form the growing invisible fellowship of believers. It is my hope that these silent Urantians will be induced to write articles and to contribute ideas for the Journal.

I do not underestimate the difficulties ahead. Many will protest that the time is not right for a spiritual movement to be launched. In answer, I offer the following story.

It has been written that, many years ago, a group of travelers sought to climb a mighty mountain. They were making good progress in their climb, and soon came in sight of the summit of the mountain. About the same time, they noted that a tremendous storm was raging just above them, and they would have to pass through it to reach their goal.

Fortunately, the travelers observed that there was a cabin close by. They entered, and were delighted to find that it was warm and comfortable and was well stocked with food. They decided it would be wise to delay their trip until the storm abated, and then continue on.

The tourists enjoyed the security and serenity of the cabin, and several days went by. When they went outside, they noted the shining pinnacle of the mountain, bright in the sunlight above the storm. But, although the great goal beckoned them, the storm raged on.

After several weeks, an old native to the area happened by. He asked them why they were living in the cabin. The travelers explained that they were waiting for the storm near the summit of the mountain to end, so that they could continue their journey.

The native smiled. He told the pilgrims that there is always a storm near the summit of the mountain.

Fellow pilgrims, there will never come a more fortuitous interval when there is no storm to block our way. There is always a storm at the fringes of a new frontier—or more appropriate: *a new world*. We are but discovering this new world, there are untold riches to be revealed. One day, writers will tell of the wondrous days that are barely dawning. The accounts will, in my judgment, be similar to the one that follows, which describes the discovery of another new world, just over 500 years ago:

“Everything that has happened since the marvellous discovery of the Americas has been so extraordinary that the whole story remains quite incredible to anyone who has not experienced it at first hand. Indeed, it seems to overshadow all the deeds of famous people in the past, no matter how heroic, and to silence all talk of other wonders of the world.” [Bartolome de las Casas, “A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies,” 1542.]

For us, now, these are the remarkable days of the Fifth Epochal Revelation, and this is the hour for the “new and everlasting religion of Jesus.” This is the time of the genius of the people, the ordinary folks—the youth, the silent and unsung Urantians, the army of lay persons who will again make Jesus visible to a truth-hungry world.

“. . . what is now most needed is Jesus. The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit-born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men . . . Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus’ life and illuminated with a new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation. And when Jesus becomes thus lifted up, he will draw all men to himself. Jesus’ disciples should be more than conquerors, even overflowing sources of inspiration and enhanced living to all men. Religion is only an exalted humanism until it is made divine by the discovery of the reality of the presence of God in personal experience.” [2084 par. 1] **L.M.**

Books of Significance

The Art of Possibility

Rosamund Stone Zander & Benjamin Zander

When a poet and a scientist combine forces in an insightful and enlightened way, the result is an excellent book. “Ben” Zander is conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, and “Ros” is a family therapist and landscape painter. The role of conductor may be the last bastion of the total dictator, but not for Zander. He is a genius at combining strong leadership and compassion. I found his methods and insights very helpful, especially for pragmatic application to professional demands on a creative personality. Zander discovered that his own conductor/leader’s power was directly linked to how much greatness he was willing to grant others. A remarkable example is his vignette: “Leading from any Chair.” The Zanders invite us to all become compassionate communicators, leaders and performers whose lives radiate possibility to the world. Then, they show us how to do it!

L.M.

Practicing His Presence

Frank Laubach

“Can I bring the Lord back in my mind-flow every few seconds so that God shall always be in my mind? I choose to make the rest of my life an experiment in answering this question.” p. 10

Frank Laubach’s great “experiment” started in a missionary outpost in 1929. His letters chronicling his attempt to live every moment in the presence of God are startling in their depth and simplicity.

The SeedSowers publishing house has combined the letters of Frank Laubach and a new updated version of Brother Lawrence’s *The Practice of the Presence of God*, into one book entitled *Practicing His Presence*. The experiences of these two men, one from the 17th century and the other from the 20th, in their quest for unbroken communion, will kindle hope in all those who aspire to this seemingly unobtainable goal. Since many of us are familiar with Brother Lawrence’s three hundred year old classic, which has never been out of print, we’ll focus on a few of Frank Laubach’s discoveries.

“As I analyze myself I find several things happening to me as a result of . . . strenuous effort to keep the Lord in mind every minute. This concentration on God is strenuous, but everything else has ceased to be so. I think more clearly, I forget less frequently. Things which I did with a strain before, I now do easily and with no effort whatever. I worry about nothing. . . I no longer feel in a hurry about anything. Everything goes right.” p. 15

In the Urantia Papers we are told of Jesus: “The secret of his unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship—unbroken communion with God. . .” [Page 2089 par. 0]. And we are encouraged to attempt it ourselves: “. . . the divine bestowals may flow to the hearts and souls of those who thus remember to maintain unbroken communion with their Maker. . .” [Page 2066 par 0]. Laubach responds to the question of how one is to remember: “By forming a new habit! All thought employs silent words and is really conversation with your inner self. Instead of talking to yourself, form the habit of talking to Christ. . . when evil thoughts of any kind come, say, ‘Lord, these thoughts are not fit to discuss with you. Lord, you do the thinking. Renew my mind by your presence.’” p. 32

Laubach shares how his relationships have become imbued with a new affection: “I choose to look at people through God, using God as my glasses, colored with His love for them.” p.25. Frank Laubach went on to become a world renowned educator, writing over 50 books, receiving many honors, and living “one of the fullest lives ever lived by one of Christ’s followers.” p. xiv

“And if you should forget Him for minutes or even days, do not groan or repent, but begin anew with a smile. Every minute can be a fresh beginning.” p.37 **J.B.M.**

Interface

A New Urgency?

Recent events have literally brought home the need for the world to hear the Good News, and hear it apart from cultural bias and conflict. The conditions that give rise to hatred and prejudice and intolerance are complex economically and culturally, but simple in terms of basic human nature. Such conditions will always exist as long as we fail to recognize others as brothers and sisters in the human family of the one divine Creator-Father. Readers of *The Urantia Book* no doubt feel a new urgency in sharing the message of the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

At the same time, as we reflect back on the history of our world, it's hard to find a time when that wasn't the case. Few generations have existed without the destructive forces of human nature breaking in upon their lives from beyond the home boundaries of nation-states. The Good News has always been urgently needed, but the consequences of a world failing to understand it keeps getting higher. In a post-cold war age, many of us had hoped that a new age was dawning, a veritable spring time of international cooperation compared to the conflicts of every generation before us. Now it seems that a new era of conflict has arisen, built on long standing inequalities and prejudice, as well as pride, arrogance, and self deceit. And no side can lay claim to purity of motive and action in the long history of events leading us here. A new stage in the agenda for mankind is emerging. All the more need for sharing the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

At the same time, along with the urgency, comes the need for patience. I've always marveled at how patient Jesus was in the face of the burden he carried. His was a task far beyond that of any other mortal. How could he maintain such sublime composure while faced not only with the hostility of the world around him, but the slow comprehension of his own followers?

But he did. The urgency of his task was always there, but so was the patience, the un-hurriedness of his day to day living. I can only attribute it to a sublime confidence in God's wisdom and over-control, and the certainty, even fore-knowledge, of the outcome.

So as we go about our tasks, I pray for both a sense of urgency and patience, for as ambassadors of the

Fifth Epochal Revelation, I believe we will need both—in equal measure.

Merlyn Cox

Forgotten Urantians

Don Deam

During the 1970's and 80's Don Deam was often seen at Urantia Conferences quietly smoking a pipe and observing the goings on. He was always an active Urantian, and hosted a study group and his own regional conference in Topeka, Kansas before he retired from his law practice and moved to Arkansas. Don was especially supportive and helpful to me in various Urantia projects over the years. But, I really didn't know Don's remarkable background and service to his country until one quiet afternoon in his study. There, reluctantly—at my urging—he unfolded events and spun stories, and showed me unique artifacts and clippings from his adventures.

The world held its breath on June 6, 1944 as Allied troops began to storm the beaches of Normandy, France. But the untold story really began the night before, when American paratroopers were dropped behind German lines. Don Deam was one of those brave men, a First Sergeant of the 501st Parachute Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division, the famous "Screaming Eagles." Their mission was to land behind enemy lines in the dark, assemble (at the sound of a cow bell which the division commander would ring), and to drive backward toward Omaha Beach and link up with the 4th Infantry Division. What actually happened that night was vastly different. Deam said: "I never did hear any cow bell."

To begin with, the 18 year old, 125 pound Deam landed in frigid canal waters and was promptly dragged to the bottom by his heavy gear. He cut himself loose, and struggled up a muddy bank, clutching his Tommy gun. His comrades were nowhere in sight. After a few minutes he found a Corporal from another division hanging helplessly in a tree. While cutting him down, in the corner of his eye he spotted two Germans with fixed bayonets approaching. Swiftly he hit the ground and opened fire. They dropped silently to the ground. Deam crawled over and discovered he had killed a cow. The "bayonets" that he thought he saw were the star-crossed animal's horns flashing in the moonlight.

In the course of that golden afternoon Donald Deam told me other stories, including being trapped in Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge, and “seeing lots of good men die there” under withering Nazi SS fire. But Bastogne held. Deam recalled watching Patton arrive shortly after Bastogne was relieved, waving from his tank, his fancy pistols gleaming in the sun. What Don did not tell me that day was later revealed in a fading newspaper clipping. The story told of his heroism, and how he came to be awarded a Purple Heart and the coveted Silver Star for his gallantry in battle during those terrible days of uncertainty behind German lines. As “ranking officer,” Deam took charge of 200 men and evacuated them safely to link up with the main body of troops. The clipping read:

“Directing the withdrawal, First Sgt. Deam supervised a stream crossing by all 200 men which he accomplished with precision and a minimum number of casualties, despite intense fire by the enemy. In the march that followed, Deam went from man to man, encouraging them not to be afraid and to keep low. Shot three times through the arm during the stream crossing, he ignored his own wounds and exposed himself continually to fire as he aided and supervised the group. He finally succeeded in leading them to Major Richard J. Allen . . . and with this additional strength Maj. Allen was able to capture Beuze-Addeville and later form part of the group who ... seized and held the La Barquette locks, a regimental mission.”

Don now lives alone in a retirement center in Topeka. His sight is failing, but he manages to read with the aid of modern technology. He loves to hear from Urantians, old and young. Drop him a few words of encouragement at: *Donald L. Deam, 3515 SW 6th, Apt. 228, Topeka, KS. 66606. Or pick up the phone and give him a call: (785) 235-5909. Don loves to hear from Urantians.*

L.M.

Real Life Outreach

Urantians Share Inner Life Experiences **The Cleaning Lady**

I'm a professional woman who usually works late at the office. Much as most any woman, in the back of my mind I am always, on some level, conscious of my physical safety. In the evening a black woman cleans our offices after work. At first she made me very uncomfortable. I thought there was something

mentally wrong with her. She is large, has huge teeth and is missing a few, her back is curved and she's always rubbing her face as if she's exhausted. I greet her every time I see her. The other evening she was in the lunch room with her head on the table. I spoke to her but she was so tired she couldn't lift her head.

The next night she was much better. I asked her if she worked more than one job. Yes, she said. I asked her if she got a nap today because she looked like she felt better. Yes, she said. And I told her I was happy she was able to get some rest. Then she told me about her other job. She packs lunches for the less fortunate! Understand that this woman is poor, she wears tattered clothing, she is not educated. Yet, she's an angel to people less fortunate than her!

The next night I gave her some cucumbers from the garden and she was so excited. She told me all about the salad she was going to make. By this simple action I connected with her on a new level. The consciousness of separation and discomfort I had was dispelled, and replaced by something different—something precious.

I now have some idea of how the Master did not measure people by some code of status—in fact—he did not measure them at all. He could “see” all people as his brothers and sisters: “The Master looked upon men as the sons of God and foresaw a magnificent and eternal future for those who chose survival. He was not a moral skeptic; he viewed man positively, not negatively. He saw most men as weak rather than wicked, more distraught than depraved. But no matter what their status, they were all God's children and his brethren.” [2093 par. 3]

S.C.C.

“Jesus was never in a hurry. He had time to comfort his fellow men ‘as he passed by.’ And he always made his friends feel at ease. He was a charming listener. He never engaged in the meddlesome probing of the souls of his associates.” [Page 1874]

“Most of the really important things which Jesus said or did seemed to happen casually, ‘as he passed by.’ There was so little of the professional, the well-planned, or the premeditated in the Master's earthly ministry. He dispensed health and scattered happiness naturally and gracefully as he journeyed through life. It was literally true, ‘He went about doing good.’ ” [Page 1875]

The Spiritual Fellowship

Dr. Meredith Sprunger

During the past 45 years there has been a difference of opinion regarding the nature of the Urantia movement. Some have regarded it as a religious movement; others have viewed it as an educational movement with a religious purpose. The official organizations—Urantia Foundation, The Urantia Book Fellowship, and the International Urantia Association—have all denied that they are religious organizations. They have lost much of the dynamic of outreach ministry and are instead engaged in political power struggles.

There is no group exclusively dedicated to the dissemination of the Fifth Epochal Revelation as a religious mission. While religion is fundamentally an individual experience of values, this individual experience inevitably results in social expression. This social expression is important if our world society is to evolve in an enlightened, positive direction.

The history of religion shows that spiritual value systems are always established and promoted through some kind of religious organization. When I first discovered the Urantia Papers, I thought they were ideally suited to upstep Christianity and the other religions of the world. I still believe this will eventually happen. For over 40 years I have been interfacing with the leaders of the Christian Church and this experience has made it quite clear that it will take considerable time before they will seriously examine the Urantia Papers. So after much thought and soul searching, I believe it is time, probably past time, to actualize a bona fide religious organization inspired by the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

Early this year Sherilyn Henry and I, along with around 40 other students of the Urantia Papers, started organizing a new religious organization, The Spiritual Fellowship. This organization is based upon the teachings of Jesus in the Fifth Epochal Revelation. The Spiritual Fellowship is being incorporated in the State of California. It will also be incorporated in Canada.

