

Spiritual Fellowship Journal

for Students & Believers in the Revelation of the Urantia Papers

Volume 12, Number 2

Fall and Winter, 2002-2003

The History of the Spiritual Fellowship

Meredith J. Sprunger

Quantum Mysteries & the Urantia Papers

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Excerpts of Nadia's Letters to J.J. Johnson

The Man Nobody Knows

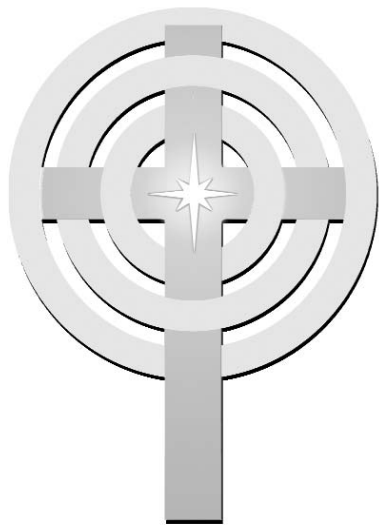
A Discovery of the Real Jesus

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Interface: If We Build it, Will They Come?

Are You an Unused Urantia Resource?

Downgrasp: Buckminster Fuller's Life-Changing Experience



About The Spiritual Fellowship

Our Mission Statement

The Spiritual Fellowship is a religious organization whose mission is to bring the spiritual teachings of the Urantia Papers to all people.

Our Core Values

The Spiritual Fellowship is committed to motivating, empowering, and supporting all people in their growing relationship with God and encouraging loving service, forgiveness, and ministry among all of God's children. The Spiritual Fellowship believes the Urantia Papers present an expanded revelation of the Life and Teachings of Jesus and a fuller revelation of God and our relationship to God. While recognizing that any revelation is incomplete short of the attainment of God, our Universal Parent, The Spiritual Fellowship recognizes the value of a continuing study of the Urantia Papers and other spiritual sources for inspiration and guidance.

How to Join The Spiritual Fellowship

If you wish to join The Spiritual Fellowship, please mail the completed membership form to:

**Nancy Long
The Spiritual Fellowship
9554 Lick Creel Road
Morgantown, IN 46160**

The Spiritual Fellowship Membership Form

Yes, I wish to become a member-at-large of The Spiritual Fellowship!

I hereby profess faith in the Father/Motherhood of God and the brother/sisterhood of all people as portrayed by the Life and Teachings of Jesus in the Urantia Papers.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Area Code: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Spiritual Fellowship Journal

For Students & Believers in the Revelation of the Urantia Papers

Founded by
Dr. Meredith Justin Sprunger

FALL & WINTER 2002 - 2003
Volume 12, No.2

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Editorials

God's Little Three-Digit Joke on Quantum Science

One of the historically renowned quantum physicists, Richard Feynman, once suggested that all physicists should put up a sign in their office with a particular three-digit number on it that would remind them of how much science doesn't know. Werner Heisenberg, of the famous uncertainty principle, declared that all the quandaries of quantum physics would shrivel up if this same three-digit number was ever explained! In *The God Particle* by Nobel prize-winning quantum physicist, Leon Lederman, the same perplexing three-digit number is referred to as showing up: "... naked all over the place. This means that a scientist on Mars, or the fourteenth planet of the star Sirius, using whatever god-awful units they have for charge, speed, and their version of Planck's constant, would get [the same three digit number]. It is a pure number." Lederman goes even further: "Physicists have agonized over [this three digit number] for fifty years . . . I tell my undergraduate students that if they are ever in a major city anywhere in the world, they should write [this three digit number] on a sign and hold it up on a busy street corner. Eventually a physicist will see that they're distressed and come to their assistance."

Long-time readers may laugh aloud, as I did, when they learn that the mysterious number is 137.

To readers of less experience, 137 is the key number that would represent the primary distribution of the First Source and Center. In the Urantia Papers: number one representing the First Source and Center, number three representing the Paradise Trinity, and number seven representing the Sevenfold Relationship, God the Sevenfold. (Seven exhausts all possible combinations of the Trinity).

But how could the cosmic revelatory significance of number 137 be explained to a scientist like Lederman? He would have to study the Urantia Papers to grasp it. Even if he chose to do so, what value would the information be to his career? If he sought to disclose it publicly he would be disgraced in his chosen profession.

And therein lies the problem of the many experts of particular disciplines who are potential readers of the Urantia Papers. The quantum physics scientist peers at gauges and screens to study the world of the very, very small, and is baffled. A good student of the Urantia Papers might explain to her: "Of course what you are seeing here violates the precepts of what we know as time and space. You are looking into the emerging Unqualified Absolute. The puzzling transactions you see are simply the mind of God engaged in the cancellation of both past and future to 'make room' for time and space — the Universal Absolute." However, would any scientist spend the months of study required to grasp this principle of how the Absolute "makes room" for the finite?