Currently, ten research and consulting committees have been organized to study various aspects of The

Spiritual Fellowship over the next few years. The Founding Directors are Sherilyn Henry, Nancy Long, Larry Mullins, Irene Sprunger, Meredith Sprunger, and Sue Tennant. The Theological and Philosophical Principles Committee is chaired by Nancy Long; the Manual On Ministry Committee is chaired by Gregory Young; the Liturgy and Rituals Committee chair is Michael Melody; the Composition of sacred Music and Revision of Hymns Committee is chaired by Bud Bromley; the Education Committee chair is Merlyn Cox; the Evangelism Committee is chaired by Christopher Lepine; our Website Committee is chaired by Robert Hurt; the Finance and Stewardship Committee chair is Sherilyn Henry; and the Administrative and Planning Committee chair is Meredith Sprunger.

Our Mission Statement is: “The worldwide mission of The Spiritual Fellowship is to teach, motivate, empower, and support all people in their growing relationship with God and to encourage their loving service to humankind.”

Our Preamble highlights the seven most important concepts that The Spiritual Fellowship attempts to promote and live:

1. The loving Parenthood of God and the spiritual brother /sisterhood of all people are our two guiding foundational principles. We acknowledge as

kindred spirits, all individuals and traditions, past and present, who recognize these two principles.

2. We rejoice that all people are God’s beloved children and that, as the ultimate authority, a fragment of God’s spirit indwells each person, guiding us, if we are willing, to our highest spiritual good.

3. The Spiritual Fellowship affirms that true religion is the spiritual experience of personally knowing God. We believe that the supernal quest of all people is that of discovering God, and that the path of finding and doing God’s will is an individual responsibility and personal experience.

4. The Spiritual Fellowship recognizes as the spiritual ideal for human living, the life and teachings of Jesus as confirmed and expanded in *The Urantia Book*. To this end, we utilize all sacred scriptures portraying spiritual truth and wisdom harmonious with this guideline for spiritual living.

5. The Spiritual Fellowship welcomes all people

The worldwide mission of The Spiritual Fellowship is to teach, motivate, empower, and support all people in their growing relationship with God and to encourage their loving service to humankind.

into membership who recognize the parenthood of God and the spiritual kinship of all people, and who endeavor to live a God-centered life striving to give selfless, loving service to others.

6. The Spiritual Fellowship challenges each member to strive towards consistent, God-centered living and thus supports, honors, and encourages spiritual transformation and enhanced values for the individual, the family, and the community in all aspects of life: physical, social, psychological, and spiritual.

7. The Spiritual Fellowship is growth-focused. It will be in constant self-generated improvement without sacrificing its essential vision, purpose, and nature of principles.

The Industrial Age was primarily an extension of muscle-power. The Information Age is an extension of mental power. The Chaordic Age* promises to be an extension of spiritual influence, insight, and transformation. We hope The Spiritual Fellowship is the beginning of a religious institution that will carry the religion of Jesus and the Fifth Epochal Revelation throughout the world.

“It is difficult for religion to survive as the private practice of isolated individuals. This has ever been the error of the religious leaders: Seeing the evils of institutionalized religion, they seek to destroy the technique of group functioning. In place of destroying all ritual, they would do better to reform it.” [Page 1076.]

“While it is true that the institutionalization of religion has usually detracted from its spiritual quality, it is also a fact that no religion has thus far succeeded in surviving without the aid of institutional organization of some degree, greater or lesser.” [Pg. 1083.]

*The Chaordic Age: When an innovative individual by the name of Dee Hock was CEO of VISA International, he introduced principles which enabled people and institutions of every conceivable language, culture, currency, race, and economic and political persuasion to unite in a commonly owned organization in which members simultaneously engaged in the most intense cooperation and fierce competition. In attempting to explain these creative principles, Hock found no word that adequately portrayed these principles, so he coined a word from chaos and order—chaord. A chaord is any self-organizing, self-governing, adaptive, nonlinear, complex organism, organization, community or system, the behavior of which harmoniously blends characteristics of both chaos and order. It is an entity whose behavior exhibits observable patterns and probabilities not governed or explained by the rules that govern or explain its constituent parts. It is characteristic of the fundamental organizing principles of evolution and nature. Many experts believe we are entering into a Chaordic Age, in which the most successful organizations will be developed according to Chaordic principles. See Dee Hock, “*Birth of the Chaordic Age.*”

“Regardless of the drawbacks and handicaps, every new revelation of truth has given rise to a new cult, and even the restatement of the religion of Jesus must develop a new and appropriate symbolism.” [Page 966.]

“Notwithstanding that the new cult has always retarded social progress, it is regrettable that so many modern believers in moral standards and spiritual ideals have no adequate symbolism—nothing to belong to.” [Pg. 965]

“There is a real purpose in the socialization of religion. It is the purpose of group religious activities to dramatize the loyalties of religion; to magnify the lures of truth, beauty, and goodness; to foster the attractiveness of supreme values; to enhance the service of unselfish fellowship; to glorify the potentials of family life; to promote religious education; to provide wise counsel and spiritual guidance; and to encourage group worship.” [Page 1092.]

The Spiritual Fellowship is a God-centered spiritual vision striving to develop an appropriate symbolism and socioreligious expression of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. We invite you to participate in this new spiritual adventure in various ways that seem appropriate for you, such as:

1. Pray that we may faithfully follow God’s will and wisdom.
2. Become a Spiritual Fellowship leader in your community by encouraging your study group, friends, and associates to start a home-based fellowship.
3. Volunteer your time, creativity, and resources to this endeavor.
4. Consider formal training to become a Spiritual Fellowship ordained minister or certified teacher.

We believe The Spiritual Fellowship will carry the religion of Jesus and the Fifth Epochal Revelation throughout the world. We invite you to join this spiritual adventure into the future.

Dr. Meredith Sprunger is Founder and Editor Emeritus of the Spiritual Fellowship Journal. He has been an active and dedicated Urantian for over four decades, serving in numerous capacities. He is author of “Spiritual Psychology” (Jemenon, 1992), coauthor of “A History of the Urantia Papers,” (Penumbra Press, 2000) and countless study aids and papers relating to the Urantia Papers.

The Spiritual Fellowship

- Why Now?

Sherilyn Henry

"I admonish you ever to remember that your mission among men is to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom ... You are to go forth preaching the love of God and the service of man." [Pg. 193 par.0].

Dear reader, you have likely heard or read by now about the beginning steps towards the formation of The Spiritual Fellowship. Meredith Sprunger and I are so very pleased and privileged to be co-founding this religious organization.

Over 40 volunteers are dedicated to building this vision into a viable organization. Meredith and I invite you and hope that you will join the ranks of this historic endeavor. The Spiritual Fellowship (TSF) is dedicated to serving all people in their growing relationship with God. TSF embraces the philosophy of living that boldly dares to suggest that active living faith in the Loving Parenthood of God and the spiritual kinship of all people is the purpose of living and the supreme reality. TSF will be a structure that supports those wishing to leaven this dark planet by proclaiming the Gospel of God's personal and intimate love and the good news of our eternal salvation potential.

TSF encourages the building of local faith-families worldwide where God is celebrated, children are raised in community, seekers are invited to share in this spiritual life of hope, love and service, and members are inspired to become kingdom builders. TSF is answering Jesus' mandate: "I admonish you ever to remember that your mission among men is to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom ... You are to go forth preaching the love of God and the service of man" [193].

There are many who criticize our efforts. Many have sincerely expressed doubt that this is the right time in Urantia history to develop and initiate a religious organization like The Spiritual Fellowship. Most have valid concerns that are important to dialogue upon. I ask you who sincerely seek to do God's will, give us the 2-3 year projected development time. See what TSF becomes before

you judge. Some of the critics against TSF are simply lazy and do not wish to be kingdom builders. They look back in history and say, "It can't be done because it's never been done before." Yet, with God all things are possible. Others suggest that there are too many problems— "a mountain of obstacles." This, in my opinion is another cop-out, for: "Difficulty whets the ardor of the truth lover, while obstacles only challenge the exertions of the undaunted kingdom builder." [156] Still others have a personal agenda of maintaining control and use arbitrary excuses such as "The world isn't ready for the Fifth Epochal Revelation" or "No religious institution should ever be organized around the Urantia Papers." Some have even self-appointed

themselves to aggressively thwart such actions in the past. This article is not for them. But for those readers with valid concerns and an open mind, I ask you to spend a moment seriously evaluating TSF: Why Now? Ask yourself the following questions and see what the Spirit of Truth reveals to you.

1). Do you think that Christ Michael would eventually want one religious worldwide faith-family that, while celebrating diversity, lives in respectful unity here on Urantia? If yes, when do you think he might wish this to

happen?

2). In your opinion, does any current world religion or religious organization have the potential to become that unifying factor? If your answer is no,

3). What would be the indicators that it is now time to "construct a new and appealing philosophy of living?" [43]

4). Who should determine "the right time?"

5). Once deemed "the right time," whether today or 15 centuries from now, what are the necessary organizational first steps towards the eventual attainment of a religious faith community that would be capable of proclaiming this gospel?

6). Who are the "right people" and how might these leaders be chosen to begin this historic endeavor?

7). When we investigate the question of whether now is the time to initiate this endeavor, what are the factors that both support this effort and/or discourage it?

Christ tells us: "You are commissioned to preach this gospel of the kingdom...and you must not allow anything to divert your devotion to this one duty. Let all mankind benefit from the overflow of your loving spiritual ministry, enlightening intellectual communion, and uplifting social service; but none of these humanitarian labors, nor all of them, should be permitted to take the place of proclaiming the gospel." [1931] Isn't it high time we start proclaiming the gospel?

8). Is there qualitative evidence that now is not the right time?

9). We learn, "There is great hope for any church that worships the living God, validates the brotherhood of man, and dares to remove all creedal pressure from its members." [1135]. If TSF is faithful to this mandate and encouraging religious liberty by removing creedal dictates, then isn't this a promise of hope?

10). Christ tells us: "You are commissioned to preach this gospel of the kingdom...and you must not allow anything to divert your devotion to this one duty. Let all mankind benefit from the overflow of your loving spiritual ministry, enlightening intellectual communion, and uplifting social service; but none of these humanitarian labors, nor all of them, should be permitted to take the place of proclaiming the gospel." [1931] Isn't it high time we start proclaiming the gospel?

Finally, dear reader, I challenge you with "Why not?" We cannot fail in attempting to create a noncreedal supportive organization—we fail only if we fail to try now. If it is not God's will to support The Spiritual Fellowship, it will wither on the vine. But wouldn't it be far wiser to side with Gamaliel instead of the Sadducees on this question? Gamaliel said, "Refrain from [thwarting] these men and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them, lest haply you be found even to be fighting against God." [2068] We are mandated by our Creator Son through our beloved scriptures to go outside of our own community and boldly proclaim this gospel, "... go you now into all the world preaching this gospel of the kingdom of heaven to all men" (193:0.5).

So when all is said and done, "What do you recommend we do today?" I hope that you feel inspired enough to join us, now, if only to pray that we may clearly discern God's will for The Spiritual Fellowship. If you wish to share thoughts, questions, or would like to help create TSF, please write me personally at: shenrymft@hotmail.com. God bless you!

Sherilyn Henry is a licensed Marriage Family Therapist and has practiced for over 12 years. She is now attending seminary at The Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. She and her husband Doug live in Fairfield, CA.

The Family - Birthplace of Cosmic Citizenship

Paul Snider

*Plenary Address, Urantia Book Fellowship,
International Conference, 1999*

We bring a child into the world. A simple and ordinary thing, but wonderfully complex. Whether we know it or not, we have now become engaged in the supreme responsibility of human existence.¹ We have now begun the process of nurturing and shaping a cosmic citizen. What faith the Father in heaven has in us to allow us the privilege of doing this.² To entrust His children to our watchcare.³ Of all human trusts, this is the most sacred,⁴ our highest human duty.⁵ Whether we know it or not, these are the facts of life.

What is it about the idea of family that makes it so profoundly important? Why does *The Urantia Book* say that almost everything of lasting value has its roots in the family,⁶ that the home is civilization's only hope of survival?⁷ Why is it that the family occupied the

very center of Jesus' philosophy of life, here and hereafter?⁸ What is it in this simple notion that resonates from here to Paradise and beyond?

I think we can find some of the answers by looking at what families do. Every family is unique. No two have exactly the same dynamics. And yet, families

all do the same things, with greater or lesser skill.

In family life we are like sharp rough-edged stones all thrown together. We continuously toss against each other in the river of time. After all the rubbing and rubbing the sharp edges begin to disappear. We become smooth pebbles. We adjust our antagonisms. We teach the pursuits of peace to our children.⁶ The family is the master civilizer.⁹

With some assistance from friends, neighbors, and community, the true family teaches most of what is really essential in life. This is what *The Urantia Book* tells us. This is what our own experience confirms. Well, what are the essentials of life?

First and foremost, we begin to learn about love, how to love, how to be loved. All of the foundations of cosmic citizenship are built upon the enduring base of

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love. Without love we are nothing. Without love there is no place for us in the universe. In the way we love our children we begin to get a glimmer - we actually begin to experience—the way God relates to His universe children. And at the same time—if we get it right—we portray to our children the first of a long series of ascending disclosures of the love of God for all universe children.¹⁰ We begin to portray unconditional love.

Second, we learn about mercy. I have so often received mercy that I did not deserve, that I have come to define mercy as what you extend to someone who doesn't deserve it. If it's deserved, it's not mercy, it's justice.

Someone once told me that home is where you go when you can't go anywhere else. When I think about that, when I think about all the children who can't ever go home again—when I imagine their eyes—it tears my heart out. Mercy is what you extend to someone who doesn't deserve it. Home is where we first begin to learn about mercy and forgiveness. Mercy is applied love.¹¹

Third, we learn about ministry. A true parent continuously ministers to the child.¹² And ministry does not mean indulgence. Just the opposite. Ministry focuses on things that build character. In time, children come to recognize this and appreciate it. And this service endures as long as there is a parent-child relationship. You never stop being a father. You never stop being a mother.

The list could go on and on. So many other things. The family teaches culture to the next generation.¹³ The family teaches patience, altruism, tolerance, forbearance.¹⁴ And it also teaches duty, responsibility, discipline, consequences. It teaches us that we are all bound together, that we rise or fall, a little bit or a lot, with the actions of each member.¹⁵ It's not like a big corporation in which you can say: We're having some financial problems this year. We'll have to downsize. Sorry, but we'll have to let a few of you kids go. Good luck.¹⁶

No way. In a family you can't lay off or fire anyone. The family teaches: We are all in this together. We will

rise or fall with each other . . . Somewhere the thought recurs again and again in my mind: It is the Father's will that none should be lost.

Six months after I discovered God I discovered *The Urantia Book*. This was in 1965, and Mary has been with me in this since the beginning. I can't begin to tell you how valuable that has been.

The Urantia Book made us aware of a presence, within our reach, of a sphere of life infinitely more valuable than the natural life of humankind.¹⁷ We wanted to find out more about this, explore its higher pathways wherever they would lead. We wanted to introduce our children to the majestic cosmic framework of the Urantia teachings. But how? This was no easy question.

Not knowing what else to do, we plunged ahead. We made every mistake we could think of, and a few more.

We tried reading passages from the book at dinnertime. We tried formal lessons, with lesson plans and diagrams, the whole works. A certain telltale glaze would come over the children's eyes. We tried to make a family study group. We tried a few disastrous family councils. We weren't connecting. One day, at the mention of Jesus, we observed about 7 or 8 seconds of pure, apprehensive silence among the children. Then one of them said: "Here comes another brainy lecture."

That stopped us in our tracks. We felt like total failures.

For more than six months we made no mention of the book or the teachings. And then we began accidentally to stumble forward into the light.

What began to work was quite simple and practical. It started at the dinner table. Over the months and years that followed, we did other things—we did a lot of study group activity, *always* with children who were free to wander in and out as they pleased. We took part for years in a beautiful meeting for worship in an organized religion. But it was the dinner table that turned the tide.

Mary and I had both taken steps to arrange our lives so that we could have family sit-down dinners. No television. No distractions. I restricted my travel to only a few days a year. Sitting around the table we began to tell stories from *The Urantia Book*. We didn't plan this as a teaching exercise. It just unfolded naturally from

. . . it was the dinner table that turned the tide. Sitting around the table we began to tell stories from The Urantia Book. We didn't plan this as a teaching exercise. It just unfolded naturally from our enthusiasm. We began to tell stories about the Garden of Eden, Adamson and Ratta, the fandors, the midwayers, the goings on in Dalamatia, the Lucifer rebellion, Van and Amadon, life on a neighboring planet ... Jesus on Mount Hermon, Jesus and Rebecca—so many Jesus stories. The Urantia Book has lots of good stories. Some of them are spectacular.

our enthusiasm. We began to tell stories about the Garden of Eden, Adamson and Ratta, the fandors, the midwayers, the goings on in Dalamatia, the Lucifer rebellion, Van and Amadon, life on a neighboring planet, what happens when you awaken after mortal death, the morontia journey, Jesus on Mount Hermon, Jesus and Rebecca—so many Jesus stories. *The Urantia Book* has lots of good stories. Some of them are spectacular.

The children found these stories fascinating, and would ask questions. It was a natural and easy transition to move beyond the stories into teaching. In the normal conversations about the events of the day, issues would always arise from which the perspectives of the Urantia Papers could shed some larger illumination.

Much of what we tried to teach came in response to questions. All of the children have great curiosity and lively imaginations. But in the beginning, we tended to over-teach, to say too much. We quickly found we had to learn a fundamental lesson, which was this: The child must remain in control of the learning process, and feel in control.

Because of your own enthusiasm for the teachings, you may not always watch closely enough for body language that tells you the point has been made or the lesson has ended. You have a great urge to add one more thought to round out the concept, to list one or two additional facts, to give one more example, to offer one more cogent observation. . . Don't.

When the look in the eye says stop, when the body language says stop, bite your tongue and stop. *Let the child remain in control.* This makes all the difference. It keeps things relaxed. It stimulates the child to keep on asking questions. . . I can remember nights when we never left the dinner table until midnight. Two children on one knee, another child on the other knee. Questions, questions, questions. It was exhilarating.

There is one other thing I should mention about the dinner table discussions. Mary and I quite often see things in different ways. We share the same values, but our perceptions come in from different angles. I should also mention that Mary—bless her heart—has never been hesitant to speak her mind. Over the years there were many times when Mary and I would present different interpretations of some of the Urantia teachings. At the time I thought to myself: My God, we are really going to confuse the kids. It was not until many years later that we learned they weren't confused at all. What they took away from

these exchanges was this: *There is no dogma.* You are free to have your own opinion. For a young mind, this was a liberating revelation.

In our years of child rearing there were two things we were consciously trying to do. More than anything else, we wanted each of our children to develop a personal, private, powerful relationship with God, and a desire to follow the inspiration of Jesus' life and teachings wherever it would lead them.

Second, we wanted to help our children develop a framework for living their mortal lives that would be fully consistent with all phases of living anywhere in the universe beyond - through all the morontia progressions, even to the realms of Paradise. We wanted our children to feel at home in the universe,¹⁸ to know we have friends on other worlds.

We didn't call this cosmic citizenship then, but in retrospect that's what we often talked about. Except for the Supreme. We just nibbled around the edges of the Supreme. Cosmic citizenship does not begin in the mansion worlds. It begins here and now. One of the major purposes of *The Urantia Book* is to tell us that. Beyond its purpose of spiritual transformation, the revelation introduces us to the idea that we are entry-level participants in an immense enterprise. It says in effect: Folks, this is the way the universe works. It's time you knew it. These are the facts of universe reality. Start getting used to it.

We live and move and have our being within the Supreme Being¹⁹—the evolving Mother God,²⁰ the Finite God,²¹ the God of Time and Space,²² the God of Experience.²³ We can only approach the Supreme by means of experience.²⁴ We have to do something.²⁵ We cannot evolve without the Supreme. The Supreme probably cannot evolve without us.²⁶ Thus, we have a duty to the Supreme.²⁷ Our duty is to help build dynamic levels of experience-based spirituality into the immanence of the Supreme.²⁸ This is a big job. It involves the entire grand universe.²⁹ We have to work together to do our tiny, tiny, tiny irreplaceable part.³⁰

Where do we start? How do we begin? I am going to suggest eight types of action, eight modes of living, that repercuss in the Supreme, that not only help us evolve, but also help the Supreme evolve. There are many, many more things we can do in addition to these eight ideas, but these eight are illustrative of how we can proceed as individuals. I won't even try to suggest how we can proceed as groups. But as individuals, these are the kinds of things that begin to build an enduring foundation for cosmic citizenship.

In more extended detail, these were the kinds of things we discussed over the years around the dinner table.

The first action is to stay focused.

Each of us has to make a decision about survival and continuing growth, to become ever more godlike. We have to *want* to go forward. Mary and I gave absolute assurances to the children that none of them would ever be dragged kicking and screaming into higher states of being. When life gets you down, stay focused on the larger scheme of things.

Staying focused means staying focused on the Father's will as the singular enduring principle of all existence, the sure pathway to progress now and forever.

But there is an important companion word. We have to stay *intelligently* focused. What this does not mean is saying: Hey, boss, tell me what to do and I'll do it.³¹ You can't get anywhere near Paradise with that attitude. You need to supply some real volitional horsepower.

What it does mean is intelligent partnership, always knowing who the senior partner is. Intelligent focus means we express again and again—forever—within our mind, the full volitional power of the personality prerogatives God has given us: Father, I will to do your will. I *choose* your will. I understand its supernal value.

Many people believe the Father's will applies only to big decisions, major actions. They think God is too busy to get involved in the small and commonplace details of daily living. Those who hold this view simply do not understand that God is truly infinite.

There is one phrase, just part of a sentence in *The Urantia Book*, that clearly teaches that the will of God extends even into the smallest details of life, that at every moment of our conscious being, we have the opportunity to choose His will. The sentence is on page 1555, in the middle of paragraph 2, in a description of the Apostle John.

I think this is the most powerful sentence in *The Urantia Book*. It says that Jesus always deferred *his slightest wish* to the will of the Father in heaven.

To the casual mind,³² commitment at this level—the 100% level—would be terribly restrictive, like a straitjacket. It would turn us into spiritual zombies. The fact is, it would lead to just the opposite. The Father's will is the greatest liberating force in the

universe. Jesus proved that over and over again in his life. And the more fully we progress as cosmic citizens, the more fully we will come actually to experience the truth of this statement.

The second action is to stay relaxed.

I don't mean lounging around in your bathrobes. I mean inwardly relaxed. Spiritually relaxed. Don't keep feeling your spiritual pulse. The action nucleus of this idea comes in moving from a state of tension to something approaching spiritual serenity. We will have to do this long into the future. You can't grow when you're tense.

The most spiritually relaxing story I ever heard grew out of a meeting long ago between George Foxx, founder of the Quakers, and William Penn, before he moved to Philadelphia. As the story was told to me,

Penn was then a young Englishman, a pretty tough guy, a sword-carrying swashbuckler. He was becoming interested in the Quakers and was thinking of joining their religious society. But he was hesitant. So he met with George Foxx.

• Penn said: If I become a Quaker, how long can I carry my sword?

• Foxx said: Let's sit down and

pray together about that.

• They prayed together for a good period of time. Then finally, Foxx looked up and said: As long as you can.

I think this story reveals God's attitude toward us. Go forward with your whole self. Don't keep looking back at the baggage you left behind. Carry your sword as long as you can. But when you put it down, when it's just not you anymore, put it down forever.

The third action is to stay balanced.

Just because we study *The Urantia Book* doesn't mean we are in a halfway house to heaven. All it means is that we have expanded potential. We are not chosen people. We are not special. What we have is the sustenance of a far-flung cosmic perspective.³³ Our challenge is to translate potential into actual—into living the teachings we have begun to comprehend. But the road from here to there is long and difficult.

Always, we emphasized: Use common sense. Keep things in proportion, even *The Urantia Book*. Assimilate the wholeness of the teachings. Don't get lost in a single part.

There is one phrase, just part of a sentence in The Urantia Book, that clearly teaches that the will of God extends even into the smallest details of life, that at every moment of our conscious being, we have the opportunity to choose His will . . . I think this is the most powerful sentence in The Urantia Book.

Year after year, as a family, we witnessed individuals walking around with Urantia Books, but who had clearly lost their balance and were becoming strange. Some of them seemed to do it all by themselves. Some of them seemed to fall victim to the distractions that interlace the Urantia movement.

We consistently taught the children that there is inherent dignity and worth in every other person, that in time we will all become brothers and sisters of destiny. And we often told our children that we can never know where, or when, or how the light of God will illuminate another mind. The only thing we can know for sure is that God always works in strikingly original ways. So we should listen carefully to what others say, try to remain spiritually aware.

Over the years, all of us had to weigh these teachings against the observations and assessments necessary to determine when we were in the presence of truth, or when we were in the presence of an exaggerated religious ego.³⁴

With Jesus as your role model, these assessments are much easier to make. The symmetry of Jesus' personality is balance in its most exquisite form. We are clearly taught that "...the secret of his unparalleled religious life was his consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship - unbroken communion with God - and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices."³⁵ That says it all.

The fourth action is to *stay loyal*.

Stay loyal to the highest values you can comprehend. We have been taught that human loyalties, once mobilized, are hard to change.³⁶ Our most profound loyalties underlie the actions of everything we do.

Jesus placed a very high premium on loyalty. And so does the human race. The Urantia Papers tell us that children are permanently impressed only by our primary loyalties.³⁷ And children cannot be fooled about this. We wanted our children to find pathways that would lead to the deepest ranges of soul mobilization.

When we have established the sovereignty of truth, beauty, and goodness in our heart,³⁸ we will nurture it and support it wherever we find it. We will be loyal to what these values represent.

People tend to say truth, beauty, and goodness almost as a singular phrase. They grasp what truth means. They understand goodness. But too often—much too often—people forget that beauty is the

middle word, of equal value with the other two. Beauty is a primary aspect of God we too often ignore.

Not only the beauty of things physical and material, but also the beauty of relationships in which the integrity of the relationship is honored and never violated or betrayed. Beauty of the spirit of things. Cosmic levels of beauty. Beauty that rises within the great spiritual power of wholehearted devotion to a common cause, mutual loyalty to a cosmic Deity.³⁹

The great thing we can teach our children is hope and faith in the ultimate goodness, truth and beauty of creation.

God-centered loyalty is fundamental. Loyalty to truth, beauty, and goodness is fundamental. Our primary loyalties will be tested over and over again in our godward adventure. And these tests will usually come out of ambush, to catch us when we're not looking, to capture what is the real spontaneous and instantaneous reaction of the heart.

The fifth action is to *stay determined*.

Persevere. Grow to the maximum of your being. Don't ever stop, except for an occasional rest. Use the talents you were given. Use it or lose it⁴⁰—that's the law of the universe.

Life will knock you down again and again. Get up stronger each time. Pick yourself up and go forward. Learn from your mistakes. Become better for the experience.

One of my favorite stories comes from the boxer, Archie Moore. Archie Moore had remarkable endurance as a fighter. He was 45 years old and still knocking 22-year olds out of the ring.

One night Archie was up against a tough young fighter in a 15-rounder. Archie was holding his own right into the 15th round when his opponent knocked him to the canvas. The referee began the count. At the count of nine Archie got up, and quickly proceeded to knock the other guy out of the ring.

In the dressing room some reporters crowded around Archie. You know how reporters are—sometimes they ask really dumb questions. But sometimes the dumb questions produce remarkable answers. One of the reporters asked: Archie, when you were down for the nine-count, what were you thinking about?

Archie thought for a few moments, then he said: "Well, I kind of got to thinking—like he's got all afternoon—if I don't get up off the mat, I'm gonna lose the fight."

That story has inspired our whole family for 30

years. When times are really tough, when you have worked to the point of utter exhaustion and there is still more to do, when you're up against an impossible deadline and all the energy seems gone, when the odds against you seem overwhelming, just say to yourself: If I don't get up off the mat, I'm gonna lose the fight. Then get up off the mat and win the fight.

The sixth action is to stay nonjudgmental.

This is an action because you usually have to work at it. It doesn't just pop into your head naturally as your first response, unless you have become very spiritual.

Staying nonjudgmental means we have to be cautious about making judgments about other people, especially about their motives. I'm sure that all of us, at one time or another have found ourselves accused of

motives that were the exact opposite of what we were thinking. So we all understand the social danger.

To be judgmental is to be quick to condemn, quick to assign motives, quick to assume a superior morality; quick to gossip, quick to mistrust. I think we can all imagine that life in the cosmos cannot proceed on this basis. So it is best we start learning the lesson now, that we begin to place a high value on *accuracy*. To give others the benefit of the doubt. To approach life situations with a nonjudgmental attitude.

Sometimes what you think you see is not what you're seeing at all. *The Urantia Book* portrait of our snarling primitive ancestor facing a sabre-tooth tiger is only one of countless examples we could use. What we are instructed to look for is the truth content in what is going on.