This is also a problem for the older scientific minds in the Urantia Movement. It is a disappointment to me that the majority of our self-appointed Urantian "scientists" have never delved into the really difficult issues, such as the significance of "137." They prefer the safer course of sawing the sawdust of the science in the Papers, even though it was disclaimed in the sense it would soon be in "need of revision." Nor will they take on the daunting task of developing a revised body of science as an adjunct to the Papers. (For even if the science were thoroughly updated, the philosophical foundations of the Papers would not be damaged in any way). Then, in this dry desert of Urantia science, along comes Donald Briglia, of Palo Alto, California.

Joan and I visited a Urantia Study group in California a summer ago, and I mentioned the number 137 in context with quantum mechanics. Donald, a physicist, launched into an intriguing discussion of the number. At my request, he wrote an article on it. Part One is published in this issue.

Some will find this article a bit difficult, but it is well worth the effort of reading. It is well documented and offers a wealth of possible threads that could be picked up and developed by some of our younger, creative scientific minds. And, regarding science, keep in mind that Richard Feynman once noted that nothing we know about elementary particles and forces can tell us anything about green reptiles that go croak in the night, or the music of Mozart, or the Ten Commandments.

L.M.

An Old-Fashioned Conference of Urantia Believers at Unity Village

In October, Joan and I had the privilege of attending the Heart of America Urantia Conference at Unity Village, Missouri. Beautiful grounds, excellent food, accommodations, planning and facilities were featured. It was an opportunity to meet some new friends and renew our relationships with some fine Urantians. The theme was Daily Walking with our Adjusters, and the conference adhered faithfully to the teachings of the Urantia Papers. No hocus-pocus, no channeling, just stimulating and inspiring messages from readers who know their stuff. The conference was organized by Susan Cook, who was ably supported by the Heart of America society of readers. It was wonderful; I had forgotten how great old-fashioned Urantia conferences could be. We need more of them.

L.M.

Are You an Unused Urantia Resource?

There are many great Urantians out there who are not being used ... and you may be one of them. Do you have a story to tell? The Journal welcomes stories and articles from Urantians. We are most interested in first hand outreach experiences, such as Ken Raveill's article in this issue, "*Let's Go Public*," and Micah Kruger's stirring: "*A Service Adventure in Guatemala*." ***We are especially interested in Urantians who have not had an opportunity to be heard.*** Outreach stories such as J.J. Johnson's courageous efforts in Islamabad are welcome ... (see "Our Urantian in Pakistan") as well as brilliant and informed perspectives such as Donald Briglia's article: "*Quantum Mysteries & the Urantia Papers*." Creative ideas for secondary works such as Tom and Karen Allen's "*Compare*" are most valuable. We plan to begin a column for Urantian Youth soon, and want to hear from this greatly under-valued and under-used source and perspective. ***Finally there is a wealth of golden riches among senior Urantians*** ... Helena Sprague, who is a Urantia Foundation Trustee Emeritus, and who served on the Urantia Brotherhood General Council, wrote us recently about this. She hosts a Senior Seminars group, and (with Bill Rocap) a "Shared Perceptions" group for seniors. With 46 years of close involvement with the Urantia Papers,

who can imagine the value of her insights and ideas? ***Where are the great Urantian Leaders and Teachers?*** They are here, now. They have long — too long — been silent. We seek nonpolitical and grounded insights and ideas regardless of your position, affiliation or lack of same. We seek to tap the gathered power of "ordinary" Urantians ... *the genius of the people*. Are you destined to be one of the great Urantian leaders and teachers for this day and this generation? ***If not you, then who?***

L.M

Downgrasp

Buckminster Fuller's Life-Changing Experience

(Original Interview by John Love)

Reprinted from QUEST/79, Nov./Dec. 1979

"Bucky" Fuller, born in 1895, is perhaps best known as the inventor of the geodesic dome. He is also famous as an architect, engineer, futurist, cartographer, and poet. During the '20s he coined the term "Spaceship Earth," and was the first to write of the problems of a closed-system planet. In 1969 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1927 my wife and I were living in Chicago, in a one-room apartment on Belmont Avenue. We were penniless. Five years earlier, our first daughter had died on her fourth birthday, having gone through infantile paralysis, flu, spinal meningitis, and pneumonia. It was a long battle for life, and it was a terribly painful thing for us when she died.

About that time my father-in-law, an architect, had invented a new building material. I liked this man very much—and I thought his invention would be useful. I finally organized four small factories around the country making this material.

I worked terribly hard, but the minute I got through work for the day—I guess I was in a lot of pain because our child had died—I'd go off and drink all night. I had enough health, somehow, to carry on. But the company failed, and some very prominent people had bet money on me. So I was in disgrace and utterly broke. At that moment a new life, our daughter, Allegra, came to us.

I appeared to myself, in retrospect, a horrendous mess. I found myself saying, "Am I an utter failure? If so, I had better get myself out of the way, so at least

my wife and baby can be taken care of by my family.”