Here is one of my favorite examples.⁴¹ About a thousand years ago King Canute the Great united Denmark, Norway, Southern Sweden, and England into a Viking empire. The history books you probably read told you that Canute had a massive ego and was so intoxicated with power he did a strange thing. He took his throne chair to the edge of the sea and commanded the waves to stop. This is the story of the false historian.

The true historian would tell you this. Yes, Canute did take his throne chair to the edge of the sea. Yes, he did command the waves to stop. But let's look at the

motive behind the act.

Canute was angered by the constant flattery of those around him. They kept telling him he was so powerful he was capable of *any* achievement. He needed to teach them a lesson they would never forget.

"After ordering back the sea and getting his feet wet, Canute then said: 'Let all men know how empty and worthless is the power of kings, for there is none worthy of the name but He whom heaven and earth and sea obey by eternal laws.' Afterward, Canute never again wore his crown. He hung it instead in Winchester Cathedral."

So what looked like ego and intoxication of power to a false historian was in truth a demonstration of profound humility to a true historian. Let us not become false historians, even in the small details of our daily lives and interactions. This is a lesson for all time.

The seventh action is to stay driven.

Stay driven to excel in whatever you undertake. You can't get to Paradise with half-hearted effort. The universe is a place of whole hearts. Might as well learn that right now. Always do your best. Whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. Put your heart into it. These are not clichés. This is Reality 101.

We have been taught that "...it is repugnant to the divine nature to suffer any sort of deterioration or ever to permit the execution of any purely personal act in an inferior way."⁴² The work of this world is of paramount importance, but important as it is, the work itself is not nearly so important as the way we do this work.⁴³

As cosmic citizens, the quest for perfection—relaxed perfection—must become the underlying urge for everything we do.

The eighth action is to stay cooperative.

If we're not already cooperative in nature, we had better start learning fast. One of the most important lessons we learn on this planet is teamwork,⁴⁴ how to work effectively with other people, especially people who are not at all like us. Once we learn the transcendent value of teamwork, we will begin to get a glimpse of what is really going on in the universe.

So much to do. So many things to keep in mind. And this is not even basic training - it's just the introduction

If we're not already cooperative in nature, we had better start learning fast. One of the most important lessons we learn on this planet is teamwork, how to work effectively with other people, especially people who are not at all like us. Once we learn the transcendent value of teamwork, we will begin to get a glimpse of what is really going on in the universe.

to our basic training as citizens of a universe teeming with life and purpose.

Fortunately, *The Urantia Book* comes to our rescue. It provides a basic model for universe progression - a primary progression technique for cosmic problem solving. And it also reveals a primary progression attitude. These two things together will get you from here to there.

The *progression technique* is very simple, and you always have it with you wherever you are. The technique is to trade your mind for the mind of Jesus⁴⁵—the Jesus of *The Urantia Book*. The Jesus we have come to know as having a superbly balanced character, a wonderful symmetry of toughness and compassion, an unflinching dedication to seeking and doing the Father's will.

As you face decisions, actions, situations, think to yourself: What would Jesus do? Your honest answers to that question will begin to guide your actions with great spiritual power. Once you have done this with real success the first time—once you actually *experience* the mind of Jesus, however briefly, you will never want to go back to your old ways.

The primary progression *attitude* is equally simple. A Melchizedek revelator tells us that the keys to the kingdom of heaven are: sincerity, more sincerity, and more sincerity. All of us have these keys within us, and we use them by decisions, by more decisions, and by more decisions.⁴⁶ In time, we build up a gathering momentum that carries us ever godward.

Mary and I taught our children that *The Urantia Book* is not the end of the search, but only the beginning. *Everything* in life becomes more fascinating in the cosmic glow of the Urantia teachings. The first time I read the book cover to cover was in 1967. I discovered the majestic beauty of the writing, the supernal character of the philosophical observations, the symphonic quality in the way the revelation unfolds. I have often said: I have been bored only four times since 1967.

We live in a dangerous world, but one that is alive with promise. All through the world, even now, we can feel the stirrings for love and beauty,⁴⁷ the hunger for truth and righteousness rising in the human heart. Let each of us, each day give nourishment to these splendid hungers.

We who believe in the Urantia teachings are called voluntarily to a higher standard of conduct and action. We are now called upon to act out the meanings of what we have discovered. But how?

What would Jesus do?

God bless you my friends, my brothers and sisters of destiny, and keep you in His love forever.

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"My little children, I am going away, going back to my Father. In a little while you will not see me as you do here, as flesh and blood. In a very short time I am going to send you my spirit, just like me except for this material body. This new teacher is the Spirit of Truth who will live with each one of you, in your hearts, and so will all the children of light be made one and be drawn toward one another. And in this very manner will my Father and I be able to live in the souls of each one of you and also in the hearts of all other men who love us and make that love real in their experiences by loving one another, even as I am now loving you." [Pg. 1949 Par.1]

Identity in the Modern Renaissance

Dr. Bruce R. Jackson

Are We Living in a Renaissance?

I teach a college course in humanities. In this course I suggest to my students that our planet is currently engaged in a renaissance that will be much larger and have a greater impact on the world than the European Renaissance (ca. 1350 - 1600). Most people are aware of the European Renaissance through such familiar icons as the Mona Lisa and the Last Supper, the music of Luther and Palestrina, and the writings of Petrarch, Machiavelli, and Shakespeare. Yet to understand the historical impact of the European Renaissance one must examine the emergence of humanism and individualism, the scholarly investigation of classical thought, the evolution of modern scientific methodology, and the other great movements in intellectual history that gave birth to modern religious, educational, economic, and governmental systems.

Defining a renaissance is difficult. It involves a creative flowering of new ideas with a rebirth of the better values of the past. It is a time of extraordinary change at all levels of society. It is driven by the combination of human suffering, social upheaval, rapid technological development, the reemergence of the better traditional ideals, and the development of exciting new ideas that contain the potential for profound social change.

A renaissance is a very tricky period of history to understand when you are living in it. The intellectuals of the European Renaissance were so conscious of their unique place in history that they gave their era the title "renaissance." Yet it is clear that they had difficulty in understanding just what that meant in terms of successfully divining the near future. The same is true for us. Neither futurists nor economists are particularly good at making effective predictions concerning the movement of current social history. The turmoil, upheaval, and confusion of a renaissance is characterized by paradox and the unforeseen consequences of invention. Fundamental societal belief systems change rapidly during a renaissance, and much of this is driven by new technologies that quickly disperse information across cultures.

A renaissance is a time when the exploration of new ideas is influenced by a relatively small group of people who are in close communication with each other. Throughout history this fact has not been lost on many eager young intellectuals. One has only to look at the Sistine Chapel to yearn for those heady years of creativity and artistic flourishing. History is littered with claimants to a period of renaissance who wish themselves into the creative frenzy that entitles them to the vaunted historical status.

So are we making the claim that we are living in an age of renaissance? Without question. The internationalization of language, the worldwide spread of connected communications, the unparalleled publication of ideas, the recognition of traditional values, the challenges of the environment, the public revulsion at war and genocide, and the pressures of the world economy clearly indicate a renaissance of global proportions.

The Kernel of Thought for Our Renaissance

Every renaissance has at its core a concept that shapes the direction of human thought. For the European Renaissance this idea was "humanism." This kernel of thought became the foundation

of the Protestant Reformation, the cornerstone of scientific method, and the watchword of human creative activity.

Discovering the modern kernel of thought is key to understanding our renaissance. It is increasingly clear that the modern renaissance is about "diversity." The old pluralistic systems are breaking down. For example, George Orwell, in his classic novel *1984*, missed the boat because he viewed the evolution of government in classic totalitarian terms.

Modern political systems are being forced to move away from the traditional models because of the power of diversity as the new operational method. For example, war on a massive scale demonstrated in the two world wars is increasingly becoming obsolete because it is bad for business: the enemy of today may necessarily be the customers of tomorrow. The conflict initiated on September 11 will be significantly different from any other war in history. As war is an immensely powerful engine of social change during a renaissance, this new type of warfare will change the way governments, social institutions,

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and religious organizations interface with each other. This conflict will force the governments of the world to be sensitive to diversity, particularly in dealing with a variety of religious faiths.

Diversity is inherently difficult to define. While an intellectually appealing democratic idea, the very breadth of the concept offers modern thinkers a very slippery slope. Diversity threatens to destroy intellectual progress because its acceptance places on the table all kinds of ideas that are in conflict with each other. As human intellectual history has been largely Darwinian in the selection of ideas, giving equal status to ideas different from "ours" is difficult for "us." Acceptance of diversity demands tolerance of foreign cultures. Therefore, in the geopolitical arena, the acceptance of the concept of diversity will evolve slowly.

The problem with diversity is that it does not contain an elemental factor that can drive a renaissance. Though acceptance of diversity would change the face of this planet, it does not strike at the very core of each individual. Humanism was important to the Europeans because it changed human life on a personal level. This new valuation of human worth is at the very core of every social change in the European Renaissance.

I believe that contained within the pages of *The Urantia Book* is the kernel that is needed to give the modern renaissance direction and focus: a complete description of ascendant life. No other single piece of information has the potential to change the human condition on a massive scale. If the teachings of Jesus were enough, then the authors of the fifth epochal revelation would have given us Parts III and IV only. It is the totality of the message of the fifth epochal revelation that has the potential to change the very foundation of human perception. This kernel can be summed up as follows: every human being is a free will ascendant being living in Christ Michael's universe.

I believe that the modern kernel of knowledge that will fuel our renaissance will be a new understanding of ascendant life. Though recognition of the Heavenly Father is the only condition necessary to obtain ascendant life status, much more is possible. Accepting the challenge of ascendant

life presents the individual with the responsibility to acquire new and increasingly powerful information. This information includes such things as knowledge of the universal kingdom, understanding of the direct connection with the Heavenly Father through the Thought Adjuster, an experience of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognition of the role of other spiritual beings in human activity, knowledge of the teachings of our universal sovereign, acceptance of tenants of the Religion of Jesus Christ, and experientially living the spiritually driven life of an ascendant being.

The limitations of mortal living are well understood and accepting the gift of ascendant life is very easy. Living as an ascendant being demands a very different perspective. Knowledge of the process of ascendant life empowers the individual to live at very high levels of cosmic consciousness. Ascendant living changes the

very foundations of daily life. For example, the human interpersonal relationships change when a mortal becomes an ascendant being because he or she recognizes that all fellow human beings are ascendant beings. We are all the free will sons and daughters of the Heavenly Father.

The Urantia Book makes it clear that ascendant living is qualitatively

different from narrow earthbound perspectives. The book suggests that if enough individuals truly become ascendant beings, the very face of this earth will change. This is why the synergistic coincidence of our modern renaissance and the fifth epochal revelation promises to make great social changes in the not-to-distant future.

Persecution and Ascendant Living in the Modern Renaissance

The choice of living as a mortal or ascendant being is entirely the free will choice of each individual. What makes *the Urantia Book* important is that it places into the hands of the reader the certainty of that knowledge. Spiritual living no longer is the sole province of "blind faith." Ascendant living is experiential and shapes the individuals understanding of the consequences of cause and effect. Ascendant living changes the way human beings relate to each other. Ascendant living is a new vision of life itself.

The great failing of most of the world religions is that while they promise eternal life, their practitioners have no real understanding of it on a personal level. It is very difficult for most people to understand the

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consequences of life beyond mortal death. It is not until after resurrection that many truly begin to understand the nature of ascendant life. This expansion of human vision is a potentially powerful kernel in the modern renaissance because it represents an entirely new understanding of the role each individual has in the universe. This understanding is directly experiential, is truly life changing, and leads to citizenship in a universal kingdom that is very real.

The problem with any intellectual kernel is that it threatens traditional systems. Throughout human history every kernel that changes the foundations of human behavior has met with significant resistance. During the European Renaissance the Roman Catholic Church was not at all excited about the concept of Humanism. Their reaction to the Protestant Reformation was one of persecution and bloodshed.

While the fact of ascendant life is understood by most of the major religions, the practical implications of ascendant living as presented in *The Urantia Book* is threatening to orthodoxy. It should not surprise us that after 46 years of publication Christian theologians, clergy and intellectuals have rejected *The Urantia Book* using the most contemporary form of persecution the world has to offer: indifference and ambivalence. Most religionists in the modern world would like to see the fifth epochal revelation simply disappear by attempting to ignore it. Therefore, many who preach in the name of Jesus Christ are unable to embrace the new revelation of Christ's universe because to recognize its existence threatens to do what they fear the most: change them and alter some of the basic tenants of their faith.

I too have suffered persecution at the hands of the church, and I do not find their teeth to be particularly sharp. Though I could hardly compare my suffering to the tortured souls burned at the stake, the new renaissance offers the opportunity for all of the citizens of Christ's universe to rise up from our wounds, learn, and work even harder for Jesus' universal kingdom. The movement working with *The Urantia Book* will have ample opportunity to learn the lessons that will enable us to overcome any persecution the church and society can dish out while becoming effective ambassadors for the kingdom.

Identity in the Modern Renaissance

During the European Renaissance the Protestants were able to develop a public identity because of the confluence of a number of factors: the philosophical and political groundwork was already established, the emergence of a powerful new technology enabled communications to cross geographic borders, and the obsessive persecution of the established church. While the first two of these conditions are in place today, nobody is actively seeking to initiate a modern inquisition. If *The Urantia Book* is to be effectively presented to the world, we will need to develop an identity that is uniquely our own. We cannot count on the persecution by the established church to place our name on the map of human consciousness. In many ways this is a more difficult order than the challenge faced by the Protestant Reformation.

A study of the Harlem Renaissance (ca. 1920 -1935) offers us a modern solution: the development of a clearly defined self-identity. During this short and very localized renaissance African Americans were struggling to develop a public identity that clearly expressed their creative

uniqueness, their heritage, and their culture to a largely hostile white world. They did this with new music, art, and literature that presented their case in their own terms. They changed the music industry through the establishment of a new form of popular music: jazz. In art they introduced the world to the images of Africa combined with a fresh new urban attitude. In literature they developed the philosophical groundwork for the civil rights movement.

The Urantia Book clearly states that the Fifth Epochal Revelation will spread in a surprising fashion. A study of renaissance indicates that it will take the cooperative efforts of many artisans to do this. Our musicians, artists, writers, philosophers, and scholars must labor together to shape the identity of the fifth epochal revelation into a sharply focused and simple kernel that the rest of the world will be able to understand. This high level of communication between artisans is found in every renaissance and is absolutely essential for the establishment of a public identity.

Concluding with Cooperation

Cooperation amongst the readers of *The Urantia Book* is essential for the presentation of *The Urantia*

It should not surprise us that after 46 years of publication Christian theologians, clergy and intellectuals have rejected The Urantia Book using the most contemporary form of persecution the world has to offer: indifference and ambivalence.

Book to the larger world. If we are divided we will remain weak and will continue to be ignored. We must develop effective methods of working out our various opinions and beliefs through a celebration of our diversity. This is what the book means by developing unity of purpose without a uniformity of method.

In promoting a cooperative spirit we must learn how to communicate with each other in a way that strengthens our cause. We must learn to control our propensity to refuse to cooperate and compromise simply because it might violate some "fundamental principle" that we hold dear.

If we are to have any hope of being heard in the "mega din" of the modern world, we must forge our message into a simple and easily understandable concept that communicates truths that every human being already intuitively understands but may interpret differently. One of the basic tenants of missions is that those who hear the new message tend to reinterpret it into their own terms. The result of a missionary effort may turn out to be what the missionary considers to be "heresy."

We must learn to accept the fact that the kernel of truth that we wish to share with the world is already inherent in most of the religions of the world. Acceptance of the truth we offer the world may not require any knowledge of *The Urantia Book*. Just getting the kernel of ascendant life into the mainstream of human consciousness is challenge enough.

This is indeed a tall order. Are we ready to make the effort? The fields are white with the harvest but the laborers are few. Let us pray that our artisans are up for the monumental task that is at hand.

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Sincere "Spiritual Attitude" [1733] = "Positive Doing" [1769]

Nancy Bigelow

What do you say to a four or five year old who looks up into your eyes and asks: "What does God look like?" I think the worst possible response is: "I don't know." I believe telling a child "I don't know" suggests an I don't care attitude. "I don't care" is antithetical to any known concept about the God who cares for each of us so deeply he sent our Creator Son to Urantia to teach us how to ascend. Attitude is everything if a mortal is ever to set foot(?) on Paradise. I discovered (while watching a TV news clip about model aircraft) that even a lawn mower will ascend and actually fly if it attains the right

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attitude, which leads me to think a genuinely positive attitude might motivate a mortal to actually DO "the will of the Paradise Father." [1331]

My preferred response to the question: "What does God look like?" is: "God

looks like the way Jesus acts. This will or will not satisfy a child, depending; if a child's face brightens with recognition of moral duty toward one's fellows, this is a good sign—that child may already possess a Mystery Monitor. If the child expresses passive acceptance, or demands to know about eyes and ears and other body parts, it could be the opportune time to introduce those creature comprehensible attitudes/attributes of divinity known as "infinite goodness, endless mercy, matchless wisdom, superb character," [26] beauty, and truth. After all, you and I walk around each and every day carrying a live "Creator attribute" [1330] within our minds. (Makes me wonder why so many Urantians make so many off-kilter decisions.)

In our family, God looks pretty much like we're going to look in a few million years (minus material bodies) if everyone develops a better attitude about Brussels sprouts, and begins behaving like Jesus and his brothers and sisters behaved when they were growing up. "The human Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great as well as being true, beautiful and good. All these attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as the 'will of the Father in heaven.'" [2087]

Our dictionaries do not analogize attribute (or

attitude) with will, but it seems to me that had God not had a positive, purposeful attitude, he would not have willed the Eternal Son (and his attendant attributes) into existence, and they in turn would not have willed the Infinite Spirit in order to actively express God's volition within and throughout the totality of his Creation.

On a TV show *The Golden Girls*, the most-golden matriarch is wont to say: "Picture this," and she then goes on to evoke a verbal vignette more picturesque than the real thing. Humans on Urantia have usually pictured their gods as having distinctive heads. One of the most unusual looking Egyptian deities is the one with the Price-Pfister Pfaucet name Thoth. (Only a mother could love that face!) But even Thoth has human arms and legs. In the manner humans seem to need a beginning for everything, I think we also like to think a god can place a caring hand on a shoulder, or literally walk on water. I recall the time someone on one of the cyber-lists said she felt God hugging her. "The actuality of the existence of God is demonstrated

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in human experience by the indwelling of the divine presence, the spirit Monitor sent from Paradise to live in the mortal mind of man and there to assist in evolving the immortal soul of eternal survival." [24] If a mortal imagines God is hugging her, it's no wonder she envisions God with arms; that's how the human mind works. The brain stores an image (after the first hug) complete with arms and even the feeling of being hugged. However, "it is not necessary to see God with the eyes of the flesh in order to discern him by the faith-vision of the spiritualized [perfected] mind." [25]

In other words, what we mortals term the mind's eye, is capable of experiencing a God-hugging without physically seeing or feeling any arms of any description.

God has never named himself (according to the Urantia Papers), but names attached to attributes, attitudes, and actions can help to explain an object (or person's image), simply because names (over the years) have come to reflect characteristics, meanings, and even values. Millions of people on our planet believe JESUS has to look at least something like God, not only because they believe he is God's only begotten Son, but they believe Jesus acts-out the

features of God's personality. The Urantia Papers teach that God's personality represents everything he will ever be (and much, much more!).

"Personality is that feature of an individual which we know, and which enables us to identify such a being at some future time regardless of the nature and extent of changes in form, mind, or spirit status." [194] Noah Webster defines feature: 1. a. The make, form, or appearance, esp. of a person. b. Formerly, physical beauty. 2. The make or cast of a human face or of its parts; facial aspect. (Synonym, characteristic.) It would appear that who I am as a PERSON definitely conditions how other people will picture me, and I have learned from the Papers that my very

own absolutely unique "prerogatives of personality" [85] represent everything I can ever hope to be via my God-given free will. (Seems to me personal attitude can make or break a person's image.)

Jesus supposedly asked his Apostles: "Why do you call me good?" Well, for one thing, if Jesus really is a manifestation of

God, he can't ever be less than genuinely very good because God personifies a perfectly good person from the get-go; God tells us that, Jesus told us that, and I believe it. Only a perfectly righteous God would have whomped-up a salvation scheme whose ONLY real requirement for eternal survival is that I, as a person, will strive to be as perfect in my sphere of existence as God is on Paradise. Becoming the Father and Son coexistent with the Infinite Spirit, God's personal self is realized; he's the first real and fully-aware-of-it-person, and therein lies his primary purpose for creating Creation, "ceaseless self-realization" [29] within a master universe, where persons like us have a "first duty" to "strive for the attainment of the perfection of [the Master's] divinity." [22]

"The term God always denotes *personality*." [4] God is the face of fettered causality. Personality identifies "the absolute unity of Deity." [28] "Personality in the supreme sense is the revelation of God to the universe of universes." [29] Prior to unification (personalization) as the original Trinity, Deity's "image" is unfettered volition (albeit, perfect and purposeful will). In that state of "infinity of will," [6] Father-Infinite is able to fragment his prepersonal Mystery Monitors because Deity is pure essence of

presence rather than a persona. "Adjusters are fragments of the ancestor of gravity." [1183] Impersonal (prepersonal) spirit entities are without personal reference or identity (yet!). My Father-Monitor is a part of eternity-infinity prior to Father's personalization on Paradise, and in the here-and-now, neither Nancy B. nor her Thought Controller possess a unified personality, so both of us are "prepersonal" in one sense.

The name God portrays a perfect person; "there is no thing lacking in the beauty and perfection of his righteous character." [36] More important, from my mortal point of view, "the perfect and imperfect are truly interrelated" and "absolutely controlled by one infinite mind," and "therefore may the finite evolutionary creature ascend to Paradise in obedience to the Universal Father's mandate: 'Be you perfect, even as I am perfect.'" [637] "God is a universal spirit; God is the universal person." [25] God is the universal FATHER. "When all is said and done, the Father idea is still the highest human concept of God." [2097] In other words, God is our real father in every sense of the human words father and person. How do I know that? I know it because I love God. "Only a *person* can love and be loved. Even beauty and truth would be divorced from survival hope if they were not attributes of a personal God, a loving Father." [31]

And "the spirit nature of the Universal Father is shared fully with his coexistent self, the Eternal Son of Paradise." I'm thinking that if God the Father and God the Son share a nature, they also share the same attitudes and attributes; they probably look a whole lot alike in terms of image (maybe even figuratively). And "both the Father and Son in like manner share the universal and eternal spirit fully and unreservedly with their conjoint personality co-ordinate, the Infinite Spirit." [25] "The Infinite Spirit reflects in perfection not only the nature of the Paradise Father but also the nature of the Original Son." [92]

Has anyone else noticed how meaningful the prefix and word "in" is in the Papers? Indwelling and infinite Father fragment; "in reality;" [1753] "In personality." [9] "As I have lived with you in person, then shall I live in you." [1948] "Down here I have taught you in proverbs and spoken to you in parables.

I did so because you were only children in the spirit." [1952] "You can argue over opinions about God, but experience with him and in him exists above and beyond all human controversy and mere intellectual logic." [30] Isn't our experience with our Monitor experience IN God?

Like Father, like Son; personality look-alikes; mirror-images who reflect themselves (to us) via a Conjoint Actor acting on a stage known as the grand universe. Looks to me like it's God's infinite, positive, purposeful (willful) attitude-in-mind that begot his Son, and they (in turn, utilizing original mind and infinite volition), gave expression to the power of expression itself, the Infinite Spirit. Therefore, on our

current level of reality, divine attitude = divine acting, and divine acting equivalates with divine doing. "Jesus' religion consisted not merely in *believing*, but in actually *doing*, those things which the gospel required." [1769] Think like Jesus, you'll end-up acting just like Jesus day after day doing the Father's will without even really thinking about it.

The three faces of God on Paradise are "FATHER, (Creator, Controller, and Upholder) SON, (Co-ordinate Creator, Spirit Controller, and Spiritual Administrator) and SPIRIT (Conjoint Actor, Universal Integrator, and Mind Bestower)". [4] Well, at least I know who to look for even if I don't know exactly what God looks like. (If he dresses as uniquely as the personalities he bestows, it will be a piece of cake to find him. Besides, by the time I get to Paradise, I will be seeing via the faith-vision of my mind's eye not my eyes of the flesh. In my mind, seeing with a material eye of the flesh leads only to a faith-BELIEF; seeing with the mind's eye leads to the actual faith of Jesus!)

"The Creator covers himself with light as with a garment and stretches out the heavens as a curtain." [21] "Said the seer of old: 'Lo, he goes by me, and I see him not; he passes on also, but I perceive him not.' We may constantly observe the works of God, we may be highly conscious of the material evidences of his majestic conduct, but rarely may we gaze upon the visible manifestation of his divinity, not even to behold the presence of his delegated spirit of human indwelling," [25] known variously as a Mystery Monitor, Thought Changer, Thought Adjuster,

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Thought Controller, or Father Fragment. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place." [48] In a very real sense, the pure energy fragment indwelling my mind is God looking right at me every moment of the day and night. God sees me, why can't I see him?

"In the inner experience of man, mind is joined to matter," but that somewhat computer-like joinery is toast at the time of mortal demise. "The technique of survival is embraced in those adjustments of the human will and those transformations in the mortal mind whereby such a God-conscious intellect gradually becomes spirit taught and eventually spirit led." [26] Readers of the Urantia Papers know that an actual spirit-factor of the Universal Father can live within the human mind, and we see in the quote from page 25 that this "presence" is sometimes "beheld." Beheld? Beheld how? I thought spirit wasn't discernible on our level of reality.

Noah Webster connotes the word behold with Lo! and Look! If the Creator "covers himself with light as with a garment," what sort of clothing covers my Controller? "There is a characteristic light, a spirit luminosity, which accompanies this divine presence; on Urantia this phenomenon has sometimes been referred to as that 'true light which lights every man who comes into the world.'" [1181] Lo! what does spirit luminosity Look! like? According to the Divine Counselor who indited the Foreword of the Urantia Papers, spirit luminosity "connotes the personality manifestation characteristic of spirit beings of diverse orders." [10] As I interpret that quote, spirit luminosity connotes both my Father fragment and my personality, because that "kind" of light is how God *adjusts* [47] his omnipotence, omnipresence, and all-knowingness in relation to my mortal mind.

In other words, although my Mystery Monitor is spoken of as a pre-personal spirit being, he is a form ("manifestation") empowered to grow my soul at the same time he's helping the two of us to become a brand-new personality-in-FACT at the time of our fusion. This business about the Adjuster being an impersonal entity finally makes some sense; our Monitors are pre-personal in that the First Great Source and Center was not yet personalized (on Paradise) when he fragmented our Mystery Monitors (and similar), and Thought Changer and I

are pre-fusion in the same sense Deity was pre-fusion (unification) prior to the original Trinity. The Adjuster allows me to qualify for perfection of personality in almost the same sense Deity qualified itself at that moment of the first "*absolute divinity-tension*." [6]

What do you and I look like? We're created in God's image, but what does that really mean? And, why does God live within a light so bright, Urantians would be nuked if they got anywhere close to Paradise? (I guess if a person lives on the most perfect island in the middle of everything, and that island is the actual source of "all forms of reality," [7] then in truth, God can't help it that he's not exactly a dim bulb. Besides, there's the "truth-fact" that Deity's

light bulb is a mind with a wattage that thought-up the idea of Reality in the first place. In my opinion, reality—the size of what it turned out to be—had to have been an absolutely BRILLIANT idea!) "They beheld Jesus in intimate converse with two brilliant beings clothed in the habiliments of the light of the celestial world. And Jesus' face and

form shone with the luminosity of a heavenly light." [1753]

"The immensity and grandeur of the divine personality is beyond the grasp of the unperfected mind of evolutionary mortals," but believe it or don't, "the invisible things of God are partially understood by the things which are made." [27] "In personality, mind ever intervenes between spirit and matter; therefore is the universe illuminated [interpreted] by three kinds of light: material light, intellectual insight, and spirit luminosity." [9] And therefore, "today and as [we] are, [we] must discern the invisible Maker through his manifold and diverse creation, as well as through the revelation and ministration of his Sons." In other words, Father's attributes and attitudes are visible via his Son, thence, via "his Sons and their numerous subordinates." [27-28]

"The transcendent goal of the children of time is to find the eternal God, to comprehend the divine nature, to recognize the Universal Father. God-knowing creatures have only one supreme ambition, just one consuming desire, and that is to become as they are in their spheres, like him as he is in his Paradise perfection of personality." [21] "I come forth from the Eternal, and I have repeatedly returned to the presence of the Universal Father. I know of the actuality and

***What do you and I look like?
We're created in God's image,
but what does that really mean?
And, why does God live within a
light so bright, Urantians would
be nuked if they got anywhere
close to Paradise?***

personality of the First Source and Center, the Eternal and Universal Father. I know that, while the great God is absolute, eternal, and infinite, he is also good, divine, and gracious. I know the truth of the great declarations: 'God is spirit' and 'God is love,' and these two ATTRIBUTES are most completely revealed to the universe in the Eternal Son." [26]

Did anyone see the movie *Clifford* starring Martin Short? As a child, Clifford manifests the quintessential devil's son persona. Martin Short wore that attribute/ attitude on his face for the entire movie. I think each and every one of us wears and reflects the face of our personality via the way we act and especially the way we act toward one another. By the time you and I have finished the required learning and doing with the Melchizedeks, we will be taken to Salvington where each one of us will stand "face to face with the Sovereign of all Nebadon." [1248] What will his face reflect? He has a perfect personality, and is in fact THE "pattern for all local universe personality from that of the Bright and Morning Star down to the lowest human creature of progressing animal evolution." [28] Our Master Michael probably looks just like Father, right?