At that time Lincoln Park, right on Lake Michigan, was one of my favorite places. I would run through the park at night, and I knew every inch of the lake edge. So I knew just where to go when I decided to throw myself into the lake, fully intending to commit suicide.

I stood by the side of the lake, hesitating. All my life, at home and in school, I had been admonished: “Never mind what you think! Listen! We are trying to teach you!” But by that lakeside I was forced to do some thinking on my own.

I asked myself what a little, penniless human being with a remaining life expectancy of only 10 years—I was 32 and the life expectancy of those born, as I was, in 1895 was 42—could do for humanity that great corporations and great political states cannot do. Answering myself, I said: “The individual can take initiatives without anyone’s permission.”

I told myself: “You do not have the right to eliminate yourself, you do not belong to you. You belong to the universe. The significance of you will forever remain obscure to you, but you may assume that you are fulfilling your significance if you apply yourself to converting all your experience to the highest advantage of others.”

So I vowed to keep myself alive, but only if I would never use me again just for me—each one of us is born of two, and we really belong to each other. I vowed to do my own thinking, instead of trying to accommodate everyone else’s opinions, credos, and theories. I vowed to apply my inventory of experiences to the solving of problems that affect everyone aboard planet Earth.

I didn’t want to waste a second, so I slept the way certain animals sleep: lying down as soon as I was tired, sleeping a half-hour every six hours. I also decided to hold a moratorium on speech. It was very tough on my wife, but for two years in that Chicago tenement I didn’t allow myself to use words. I wanted to force myself back to the point where I could understand what I was thinking.

I decided to forget about earning a living. It seemed to me that humans are honey-money bees, doing the right things for the wrong reasons, just as the bee inadvertently pollinates the flower. Released from the idea of earning a living, I was able to address problems in the biggest way. I decided to commit myself to the invention and development of physical artifacts to reform the environment. I decided that a plurality of such artifacts had the potential to evoke humanity’s most intelligent, interconsiderate qualities. It became obvious that if I worked always and only for all humanity, I would be optimally effective. I’d be doing what nature wanted me to do, and nature literally would support me.

Once I decided to do my own thinking, the first question I had to ask myself was: “Do you have any experiential evidence that forces you to assume a greater intellect operating in the universe?” My answer was swift and positive. Experience demonstrated an orderliness of interactive, exceptionless principles. I

was over-whelmed by this, and more convinced that my purpose was to abet the inclusion of human beings in the design of the universe.

I’m absolutely convinced that everything that has happened to me since that time has been through my commitment to this greater integrity.

Many times I’ve chickened, and everything inevitably goes wrong. But then, when I return to my commitment, my life suddenly works again. There’s something of the miraculous in that.

The Urantia Papers tell us: “Most of the spectacular phenomena associated with so-called religious conversions are entirely psychologic in nature, but now and then there do occur experiences which are also spiritual in origin. When the mental mobilization is absolutely total on any level of the psychic upreach toward spirit attainment, when there exists perfection of the human motivation of loyalties to the divine idea, then there very often occurs a sudden down-grasp of the indwelling spirit to synchronize with the concentrated and consecrated purpose of the superconscious mind of the believing mortal. And it is such experiences of unified intellectual and spiritual phenomena that constitute the conversion which consists in factors over and above purely psychologic involvement.” [p. 1099]

“You do not have the right to eliminate yourself, you do not belong to you. You belong to the universe. The significance of you will forever remain obscure to you, but you may assume that you are fulfilling your significance if you apply yourself to converting all your experience to the highest advantage of others.”

Interface

by Merlyn Cox

If We Build It, Will They Come?

Part of our desire in creating a new Urantia religious organization is to make more visible what has been up to now largely hidden. It stems from the passion to bring the Fifth Epochal Revelation to the larger community of mankind: the liberating, joyful message of the Father's love and his plan for all of his children.

How we would like to see people shorn of superstition and unworthy ideas of the Divine Creator! I'm reminded of Jesus' feelings as he looked sadly at the meaningless and childish rituals of his people. He passionately wanted to give vent to his anger at the distorted understanding of the Father in Heaven. But he held his peace; the time was not right.

He lived in a time that was ripe for the planting of seeds, but not a time when the majority were ready to accept his message. But it was a time of great spiritual hunger, and enough souls were ready that a movement was started that would continue to grow until it encompassed the earth.

We live in a time when spiritual hunger is again becoming the great thirst of mankind. The next age, as some have pointed out, appears to be an age of religious quest and not one of political ideas and ideology.

Christianity is growing rapidly around the world, especially in Africa and South America, and soon Christians in the Western world will be in a clear minority. But the growth there is more in a Pentecostal vein, rather than that of mainline Christianity. This may be both a judgment against the aridity of mainline Christianity as well as a more natural path for most people at this time. The growth of rigid fundamentalism in all parts of the world may be no less a sign of the same hunger.

Is the harvest then ripe for an enlarged receptivity of the Fifth Epochal Revelation? To some degree perhaps, but I suspect we are a long way from a time of widespread natural receptivity. For the foreseeable future it will likely remain a path for the few, rather than the many.