Urantians can't see God in the sense of seeing words or pictures on paper or a computer screen, but even blind people can see what God's divine attributes look like via the light of intelligent mind. In fact, I think some blind people see God much better than sighted people do. There is a man named Eddie (who has won a good deal of money on the TV show *Jeopardy*), whose mind and personality humble me every time I see him on that show. As far as I know he's been blind from birth, but as I have observed his facial expressions during each contest, I have seen a mind so illuminated by the first two types of universal light, I fully expect to see his guardian seraphim pushing the signal button. "The guardian seraphim are not mind, though they do spring from the same source that also gives origin to mortal mind, the Creative Spirit. Seraphim are mind stimulators; seraphim function as teachers of men by guiding the footsteps of the human personality into paths of new and progressive experiences." [1245] I see Eddie (the *Jeopardy* contestant) as beautiful (as well as good) not because of his physical appearance, but because

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his face radiates cosmic beauty; he's full to overflowing with the joy of the "*conviction of truth.*" [1949] I think he looks like a beautiful attitude coupled with a bounteous personality, working with a mind which appreciates "the eternal fitness of those things which impinge upon the recognition of divine goodness in Deity relations with all beings." [641] Eddie is living his life in the manner of Jesus, being all that he can be. The notion that Eddie seems to see divine attributes without the use of material eyes seems to suggest that most mortals on Urantia are confused about the meaning of terms like God and divinity simply because they're hung-up on God's having to have a physical image. What God DID and still DOES is what really matters (in my mind).

I figure the secret of doing the perfect thing is in first trying to have a near-perfect thought based on the way Jesus thinks about things. I can turn to any page in any one of the Jesus Papers and see how Jesus thinks and how those thoughts play-out. I figure—strive to be as perfect in my mind as I am able, even if I am unable to be perfect anywhere else, simply because God is perfect in his mind from the moment of that first thought which began everyTHING Urantians ultimately ended-up seeing on Urantia. I figure if a person wants to know what God looks like as a person, he or she needs to know how and what God is thinking, which always leads to how God acts, and he never varies in his "dependable way of divine acting." [1331]

Jesus teaches great stuff about behavior because he was fully committed to "the teaching of the ever-present divine spirit of human guidance," [1330] his Adjuster. No question in my mind that my Thought Controller has the right attitudes, or I probably wouldn't still be alive. My teenage attitudes were 93% negative, and right up to the time the Urantia Papers leaped-off a library shelf and almost bruised my toe, my adult attitudes were extremely self-serving. Now that I'm finally beginning to see via two lights of truth (my Mystery Monitor and the Spirit of Truth), I recognize that right attitude equals right attribute which may, in turn, reality-ize my eternal soul. For example, it is in my power to learn how to care for (love) another person in the very manner Jesus taught the principle of caring; "Jesus made the care of God for man like the solicitude of a loving father for

the welfare of his dependent children and then made this teaching the cornerstone of his religion." [1769]

Our Father always knows the best way to behave, and he also always manifests himself in that "usual way"—in the normal, natural, and dependable way of divine acting." [1331] Epochal Revelations always manifest God in the same miraculous manner; therefore, if you have seen those divine Sons, you have glimpsed the Father because you have witnessed God's sincerity. The attainment of goals of sonship, service, and salvation is directly proportionate with the level of sincerity.

Not long ago, a Urantia Papers faith-believer asked: What was Jesus' secret? I believe Jesus' secret is that he never abandoned the sincere attitude of a child. We know that during the incarnation, Jesus and our Michael shared the same personality, so from the moment Michael left Salvington with a fully-divine desire to do our Father's will, he was able to maintain that level of sincerity for the entire span of his mortality. Right attitude = right attribute which yields right action, "always."

"Urantia mortals have varying concepts of the miraculous, but to us who live as citizens of the local universe there are few miracles, and of these by far the most intriguing are the incarnational bestowals of the Paradise Sons. The appearance in and on your world, by apparently natural processes, of a divine Son, we regard as a miracle—the operation of universal laws beyond our understanding. Jesus of Nazareth was a miraculous person, but make no mistake; Christ Michael was not a double personality. He was not God in association with man but, rather, God *incarnate* in man. Christ Michael did not progressively become God. God did not, at some vital moment in the earth life of Jesus, become man. And this God and this man were, and now are, *one*, even as the Paradise Trinity of three beings is in reality Deity." [1331] What does Jesus look like? Well, in my mind, he certainly looks like the best way to find God.

Picture the presence of Deity; picture the Father. (I find it helps to envision all that I perceive is potential in a UNIVERSAL Father's attitude/attribute of love.) "Divine truth must not be discounted because the channel of its bestowal is apparently human. Many of your brethren have minds which accept the theory of God while they spiritually fail to realize the presence

of God. And that is just the reason why I have so often taught you that the kingdom of heaven can best be realized by acquiring the spiritual attitude of a sincere child. It is not the mental immaturity of the child that I commend to you but rather the *spiritual simplicity* of such an easy-believing and fully-trusting little one. It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to *feel the presence of God.*" [1733]

Picture the presence of Divinity; picture God's only begotten Son (or Jesus, whichever you prefer.) Picture in your MIND'S eye the attitudes and attributes of Jesus (as he lived the truth 2000 years ago), because "divine truth is a spirit-discerned reality," [1949] and God's actual reality is discerned via the "living ministry" [9] of the Infinite Spirit and his offspring. The mortal mind

is tremendously influential "as a factor in spiritual choosing." [756] "Why have you lingered so long before choosing to follow the LIGHT of truth with a whole heart?" [2032] "*Light*—spirit luminosity," [10] was/is the source of Jesus' faith. "His faith was the out-growth of the insight (illumination) born of the activity of the divine presence, his indwelling

Adjuster." [2087] Seems to me, that in order to picture deity and divinity, I need Look! no further than in my mind.

"Come, therefore, all of you into the fellowship of the Spirit of Truth in the Father's kingdom." [2032] "Today I can be with you only in person. In the times to come I will be with you and all other men who desire my presence, wherever you may be, and with each of you at the same time. Do you not discern that it is better for me to go away; that I leave you in the flesh so that I may the better and the more fully be with you in the spirit?" [1948] "All true prayers are addressed to spiritual beings, and all such petitions must be answered in spiritual terms, and all such answers must consist in spiritual realities." "Material beings can pray effectively only when they 'pray IN the SPIRIT.'" [1848-49] In the spirit is the manner in which a Spirit-fused mortal has "in spirit obeyed the Father's command, 'Be you perfect.'" [411]

(Said Judas Alpheus): "If the world SEES you not, how shall we be certain about you? How will you SHOW yourself to us?" [1948] Jesus answered: "In a very short time I am going to send you my spirit, just LIKE me except for this material body. This new teacher is the Spirit of Truth who will live with each one

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of you, in your hearts, and so will all the children of light be made one and be drawn toward one another. And in this very manner will my Father AND I be able to live in the souls of each one of you and also in the hearts of all other men who love us and make that love real in their experiences by loving one another, even as I am loving you." [1949]

What does God look like? He looks like the way Jesus lived and taught and loved, but more important, God looks the way our burgeoning, Urantia Papers-conditioned souls are beginning to look. You and I can see God clearly any time we want to just by looking inward at our Monitors. See how busy they are? They never sleep in order that, together, we will sometime see God on Paradise. "As a reality in human spiritual experience God is not a mystery." [27] A progressive soul mirrors God's truth(s) and love and life itself. (Lo! I don't think I want to know what a static-truth soul looks like.)

Nancy Bigelow lives in Hawaii with her husband, Bill. She described her life for us in her unique and creative style, and with a self-effacing charm that defies the euphemistic touch of editorial embellishment:

"Achieved what the Papers term 'physical identity' October 10, 1938, Cleveland, Ohio. Lovable, but extremely defiant child raised by utterly devoted and loving parents. Managed to escape incarceration during teenage years somewhat in the manner of that Urantia Papers frog who waltzed around lightning bolts & became the ancestor of Urantian mankind. Somehow succeeded in college (all the while maintaining defiant attitude) and was graduated with a degree in zoology and secondary education. Snagged a wonderful man at the same time received teaching certificate & have spent the bulk of my life becoming a dilettante. Mission: change dilettante status via the Fifth Epochal Revelation."

The Turning Point -Part I

Arthur Nash

Excerpted from the book, "The Golden Rule in Business," copyright 1923, this material has significance for Urantian scholars for three reasons. It provides first-source information about the seminal religious beliefs of Dr. William S. Sadler, who, in his youth was an ordained Seventh Day Adventist minister, and contemporaneous to Nash. Clearly, these beliefs are far afield from the Urantia Papers. Second, Part I of this excerpt chronicles Nash's devotion to his church, and the misguided fundamentalism of the organization that resulted in his expulsion. It is inspiring to read the birth of personal religion in Nash by means of loving service—the great gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. The third reason for examining Nash's work is that it may well have been a secondary human source for a key concept of the Urantia Papers, as we shall see in Part II.

Outside of the fact of its representing some sort of a religious system or cult, the term Seventh Day Adventism can mean little or nothing to many who will scan these pages. They regard it as being merely a combination of vowels and consonants. The character and content of what its leaders teach and its adherents believe, is as far beyond the frontier of their interest as it is beyond that of their knowledge . . . [yet] in view of the fact that as a Seventh Day Adventist I was reared and grew to manhood, and of the further fact that, as a fully accredited member of that Church I became a preacher of its doctrines, it can scarcely be deemed irrelevant if I outline, briefly, the history and belief of the people among whom I was raised.

Seventh Day Adventism originated in the work of one William Miller, who was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts February 15, 1782 and died at Low Hampton, New York December 20, 1849. A farmer by occupation possessing very limited educational advantages, he became deeply interested in the study of prophecy. In 1833 he began to lecture on the Second Coming of Christ, and predicted the destruction of the world in 1843. He made many converts to his views, in this country, in Canada, and in Great Britain. They were called Millerites. The prophet's prediction of doom having failed, he made other dates for its consummation. These failing also, the faith of many of his followers weakened and numbers fell away. Yet he still remained regarded as a man of deep sincerity, great intellectual ability, and a devoted Christian, by a large body of people.

In 1846, James White and his wife, adding certain tenets to the creed of the Millerites, founded the Seventh Day branch of Adventists. At various times they made their headquarters at Paris, Maine and Saratoga, Oswego, and Rochester, in the state of New York. In the year 1855 they settled in Battle Creek, Michigan, which, until recent times, formed the center of their activities.

The main points of doctrine taught by Seventh Day Adventists, as set forth in their literature, are as follows: They believe in the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ; that the seventh day, Saturday, is the Sabbath of the Lord God; that the keeping of Sunday is the mark of the beast, the Sabbath having been iniquitously changed by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church; that the beasts of the Apocalypse are to be identified with said Catholic Church, and that by changing the day set aside for the observance of the Sabbath they established the mark of their power; that the observance of Sunday is that against which the terrible pronouncement is made in Revelation xiv:9-11: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up ever and ever; and they shall have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

In addition to these things, Seventh Day Adventists believe that their late leader, Ellen G. White, was inspired in precisely the same way as were the writers of Holy Scriptures, that the Bible must be interpreted as to harmonize absolutely with her writings; that all the great prophecies of Scripture, except those relating to the end of the world, have already been fulfilled; that all should pay tithes; that all churches save only the Seventh Day Adventists, constitute Babylon and are spurned of God; that they, and they alone, are called to give the last warning of approaching doom to mankind; that this is the very last hour of the world's history; that the dead are unconscious, body and soul

alike, biding the great awakening; that the wicked together with Satan will be annihilated; that when Christ comes, for those advent they are hourly waiting, only one hundred and forty-four thousand of all people then living on this planet will be saved—and, of course, all of these will be Seventh Day Adventists.

. . . In the days of my youth, the theological school of Seventh Day Adventists was located in Battle Creek Michigan. To that school I was sent, and when I had finished my study-course it was said of me by some of the elders that, in their judgment, if the entire text of the New Testament should become lost, I could replace it from memory. That, of course, is a pretty tall statement, and I must be permitted to deny ever having claimed the qualifications such an extraordinary feat would entail. But, this much I have no hesitancy in saying: Did anyone, in those days, misquote a passage from the King James Version of the New Testament in my hearing, I could detect it instantly . . .

At the time when I completed my course at Battle Creek, the Seventh Day Adventists had a school for ministers and missionaries in the city of Detroit. To this school, in which there were about twenty-five young people preparing to become bearers of the "Third Angel's Message," I was sent as an instructor. A short while after I entered on my duties, the elder, who resided at the school in order to keep a watchful eye on both students and instructors, handed me a card of invitation, which read as follows: "This will be your Sunday [naming a date a few weeks ahead] to conduct services in the afternoons in the d'Arcambal home." The elder explained: "There is an old lady here in Detroit who maintains a home for jailbirds. Some ministers take turns giving services for them. I suppose this invitation means that it is our turn. But we never pay any attention to them."

I made no reply at the time. Later, I talked the matter over with a young man in the school who was a very accomplished singer as well as a progressive student. We decided we would like to go and take a peep at the d'Arcambal jail-birds.