So where does that leave us in our own efforts?

Rather than be discouraged, we should rejoice that we have the opportunity to be a part of the long-term process of preparing to communicate the message of the Fifth Epochal Revelation to the world in new ways, or at least in ways more familiar to the culture we are in.

However, we need to be aware of what a long, slow process it will be. More than this, we will ever need to be cognizant that building an institution is not the same as growing a faith community. It will ever be a temptation to let the business of the institution substitute for the deeper issues of the Spirit, the kingdom/family of God. We can build institutions, but only the Spirit can grow the community of faith.

We need to be about laying groundwork and setting goals regarding things over which we have control, and be prepared to learn and adapt as we go along. But the real work is not ours to do. That should free us to invest our efforts with joy and hope, as we pray that those in higher realms will use our efforts for the greater good and glory of the Father's work.

Merlyn Cox is a pastor serving in the North Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. He has been a Urantia Book reader for 18 years, and worked with Meredith Sprunger in initiating the Spiritual Fellowship Journal in 1991, and served for ten years as associate editor. He is currently chairman of the Education Team for The Spiritual Fellowship.

Aware of a Better Choice

In our daily struggles to live in the presence and to share our inner life with God, it is helpful to be **Aware of a Better Choice** of thought. There is always available to us a higher, better thought or attitude if we sincerely desire to be led by the Spirit.

Why not use our "priceless power of choice?" When we are feeling inadequate or stuck or just too human, think ABC and choose *God's will power* instead of our own.

Whatever situation we find ourselves in, whatever mindset we've sunken into, in *faith* we can *ask* to become **Aware of a Better Choice** and we are promised "the Spirit of Truth will always speak, saying, 'This is the way'." [p. 383] **J.B.M.**

The History of The Spiritual Fellowship

by Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger

“If you are not a positive and missionary evangel of your religion, you are self-deceived in what you call religion is only a traditional belief or a mere system of intellectual philosophy.”

[p. 1780]

“The religion of the spirit means effort, struggle, conflict, faith, determination, love, loyalty, and progress.” [p. 1729]

I have always known that *The Urantia Book* would inspire new religious organizations. The Spiritual Fellowship appears to be the first of these new religious organizations that seeks to intentionally found a community based on worship, personal spiritual growth, outreach, and evangelism, the things that we have traditionally associated with a church, synagogue, or mosque. It has had a forty-five year gestation period. Dr. Sadler and I used to discuss the probable nature of religious organizations inspired by the Fifth Epochal Revelation. We observed that the authors of the *Urantia Papers* talked about the need for a new religious organization.

“Notwithstanding that the cult has always retarded social progress, it is regrettable that so many modern believers in moral standards and spiritual ideals have no adequate symbolism—no cult of mutual support—nothing to belong to.” [p. 976]

“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.” [p. 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.” [p. 1083]

“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.” [p. 966]

“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 attractions 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. And all live religions encourage human friendship, conserve morality, promote neighborhood welfare, and facilitate the spread of the essential gospel of their respective messages of eternal salvation.” [p. 1092]

Dr. Sadler and I used to discuss the probable nature of religious organizations inspired by the Fifth Epochal Revelation. We observed that the authors of the Urantia Papers talked about the need for a new religious organization.

Background Events

When I finished reading *The Urantia Book* in 1956 I recognized that its superior teachings were very close to the theological positions of the leading thinkers on the growing edge of Christianity. I saw the Fifth Epochal Revelation as the great hope of a revitalization of the Christian faith. It seems that the midwayers in the *Life and Teachings of Jesus* are trying to upstep Christianity.

I therefore sought to follow the pattern of Jesus' ministry. At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus went to Annas, the most prominent leader of Judaism, in the hope of communicating with the leaders of Judaism. He continued his ministry in the synagogues of Judaism whenever possible. In a similar fashion, I contacted many of the leading theologians in 85 seminaries belonging to the *American Association of Theological Schools*. Between 10,000 and 15,000 personal letters offering loan books were sent to ministers in

the *United Church of Christ*, the *United Methodist Church*, *The Disciples of Christ*, and *Unity* ministers, and 5,000 letters were sent to the members of the *American Philosophical Association*. We presented the paper “*The Urantia Book and Religious Studies*” at the national meeting of the *American Academy of Religion* and published the *Spiritual Fellowship Journal* interfacing with mainline Christian ministers. We made presentations of *The Urantia Book* to ministerial groups, college classes, and individual church groups. After more than forty years of interfacing with Christian leaders and laypeople, it is obvious that it will be a long time before the leaders of Christianity will seriously examine the Urantia Papers.

We should observe that this is consistent with the history of religion. Whenever an advanced paradigm of religion has appeared on our world, it has never won over the power structure of the old religions. Usually, the new spiritual paradigm is carried to the world by ordinary people who are seekers of spiritual truth.

Realizing that eventually the Urantia Papers would need to be presented in a form that would permit studying the Papers in settings such as Sunday School classes, I condensed the central facts and truths of each paper in the exact language of *The Urantia Book*, so that sufficient time is permitted for discussion. I have used these papers for the last nine years in an *Explorers Sunday School* class I teach in the *United Church of Christ* that we attend. They have inspired some excellent discussions. In anticipation of the time when the Urantia Papers would inspire a new religious organization, I composed *The Spiritual Fellowship Constitution* in December of 1988.

We should also point out that there has been a negative attitude toward religious institutions and to some degree a “spiritual vacuum” in the official organizations in the Urantia movement. Urantia Foundation, The Urantia Book Fellowship, and the

International Urantia Association have emphasized that they are not religious organizations. Antagonism and a struggle for power and influence have dominated the official organizations.

At the same time, in recent years people have been searching for spiritual meaning on an unprecedented scale. There has been an increasing longing among students of *The Urantia Book* for a religious community, something to belong to that gives a sense of belonging to a spiritual family. There is a growing sense of the need for spiritual nourishment from birth to death. It was in this

atmosphere, after many years of planning, that The Spiritual Fellowship was formed. It is the first religious organization designed to carry the Fifth Epochal Revelation to the indigenous communities of the world.

While we must always keep in mind that God is the end and all other things are means, there is a danger in forgetting that it is the

means that are instrumental in getting to the end. When using terms like “church” or “fellowship,” there is a danger in getting bogged down in semantics—a religious organization is also a brother/ sisterhood. The history of religion shows that new spiritual value systems are always established in society through some kind of religious organization. The social dynamics of a religious organization are basic in carrying the religion of Jesus to the grass roots of the world. We believe The Spiritual Fellowship has this potential.

In addition to these preliminary activities, it appears that the Most Highs are using evolutionary religion to prepare the way for a new religious organization inspired by the Urantia Papers. We are living in one of the most promising periods of history. The most distinctive contemporary development of religion in our world is the advent of the ecumenical movement and the unprecedented search for meaningful spiritual experience. This expanding quest for spiritual guidance and direction has taken many forms. The theologian Ernst

***When using terms like
“church” or “fellowship,”
there is a danger in getting
bogged down in semantics—a
religious organization is also a
brother/sisterhood.***

Troeltsch (1865-1923) observed that all religions are relative—that is limited, partial, and incomplete. The historian Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) examined all of the religions of the world and pointed out that there is a common core and goal behind all religions. The psychiatrist Carl G. Jung (1875-1961) in an in-depth study of religions found that there is a common psychic origin and function among religions. These and other scholarly studies of religion set the stage for the contemporary ecumenical movement.

Paul F. Knitter's book, *No Other Name? ... A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, is one of the most insightful present day discussions of the ecumenical basis of religion. Dr. Knitter reminds us that Jesus established a theocentric (religion of Jesus) foundation of religion rather than a Christocentric (religion about Jesus) basis of religion. He believes that all religions could profit from the insights and experiences of other religions. The last chapter of Professor Knitter's book entitled, "The Challenge of Interreligious Dialogue," makes an eloquent argument for the development of a global theology. Knitter's more recent book, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Orbis, 2002), continues this discussion.

Stemming from this new pluralism in theology over the past quarter century or more, Lonnie D. Kliever's book *The Shattered Spectrum ... A Survey of Contemporary Theology*, observes that the kaleidoscope of new theologies that have appeared in recent times defy classification under the old categories. Professor Kliever believes that radical changes will take place in the form and content of religion in the future: "In such crisis circumstances, the search for and conversion to a new worldview can and does occur. Such a breakthrough depends upon finding some new organizing metaphor or shared paradigm through which to re-view and re-shape the world." (p. 197) The authors of the Urantia Papers have given us such a new spiritual paradigm that will bring a renaissance of religion on our world.

Evidence of the changing nature of religion and the searching attitude of people is seen in the *Congregational Life Survey* funded by the Lilly Endowment and the Louisville Institute. In April of 2001, nearly 300,000 worshipers filled out questionnaires answering questions about their church attendance and religious convictions. Nearly one quarter of them switched congregations in the past five years. But only 7 percent of newcomers had no earlier involvement with a faith community which suggests that only a small number of the unchurched are looking for traditional religious affiliation. A great number of people are searching for a more meaningful spiritual experience. In the February, 2002 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, an article, "Oh Gods!" by

Toby Lester, says that the new century will probably see religion explode—in both intensity and variety. New religions, he says, are springing up everywhere and old ones are transforming themselves dramatically.

The stage is set for the advent of a new spiritual vision that will transform our society. Our world has been prepared by:

• ***The birth of the ecumenical movement.***

- ***A growing recognition that a global understanding of religion must be theocentric.***
- ***A proliferation of new theological approaches to spiritual experience.***
- ***An unprecedented searching for a more meaningful view and experience of spiritual Reality.***
- ***A realization that our world needs a "new organizing metaphor or shared paradigm that will reshape the world."***

The Fifth Epochal Revelation, in my opinion, is the only resource that has the spiritual vision and power to fulfill these longings and aspirations of our human condition. The history of religion shows that spiritual value systems are always established by some kind of religious organization.