"Mother" d'Arcambal, the widow of a French count, was an invalid, yet a woman who was doing a wonderful humanitarian work in the city of Detroit. She had a representative of her Home meet every

The elder explained: "There is an old lady here in Detroit who maintains a home for jailbirds. Some ministers take turns giving services for them. I suppose this invitation means that it is our turn. But we never pay any attention to them."

discharged prisoner at the gate of the state prison at Jackson, and offer him a shelter and an opportunity to make a new start in life. She, and her husband, had built the Home, and had a rug and broom factory connected therewith. As I have just said, Madame d'Arcambal did a great work, and scores, possibly hundreds, of men who, else, had gone down into irretrievable ruin, were by her Christly spirit and practical assistance saved to society and years of better living. When she died, the whole of the religious world of Detroit—Protestant, Catholic, Jewish—paid homage to the work and worth of a real friend of the fallen, to a great servant of God.

To resume: The young student and myself went to the service we had been invited to conduct. After it had been concluded. Mother d'Arcambal said to me:

“Mr. Nash, this appears to be a dreadfully busy world. For sometime, as you may know, I have been an invalid; and although many good and worthy people unite in supporting our institution they don't come in to see me very often, and I get awfully lonesome. Won't you try to arrange to come here, once in a while, and read the Scriptures and talk with me?”

To this dear soul's request I very gladly acceded, and for the next two or three months I spent one or two evenings each week at the bedside of Agnes L. d'Arcambal. I was with her when she bade the world good-bye, and passed to a higher and larger sphere of service.

A few days after the death of this good woman, I was engaged in class instruction in the school, expounding the “Third Angel's Message” contained in Revelation xiv, describing to the students what, according to the Adventist interpretation, the mark of the beast was, and what the seal of God, and how the one hundred and forty-four thousand, who were to stand secure from the otherwise general condemnation upon the sea of glass, must be observers of the seventh day as the Sabbath of the Lord. When I had finished my lesson, the supervising elder rose in his place and said: “Brother Nash, I want to ask you a question. In view of the exposition you have just given the class, do you believe that Mrs. d'Arcambal can be saved?”

The question hit me as would a blow planted

squarely between the eyes. Up to that moment, possibly, I had never ventured on a really independent thought in the whole course of my life. I had accepted and taken for granted the impeccable truth of what my “spiritual pastors and masters” had taught me. But right there I was literally jolted by the question, put to me by that stern elder, into some sort of genuine mental action. I knew something of the worth of this woman's life of service, of her great heart of sympathy and love. I knew of the hand of helpfulness she had stretched out to those who had stumbled along life's journey, and had lost the way. I knew of her faith in God, and, what is more, of her faith in the possibilities for good surviving somewhere in the deeps of even the worst of mankind. Mother d'Arcambal not saved? The thing

was absurd, utterly unthinkable. Every feeling within me revolted at the idea. So I blurted out: “I want to ask you a question. Do you think Jesus Christ can be saved?”

Now I suppose that was a shocking thing to say in an Adventist school. It would be a startling, if not shocking, thing to say anywhere. Yet it must be remembered that I was but a youngster at the time, and the

phrase was born out of the heartfelt indignation that swept over me at the suggestion of a soul like that which I knew had dwelt in Mother d'Arcambal being consigned to perdition, simply because of a question which, in essence, relates only to a weekly calendar. But I had most certainly flung a bombshell in our class that morning. The elder straightened himself up, and fixing me with his eye, replied, “Young man, probably you are not aware that Mrs. d'Arcambal once went down to Battle Creek, listened to the great truths of the Third Angel's Message from Elder White, Elder Uriah Smith, and other of our great leaders, and rejected them. Moreover, what right has a young, inexperienced upstart like you to liken this woman to Jesus Christ?”

My immediate reply was that I did know she had been to Battle Creek. I knew, also, that she had listened to expositions of Seventh Day Adventist doctrine by the great leaders of the Church, but did not know she had rejected them. However, I was so aroused that I did not even state that fact. I merely informed the elder that I did know that she had been

The question hit me as would a blow planted squarely between the eyes. Up to that moment, possibly, I had never ventured on a really independent thought in the whole course of my life. I had accepted and taken for granted the impeccable truth of what my “spiritual pastors and masters” had taught me.

to Battle Creek. I was not looking for a way to dodge the issue I had raised.

Well, the upshot of that morning's experience was, that the Conference Committee of the Adventist Church was notified to convene to consider my heresy. The good brethren who composed it were scattered all over the State of Michigan, and it required two or three days' time to bring them together. During that period I knew not what sleep meant. I pondered and pondered, until my brain practically refused to function. But before I reached this mental impasse, I had arrived at a definite irrevocable conclusion. When the Committee finally met, its deliberations were short, if not sweet. I went into the room where its members were gathered and said: "Before you enter on a consideration of my case, I have just a dozen words to say which will clear the atmosphere in better fashion than two hours of cross-examination. They are these: "If people like Mother d'Arcambal are doomed to go to hell, I want to go with them. Goodbye!"

Bitter Years

The very ground on which I had stood hitherto, crumbled beneath my feet. Remember, that from my earliest infancy I had never heard or learned anything of a religious character except the tenets and teachings of Adventism. On their validity, and my acceptance of them, the authorities of the Holy Scripture, the verities of the Christian faith, the very fact of God Himself, had turned. As I let go of them, I seemed, at the same time, to be letting go of everything—human and divine. My soul became a rifled chamber, robbed ruthlessly of its every treasure. Every laudable impulse, and up-reaching desire, died away in my heart—died swiftly, as a soldier might die in battle, as a bullet crashes through his brain. The light in my spiritual firmament faded suddenly into the "blackness of darkness;" my sun went down at high noon . . .

Men there are, of whom I have met thousands, who are making their way through life untroubled by a single problem or question relating to spiritual things, or with anything relating to creed or belief. Not vicious men, these, not notoriously evil. On the contrary, many are to be reckoned as being among the most respectable and respected members of society. Such matters as these simply have no place in their scheme of things—that is all. Born in homes where no attention or significance was given to the things of the

spirit, reared in an environment where personal religion played no part, they have grown to maturity completely insensible to the appeal of anything which does not relate immediately to sense and time. With such men, ignorance is indeed bliss, or at least freedom from "the gnawing worm."

But let a man have behind him an upbringing such as mine—it matters not what the character of teaching he may have been under the influence of—and the case is altered, instantly. Try as he will, by any sort of known means, laudable or reprehensible (as the world judges), he will fail to still the mutterings of conscience, or rid himself of the appeal of the Christian faith. He may aim to find distraction in dissipation, in social, even political, obligations; in love, marriage and the discharge of family duties; but he will still hear the voice—the warning, pleading, condemning voice—crying: "This is the way, walk thou in it." This is no "call to the unconverted." I am now making no "appeal to sinners," but a plain statement of plain fact. And so, again I say, my heart always beats in sympathy with any man who, having once had a vision—no matter how misleading—of sacred things,

finds himself compelled to turn his face away, only to find—confusion and chaos. That is a stretch of life's journey, along which a man makes his way with bowed head and bleeding feet. It is a stretch I know well, for I have trodden it with heavy heart and bitter tears . . .

I left the Adventist school in Detroit and went back to my father's home in Indiana, realizing that I had flung away every vestige of my faith and had become an infidel or, at any rate, an agnostic.

I did my level best to run away from duty, faith, God—and myself. My father strove earnestly with me to recant my heresy, to acknowledge my having turned traitor to the faith of my childhood. Two prominent elders of the Adventist Church added their pleading and argument to those of my father, but I turned a deaf ear to them all. For me, the lamp of faith had spluttered out.

I left my home in Indiana and took to the road. For four or five years I wandered about the Middle West, doing odd jobs here and there. Often did I go ragged and hungry. During those years, I never cared two straws which way a freight train was headed when I

*"If people like
Mother d'Arcambal
are doomed to go to hell,
I want to go with them.
Goodbye!"*

climbed into a box-car, or what it was I did to keep body and soul together . . . Seeking rest and finding none; roaming hither and thither with all good incentive and desire absent from anything to which I set my hand, I became veritably lost . . .

Presently I made my way back to Detroit. The vast industries which, to-day, form the activities of the Michigan city were then undeveloped. The whole community was in the throes of a commercial slump, and the poverty and suffering among the poor were very acute. Distress prevailed on every hand. My mind reverted to Agnes d'Arcambal: I began to think of the good she would strive to be doing, were she still alive, and out of the thought grew a desire to do something to relieve the misery which surrounded me on every side.

Here, again, was evidence of how the influence of a life given over to the service of humanity continues to exert its power, long after its owner has passed from the sphere of mundane things. Here was I, a man who for years had striven to drive out of my ken and remembrance the last recollection of everybody and everything of a worthy or ennobling nature, finding myself drawn back to the viewpoint of a servant of Jesus, looking with eyes of pity on the distressed, and possessed by a desire to help the needy—in short, doubling back on the unworthy motives I had striven desperately to foster, through a stretch of arid, wasted years! Yet so it was; and thus sprung again into the activity the first humanitarian—shall I say Christly?—impulse that had throbbled within me, since my dismissal from Adventist school.

With the aid of some of the residents of the city, I was enabled to open a laundry which found employment for quite a number of the poor people who were without work, and almost without bread. The church people began to send us their business, and the concern soon began to get under way. I was also able to get them to donate a carload of provisions for distribution among the neediest of the city's residents. It was, I think, while engaged in this work, that I once more found myself. Among the shadows, I once more caught a glimpse of the light. Here was I, who for years had railed against God and goodness, simply forced to the conclusion that

whether Deity existed or not, there were good people in the world—people who were not ashamed to confess that they found their incentive to aid their fellows in love for Christ, and in a belief in the principles he increasingly proclaimed . . .

Yet the truth of the old proverb that “shadow proveth sun” was once more demonstrated, for it was while engaged in this relief work that I met what I am in the habit of calling my Third Angel. The first was my mother; the second was Agnes d'Arcambal; the third was my wife. (It will be seen that I was destined never to escape the Third Angel part of my early teaching!) She was, at this time, superintendent of a Y. W. C. A. boarding school. We were married in the following spring.

The woman I chose for my life-partner was possessed by a strong, robust faith. Her spiritual vision was not impaired, as was my own, by the glare and glitter of sordid things. The pure in heart—and only the pure in heart—do see God. My association with her began to have an altogether uplifting and enheartening influence on my earth-wearied spirit. The work was slow and difficult, yet it was always headed in the right direction. Eventually,

she convinced me that all my finely-spun theories, and what I had deemed sledge-hammer arguments, were, in reality, not against Christianity itself, but against a misinterpretation of it. I had been watching *men*, and ignoring Jesus. The frailties and failures of humanity had kept me from seeing that Christ could not, and would not, fail.

After some little time had elapsed, I determined to re-enter the ministry—this time in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)—and accepted a small pastorate in Bluffton, Ohio. The end of this fresh start in definite religious work was, however, destined to come with almost bewildering suddenness. A kindly-hearted, yet professedly unreligious man died in the community in which I was laboring. In preaching his memorial sermon, I eulogized his many virtues in a way which brought down upon me the censure of my church officials, and my resignation was called for.

For me the times were once more “out of joint.” I had no job, and by this time, had a wife and three small children to support. Eventually I became acquainted with some men who were selling clothing

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among the farming communities, for a house in Chicago. They invited me to join them; I did so, and it took but a short time to demonstrate the fact that I was a far better salesman than preacher.

So ended, and began, another chapter in my life. The "active ministry" I left, I suppose, for the last time. Yet—to anticipate events—I am today, addressing larger audiences and filling more church

appointments by ten-fold than in the days when I was "one of the cloth." But that time had not, as yet, arrived. Nor had the vision of the work I was one day to take up as yet been vouchsafed me. I turned back to commercial life, but without any bitterness in my heart. One—nay, two things—I learned during my second "ministerial term," which I have never unlearned. They still form part of my rule of life. The first is the realization that the inspiration for effective Christian service is a real, living, vibrant love for Jesus—His ideals, His companionship, His purposes. The second is to always "remember that our job and ourselves are one."

Some of my readers may recall the story of the workman employed on the building of one of the great English cathedrals. Day after day, during his dinner-hour, his fellow workmen found him seated close to the office of works, gazing at a colored sketch hung on one of its walls. When some of them berated him for not being sociable and mixing in during the noon recess, the old man with a curious light in his eyes replied: "No, fellows, you are wrong about that. That is not the reason I am sitting here day after day. I am only an old mortar-mixer on this job, as you know; but it helps me to mix my mortar better when *I see what a beautiful building I am working on!*" That should be the spirit of every man who is engaged in any kind of work worth doing.

Part II of Arthur Nash's story will be published in the Spring & Summer edition of the Spiritual Fellowship Journal. In this part Nash demonstrates the supplanting of the profit motive in business with the service motive, as predicted in the Urantia Papers, will one day take place. Moreover, Nash may well be the original human source of the proclamation that the religion of Jesus has not failed, it has never been

seriously tried on a large scale.

Real Life Outreach

***One . . . thing I learned during my second "ministerial term," which I have never unlearned . . . the realization that the inspiration for effective Christian service is a real, living, vibrant love for Jesus—
His ideals, His companionship, His purposes.***

Joan, Claire Thurston and I conduct a youth study group for the Urantia Papers. We meet weekly, and the participants must juggle their homework and activities to make space for the meetings. It is wonderful to see the sacrifices this group makes to continue reading the Papers. We have almost completed Part II. The age range is 10 - 17. The group consists of our daughter, Michelle; Angie Thurston; Jesse

Thurston, and Haley Thurston. Chuck Thurston also attends whenever possible. We always have pizza before the meetings begin, and we let the young folks socialize before and after the reading period, which lasts about an hour or so.

We have encouraged the group to develop a service project of some kind to give more meaning to their studies. They elected to join Claire on her visits to the nursing home on Sundays. The idea is to uplift the spirits of the folks there with a bit of conversation. This can be challenging, because at times the folks there tend to be a bit difficult to converse with. This led to an amusing incident. One recent Sunday I asked Michelle how the visit went. She reported that Jesse and her had spent the hour with a woman who was 97 years old. Michelle said the woman was somewhat depressed that day. She told the kids: "I'm so old. I'm missing out on so many things." Michelle said Jesse replied: "Well, not as many as you would if you weren't alive." The woman had to chuckle.

For many Urantians, who may be a bit reluctant to evangelize, they will discover Urantian youth to be a willing and energetic audience. When I told Michelle that we were going to start reading the Urantia Papers with the youth, she replied: "At last!"