History of Origin

Early on, after my discovery of *The Urantia Book*, I intuited that my mission was to interface

The Fifth Epochal Revelation, in my opinion, is the only resource that has the spiritual vision and power to fulfill these longings and aspirations of our human condition. The history of religion shows that spiritual value systems are always established by some kind of religious organization.

with Christian leaders, but I would help anyone who wanted to start a new religious organization based on the Urantia Papers. Over the years, I have worked with many such people, but none succeeded in actually starting such a religious organization. In January of 2001, Sherilyn Henry came to Fort Wayne and asked if I would help her organize such a religious organization. I was happy to do so. This was the beginning of a new phase for The Spiritual Fellowship.

We composed a Constitution and decided that a Board of Directors would make final decisions about The Spiritual Fellowship policy until there were twenty-five fellowships. At that time representatives from these fellowships would determine the structure and policy of The Spiritual Fellowship. An announcement of the organization of The Spiritual Fellowship was placed on the Internet and a survey of around forty interested people was made to determine membership of various committees. A logo or emblem of three azure blue concentric circles intertwined with a gold cross and a symbol at the center was adopted. Sherilyn Henry acting as Executive Director incorporated The Spiritual Fellowship in the State of California.

Several teleconferences of the Board were held in 2001, and we met at Fort Wayne in January, 2002, at Boulder in June, and at Fort Wayne in September. The IRS granted us nonprofit standing in August of 2002. Also in August Sherilyn Henry resigned from the Board of Directors. She had philosophical differences with the other members of the Board. The officers of the Board are: Meredith Sprunger, Chair; Larry Mullins, President; Tom Choquette, Vice President; Nancy Long, Secretary and acting Executive Director; Dick Bain, Treasurer; and Irene Sprunger, Director. Another Director will be selected in the near future. The Spiritual Fellowship will probably be in the process of organizing for the next couple of years.

Spiritual Fellowship Concepts

Guiding Principles—

The Spiritual Fellowship 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.

The Spiritual Fellowship Seeks to Avoid Dangers, Such As: Developing vested interests and secular involvement, Serving the institution instead of serving God and ministering to people, and Forming competitive sects and developing a “chosen people” attitude.

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 The Spiritual Fellowship 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.

The Spiritual Fellowship Seeks to 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 The Spiritual Fellowship is to create a polity with maximum flexibility that will function with small groups or large congregations, utilize lay leadership and/or ordained clergy, have cross-cultural adaptability, and broad theological inclusiveness.

We strive to 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.”

Mission Statement

The Spiritual Fellowship is a religious organization whose mission is to bring the spiritual teaching of the Urantia Papers to all people.

Our Core Values

The Spiritual Fellowship is committed to motivating, empowering, and supporting all people in their growing relationship with God and encouraging loving service, forgiveness, and ministry among all of God’s children. The Spiritual Fellowship believes the Urantia Papers present an expanded revelation of the Life and Teachings of

Jesus and a fuller revelation of God and our relationship to God. While recognizing that any revelation is incomplete short of the attainment of God, our Universal Parent, The Spiritual Fellowship recognizes the value of a continuing study of the Urantia Papers and other spiritual sources for inspiration and guidance.

Preamble of The Spiritual Fellowship Constitution

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

5. The Spiritual Fellowship welcomes all people 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

The Spiritual Fellowship welcomes all people 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.

spiritual transformation and enhanced values for the individual and the family in all aspects of life: physical, social, psychological, and spiritual.

7. The Spiritual Fellowship recognizes the freedom of each fellowship to evolve its own celebration of God's love and supports each fellowship in providing community worship and religious education. Additional programs are encouraged that offer support for personal and family spiritual transformation.

The Basic Congregational-Chaordic Structure of The Spiritual Fellowship:

1. The Spiritual Fellowship should be owned by all participants. No participant should have an inherently greater or lesser ownership position.
2. Participants should have equitable rights and obligations. There should be no attempt to impose conformity.
3. The Spiritual Fellowship should be open to all qualified participants. While it must be able to create standards for eligibility, once those standards are established, it should be open to all interested participants meeting the standards.
4. Power, function, and resources should be distributive to the maximum degree.
5. To the maximum degree possible, everything should be voluntary. Persuasion, not compulsion, should be fundamental.
6. The Spiritual Fellowship should induce, not compel, change. It should liberate and enhance creativity and ingenuity.
7. The Spiritual Fellowship should be infinitely malleable, yet extremely durable. It should be capable of constant self-generated modification of functions without sacrificing its essential nature and principles.

Vision of the Future

The Urantia Book, in my judgment, has the greatest potential of spiritually advancing our world of any event since the coming of Jesus over 2000 years ago. The history of religion shows that

spiritual value systems are always established and promoted by some kind of religious organization. The Spiritual Fellowship is seeking to establish the grassroots religious foundations based upon the teachings of the Urantia Papers that will carry their transforming message to the spiritually hungry people of the world. I believe we are at the beginning of a new era of religion on our world. We invite you to join us in this outreach mission.

This outreach ministry will not be easy. It is not for timid souls. It is difficult for people who are balanced and solid citizens in their community to risk being viewed as "different" or as belonging to some strange cult or movement. Pioneers always

Nevertheless, those who have the courage and wisdom, to bring a knowledge of the Fifth Epochal Revelation to the individuals and institutions of our world are engaging in one of the most important ministries of our times.

face difficulty and hardship. New and enlarged presentations of truth have always been, and will always be, attacked by religious traditionalists and fundamentalists. The history of spiritual growth shows that not until an enlarged vision of truth is attacked and its pioneers persecuted does it come to the attention and make its appeal to a significant number of creative

seekers for spiritual truth in society — "*Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" [p. 1571]

Nevertheless, those who have the courage and wisdom, to bring a knowledge of the Fifth Epochal Revelation to the individuals and institutions of our world are engaging in one of the most important ministries of our times. Such missionary evangels will open the door to a spiritual dynamic that will undoubtedly transform our planet in the next thousand years. An Archangel of Nebadon reminds us, "*The weak indulge in resolutions, but the strong act. Life is but a day's work—do it well. The act is ours; the consequences God's.*" [p. 556] Now is the time for courageous and wise action!

Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger is Chairman of The Spiritual Fellowship and is Founder and Editor Emeritus of the Spiritual Fellowship Journal. He lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana with his wife, Irene.

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Quantum Mysteries & the Urantia Papers

*Light, atomic structure, 860 and
lore of the number 137*

PART I of II

by Donald Briglia

Last year Joan and I visited Santa Barbara and met the Urantia Study Group there. I happened to mention something about the mystery of the three digit number, 137, and its relation to quantum mechanics. (Please see the editorial in this edition, "God's Little Three-Digit Joke on Quantum Science"). Veteran Urantians should quickly note the relationship of 137 to the Urantia Papers ... one being the First Source and Center, three the Trinity, and seven the limit of different associations of the Trinity. Donald Briglia, a physicist, happened to be in the Santa Barbara group. On that wonderful California evening Donald gave the group an elegant scientific explanation of "137," far beyond my lay abilities. He kindly consented to expand upon this explanation in our Journal. Donald's commentary follows.

L.M.

Acknowledging the huge information content contained in even a single image, vision is considered to be the primary sense. Light, the visible portion of the electromagnetic spectrum [p. 475], is the ready facilitator of visual information and is produced whenever electrons change their energy relationship in an atom or molecule in the relevant energy range, i.e., the outer shells of the structure, so they are known as optical electrons.

All visible light results from electron energy dynamics, optical electrons changing their state. More energetic electromagnetic signals come from inner shell transitions, e.g., "x rays." [p. 475]

As the facilitator of the primary and most important of the senses, light conveys to the eye or optical instrument images of very high information content through the action of photons, tiny bundles of "wavy" energy that travel faster than anything else, and whose velocity represents an upper limit to the velocity of material matter (theorized first by Einstein in his special theory of relativity). Most of what is known about the cosmos comes from

observations of light and the other non-visible photons of the electromagnetic spectrum. Our earliest mathematical knowledge of the sub-microscopic makeup of matter, atomic theory, was developed from observations of light, produced when electrons become dynamic.

The science that analyzes light dispersed into its spectral components and interprets these spectra is known as optical spectroscopy and this branch of physics produced not only our first mathematical knowledge of atomic structure but also led to quantum theory and most of the rest of the "new physics." For example, when light from the simplest atom, Hydrogen, a single proton and a single electron bound together by their mutual electrical attraction, was analyzed into its spectral components no agreement with classical electromagnetic theory was found. Classical (in this case) means pre-quantum and pre-relativity theoretical physics.

An early quantum approach by N. Bohr produced a theory that provided some agreement and led to our earliest mathematical model of atomic structure. (Of course, there were earlier models, probably going back to the Greeks, and Rutherford had a model previously, the so-called "Rutherford nuclear model of the atom," which was derived from alpha particle scattering by a nucleus, but since the fast and far more massive alphas are hardly affected by the electrons, there is no knowledge provided by this type of experiment about the electronic structure of atoms.) "*The formation of all matter is on the order of the solar system. ... Within the atom the electrons revolve about the central proton ...*" [p. 477]

Not accounted for by the Bohr theory are subtleties of the spectra, such as spectral components that are split into more than one signal, called fine structure. A. Sommerfeld added features to the Bohr model that took into account Einsteinian special relativity (the electron moves fast in this model) and the apparent spinning of the electron. This expanded model produced a theory that did agree with most of the observations. "*The electronic axial revolutions and their orbital velocities about the atomic nucleus are both beyond the human imagination ...*" [p. 477]

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"The electronic axial revolutions and their orbital velocities about the atomic nucleus are both beyond the human imagination..." [p. 477]

The Mysterious Number 137

When calculations are performed to theoretically predict the spectral features, the number 137 appears, the reciprocal of which Sommerfeld named the “fine structure constant” and denoted with the Greek letter alpha. In the technical literature, both 137 and its reciprocal are referred to as the fine structure constant (fsc).