"If the Christian church would only dare to espouse the Master's program, thousands of apparently indifferent youths would rush forward to enlist in such a spiritual undertaking, and they would not hesitate to go all the way through with this great adventure." [2085]

L.M.

The Religion Humankind Fears

Larry Mullins

“Then exclaimed Ganid: ‘Teacher, let’s you and I make a new religion, one good enough for India and big enough for Rome, and maybe we can trade it to the Jews for Yahweh.’ And Jesus replied: ‘Ganid, religions are not made. The religions of men grow up over long periods of time, while the revelations of God flash upon earth in the lives of the men who reveal God to their fellows.’

“. . . What a scene for the celestial intelligences to behold, this spectacle of the Indian lad proposing to the Creator of a universe that they make a new religion! And though the young man did not know it, they were making a new and everlasting religion right then and there —this new way of salvation, the revelation of God to man through, and in, Jesus . . . When man goes in partnership with God, great things may, and do, happen.” [1467]

The Urantia Papers provide remarkable revelatory information about what it refers to on page 1467 as the “new and everlasting religion.” Before we examine this information, it will be helpful to clarify the definition of the word “religion.”

“I already have a religion”

Some readers, when discussing a Urantia religion, have protested that they “already have a religion.” They claim to be a Catholic, or a Methodist, or a Jew, or whatever. However, the Urantia Papers generally use the word “religion” in a different context than we are accustomed. The Papers most often use the first definition of religion, as it was presented in dictionaries at the time and in virtually all modern dictionaries:

re-li-gion: 1. (a) *Belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe* (b) *expression of such belief in conduct and ritual.*

Yet, sometimes the Papers do refer to what they call formal religion, or organized religion. In this case they are generally discussing specific “religions” such as the Jewish, Christian, or other religions. This is the common definition most people are accustomed to. This is also what most people think of when the word “religion” is used. Formal religion is traditionally described in the second dictionary definition:

2. (a) *any specific system of belief and worship, often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy [the Christian religion, the Buddhist religion, etc.]* (b) *any system of beliefs, practices, ethical values, etc. resembling, suggestive of, or likened to, such a system.*

[Compton’s 1997 Edition]

For most of us, our formal “religion” is an accident of birth. We may be Catholic, yet if we had been born into a Jewish family, we would likely be Jewish. If we were born in Syria we would more likely be a Moslem. There are exceptions, but this is generally the case. It is

similar to being born in Dallas and rooting for the Dallas Cowboys, or in Washington D.C. and rooting for the Washington Redskins.

As we shall see, the “new and everlasting religion of Jesus”—the restatement of the life and teachings of Jesus as presented in the Urantia Papers—is not usually an accident of birth. *This* religion has never been “seriously or sincerely or honestly tried out.” In fact, the Urantia Papers

tell us that this is the religion that humankind fears.

Why do modern men and women of intelligence fear the religion of Jesus? What the Papers tell us:

“Primitive man lived a life of superstitious bondage to religious fear. Modern, civilized men dread the thought of falling under the dominance of strong religious convictions. Thinking man has always feared to be held by a religion. When a strong and moving religion threatens to dominate him, he invariably tries to rationalize, traditionalize, and institutionalize it, thereby hoping to gain control of it. By such procedure, even a revealed religion becomes man-made and man-dominated. Modern men and women of intelligence evade the religion of Jesus because of their fears of what it will do to them—and with them. And all such fears are well founded. The religion of Jesus does, indeed, dominate and transform its believers, demanding that men dedicate their lives to seeking for a knowledge of the will of the Father in heaven and requiring that the energies of living be consecrated to the unselfish service of the brotherhood of man.

“Selfish men and women simply will not pay such a price for even the greatest spiritual treasure ever offered mortal man.” [2083]

The Spiritual Fellowship is seeking to organize a new and everlasting religion that will be feared by many people. Is this a necessary step in the evolution of the Urantia Movement?

“Modern men and women of intelligence evade the religion of Jesus because of their fears of what it will do to them —and with them. And all such fears are well founded.” [2083]

Why do we need religion? What the Papers tell us:

“God is not only the determiner of destiny; he is man’s eternal destination. All nonreligious human activities seek to bend the universe to the distorting service of self; the truly religious individual seeks to identify the self with the universe and then to dedicate the activities of this unified self to the service of the universe family of fellow beings, human and superhuman.”[67] Since the existing Urantian organizations of note declare themselves *not* to be religious organizations, doesn’t this set the stage for secular and contentious human conflict? Is it not fair to suggest that this passage outlines why we need a new organization?

The Urantia Papers also state that: “This world has never seriously tried to carry out the teachings of Jesus on a large scale, notwithstanding that halfhearted attempts have often been made to follow the doctrines of so-called Christianity.” [1720] If the teachings of Jesus are ever to be carried out on a large scale, is it not reasonable to propose that we need some kind of a religious organization to facilitate the propagation of “the greatest spiritual treasure ever offered mortal man?” And, equally reasonable, should not such a “truly religious” organization clearly and openly seek to “identify” itself “with the universe and then to dedicate the activities of this unified” group of individuals “to the service of the universe family of fellow beings, human and superhuman?”

More than reading, more than believing

On page 2090, the Urantia Papers make the declaration: “Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.” For nearly five decades most Urantians have been generally content to call themselves “readers.” As readers, Urantians have sought to acquire this knowledge “of greatest value.” It is easy enough to be a “reader,” and to learn about the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. It is really not too difficult to encourage others to do so. We have debated and exchanged “head knowledge” about the religious life of Jesus for countless hours in study groups. Yet, something was missing, many Urantians have thirsted for something more.

Then, about five years long ago some of us took the more difficult step and began to declare ourselves

“believers.” We thus began to profess our belief in the Urantia Papers as a revelation of epochal magnitude. At the time, this seemed to be quite a progression. However, before much time had passed more and more Urantians wanted to take their understanding of the religious life of Jesus to yet another level. For us, even *believing* wholeheartedly in the teachings of the Urantia Papers did not seem to answer the “still, small voice within.”

As we began to plan The Spiritual Fellowship some of us began to assemble quotes from the Urantia Papers to support and enlarge upon the primary premise about the need to know about the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. A compelling challenge seemed to emerge. More than simply *knowing* about the Master’s religious life, and beyond *believing* in him and the task he undertook, it seemed more and more clear that we are being called upon to *follow* the Master.

“Follow me”

This is a distant cry from anything most of us expected when we first picked up the Urantia Papers. And yet, many of us now conclude that, beyond endless discussions about the religious life of Jesus, and beyond professing our belief in him and his mission, the religion of Jesus compels us to pick up our individual crosses and actually follow after the Master.

Thus, many of us find ourselves confronted with an immensely different challenge. Such a belief cannot be limited to what Christian religionists have referred to as “Sunday morning religion.” Such a belief must be acted out. It calls upon us to make it a way of life, and it cannot be confined to study groups and feel-good conferences. Such a belief disrupts everything that we are doing.

“Jesus on Leadership”

- why are many embarrassed?

Many years ago I attempted to write a book titled “Jesus on Leadership.” Eventually I decided that I didn’t know enough to write it. I still feel that way. But I learned a great deal in the attempt. For one thing, I found myself confronted by a great deal of resistance by fundamentalist Christian leaders and also by secular businessmen. This baffled me. I asked a wise Urantian about it. I said: “Why is it a businessman will gladly keep a book on his desk with the title: *Attila the Hun on Leadership*, yet would hide a book titled *Jesus on*

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Leadership?” The reply was most instructive: “The reason is, Attila the Hun is dead, and Jesus is alive. A businessman sees Jesus coming and he knows Jesus is not going to be satisfied with arranging the furniture and putting in new carpet. He is going to rip out the rotten timbers and start from scratch. Very few people are willing to undergo a renovation of that magnitude.”

There seems to be but one quote in the Urantia Papers in which the Master used his profession as a carpenter to illustrate a point: “But do not make the mistake of the foolish carpenter who wastes valuable time squaring, measuring, and smoothing his worm-eaten and inwardly rotting timber and then, when he has thus bestowed all of his labor upon the unsound beam, must reject it as unfit to enter into the foundations of the building which he would construct to withstand the assaults of time and storm. Let every man make sure that the intellectual and moral foundations of character are such as will adequately support the superstructure of the enlarging and ennobling spiritual nature, which is thus to transform the mortal mind and then, in association with that re-created mind, is to achieve the evolvment of the soul of immortal destiny.” [1738]

As we begin to entertain such stunning ideas, we may no longer find so much warmth and comfort in our study groups and our social gatherings, where we talk about the compelling life of Jesus.

On the contrary, we find ourselves back on the sun scorched roads of Israel, and through the dusty air we see that wondrous sunlit countenance turn toward us. He would probably not ask us: “Do you read the Urantia Papers?” or “Do you believe the Urantia Papers?” More likely the Master might ask: “Will you follow me?” It almost seems inevitable that if we acquire knowledge of the religious life of Jesus, sooner or later we must confront the one supreme requirement of the Master, “Follow me.”

“Jesus does not require his disciples to believe in him but rather to believe with him, believe in the reality of the love of God and in full confidence accept the security of the assurance of sonship with the heavenly Father. The Master desires that all his followers should fully share his transcendent faith. Jesus most touchingly challenged his followers, not only to believe

what he believed, but also to believe as he believed. This is the full significance of his one supreme requirement, ‘Follow me.’” [2089]

We can now see that the knowledge of “greatest value” to us is perhaps a means to an end. It leads us inevitably to an awareness of the supreme requirement of the Master. In a way, we are in a position similar to the apostles when Jesus left the planet. They had learned a great deal, but now something new was being asked of them.

“I have taught you much by word of mouth, and I have lived my life among you. I have done all that can be done to enlighten your minds and liberate your souls, and what you have not been able to get from my teachings and my life, you must now prepare to acquire

at the hand of that master of all teachers—actual experience. And in all of this new experience which now awaits you, I will go before you and the Spirit of Truth shall be with you. Fear not; that which you now fail to comprehend, the new teacher, when he has come, will reveal to you throughout the remainder of your life on earth and on through your training in the eternal ages.” [1961]

Ten Cascading Premises

Perhaps what we have examined here can be best summarized by ten short quotes from the Papers. These quotes are of special note because the understanding of each of them in turn, one after the other, leads to a deeper insight into the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. Moreover, these insights guide us, step by step, to a better understanding of the one supreme requirement of the Master. I call these the “ten cascading premises” because they gain power as they flow one into the other.

[1]. “Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.” [2090] The following passages seem to define one possible path toward understanding that life, how Jesus lived it, and how we — as Urantian Believers—are called upon to develop and live our own religious lives.

[2]. “The secret of his unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship—unbroken communion with God—and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices.” [2089]

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[3]. “Whence then comes the energy to do these great things? Look to your Master. Even now he is out in the hills taking in power while we are here giving out energy. The secret of all this problem is wrapped up in spiritual communion, in worship. From the human standpoint it is a question of combined meditation and relaxation. Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit; relaxation determines the capacity for spiritual receptivity. And this interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship. At least, that is the way the philosopher views it.” [Rodan speaking] [1777]

[4]. “Before Pentecost the apostles had given up much for Jesus. They had sacrificed their homes, families, friends, worldly goods, and positions. At Pentecost they gave themselves to God, and the Father and the Son responded by giving themselves to man—sending their spirits to live within men. This experience of losing self and finding the spirit was not one of emotion; it was an act of intelligent self-surrender and unreserved consecration.” [2089]

[5]. “But these mistakes of the intellect in no way interfered with the believer’s great progress in growth in spirit. In less than a month after the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth, the apostles made more individual spiritual progress than during their almost four years of personal and loving association with the Master.” [2061]

[6]. “Do not make the mistake of expecting to become strongly intellectually conscious of the outpoured Spirit of Truth. The spirit never creates a consciousness of himself, only a consciousness of Michael, the Son. From the beginning Jesus taught that the spirit would not speak of himself. The proof, therefore, of your fellowship with the Spirit of Truth is not to be found in your consciousness of this spirit but rather in your experience of enhanced fellowship with Michael.

“The spirit also came to help men recall and understand the words of the Master as well as to illuminate and reinterpret his life on earth.

“Next, the Spirit of Truth came to help the believer to witness to the realities of Jesus’ teachings and his life as he lived it in the flesh, and as he now again lives it anew and afresh in the individual believer of each passing generation of the spirit-filled sons of God.

“Thus it appears that the Spirit of Truth comes really to lead all believers into all truth, into the expanding knowledge of the experience of the living and growing spiritual consciousness of the reality of

eternal and ascending sonship with God.” [2061]

[7]. “Paul and his contemporaries applied all of Jesus’ spiritual implications regarding himself and the individual believer to the church as a group of believers; and in doing this, they struck a deathblow to Jesus’ concept of the divine kingdom in the heart of the individual believer.” [1865]

[8]. “There must come a revival of the actual teachings of Jesus, such a restatement as will undo the work of his early followers who went about to create a sociophilosophical system of belief regarding the fact of Michael’s sojourn on earth.” [2089]

[9]. “Christianity has indeed done a great service for this world, but what is now most needed is Jesus. The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit-born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men. It is futile to talk about a revival of primitive Christianity; you must go forward from where you find yourselves. Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus’ life and illuminated with a new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation. And when Jesus becomes thus lifted up, he will draw all men to himself. Jesus’ disciples should be more than conquerors, even overflowing sources of inspiration and enhanced living to all men. Religion is only an exalted humanism until it is made divine by the discovery of the reality of the presence of God in personal experience.” [2084]

[10.] It is the belief of many of us that this series of quotes represent one way the Urantia Revelation will: “flash upon earth in the lives of the men who reveal God to their fellows.” This also is a basis of the “new and everlasting religion . . . this new way of salvation, the revelation of God to man through, and in, Jesus . . . When man goes in partnership with God, great things may, and do, happen.” [1467]

These premises, drawn from the Urantia Papers, are suggested as philosophic tools by means of which we may arrive at certain personal conclusions. They are by no means the only arrangement or conclusions that could be developed. To those Urantians who resonate with them, the cascading premises are intended to help lead to a deeper understanding of the religious life of Jesus, how he lived it, and how we may aspire to dare to attempt it ourselves. “The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God—the very God who has made such a creature life of inner meaning-value possible.” [1221]



“When the wind blows, you hear the rustle of the leaves, but you do not see the wind--whence it comes or whither it goes--and so it is with everyone born of the spirit. With the eyes of the flesh you can behold the manifestations of the spirit, but you cannot actually discern the spirit.”

The Urantia Papers, 1602

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