The expression for the fsc involves the value of the charge of a single electron (electrodynamics), the velocity of light (relativity) and Planck’s constant (quantum theory), all of which have dimensional units, e.g., meters per second. Yet the fsc is dimensionless, so 137 is a pure (and prime) number.

This interesting and what some consider unexpected numerical result which includes considerations of electrical charge, relativistic motion and quantum effects appears in physics calculations from the sub-microscopic to the cosmologic which has given the number 137 almost cult status.

“Throughout the Thirties and Forties, the greatest scientists of the day tried and failed to figure out the magic number 137. The great Werner Heisenberg told his friends that the problems of quantum theory would disappear only when 137 was explained, and spent years trying to explain it; fortunately, the problems did go away despite his failure. One of Heisenberg’s friends, theorist Wolfgang Pauli, wasted endless research time trying to multiply pi by other numbers to get 137; Edward Teller, now a prominent advocate of star wars, derived alpha from gravitation; and a Japanese showed that the difference in the masses of the proton and delta particle is equal to alpha. All this shows is that there are many ways you can multiply and add a bunch of numbers to get 137. The closest any of these people got to the answer, perhaps, was when Pauli died—in hospital room 137.” [http://www.137.com/137]

It is a subject of great interest and much has been written about its significance in science and elsewhere. For example, 137 is the number associated with the kabala, the book of Jewish mysticism, which may be merely a coincidence but that has heightened the interest in the fsc.

“The best explanation of the mystery ever given to Victor Weisskopf, another leading theorist from that time, was provided by Gershom Scholem, one of the most eminent scholars of Jewish mysticism. When Scholem met Weisskopf, he asked about the prominent unsolved problems in physics. Weisskopf said, “Well, there’s this number, 137....” And Scholem’s eyes lit up! He said, “Did you know that one hundred thirty-seven is the number associated with the Cabala?”

[http://www.137.com/137]

Some scientists in the past wanted to consider the number 137 to be a fundamental aspect of nature, and notwithstanding that the fsc is not exactly 137 (nor completely constant) they wanted to adjust the constants in its calculation so that it is exactly that.

Another example is found in considerations of the four different lengths used to characterize electrons in atoms, the classical radius of an electron, the radius of the first Bohr orbit, the electron Compton wavelength, and the Rydberg length. These quantities differ respectively by successive powers of 137. Little wonder

that there is great and ongoing interest. Some scientists in the past wanted to consider the number 137 to be a fundamental aspect of nature, and notwithstanding that the fsc is not exactly 137 (nor completely constant) they wanted to adjust the constants in its calculation so that it is exactly that.

The 860 (in the Urantia Papers) Connection:

When a free electron captures a free proton that was initially at rest at an infinite separation, the two may become bound together to form a hydrogen atom by releasing energy, the so called binding energy. When the mechanism is that of radiative recombination to the ground state, that of lowest energy, (there are other mechanisms that may also stabilize the binding, e.g., collisional deactivation with a third particle, which has a much higher probability of occurrence, except in very sparse media), a photon is emitted that carries off the recombination energy.

This is the same amount of energy that must be expended to separate the two at rest at a very large separation, called the ionization potential (energy).

“The quantity of energy taken in or given out when electronic or other positions are shifted is always a ‘quantum’ or some multiple thereof, but the vibratory or wavelike behavior of such units of

energy is wholly determined by the dimensions of the material structures concerned. Such wavelike energy ripples are 860 times the diameters of the ultimatoms, electrons, atoms or other units thus performing.” [p. 474]

License has been used here (it is usually stated that the nuclear proton captures the electron) to draw attention to the observation that the electron is dimensionally so much larger than the proton in models of atomic optical processes/structures though it is so much smaller in mass. The more correct way of stating the recombination is that they capture each other to form their union. Using the planetary model of this simplest of atomic systems, and calculating how fast the electron moves, the result is that the electron velocity is only slightly relativistic, less than one percent of the velocity of light, as light travels 137 times faster. Interpreting the phrase “wavelike energy ripples” to mean “wavelengths,” logical consistency results. The reason 860 is stated as a dimensionless number is it is the ratio of two lengths, a wavelength and a diameter.

The reader has perhaps anticipated that there is a connection between these two numbers. Yes, 860 is two pi times 137, two pi being the ratio of the circumference to the radius of every circle. The details of the applicability of this 860 rule is beyond the scope of this article, but it would presumably apply to the various transitions which take place when atoms are excited by energetic processes like high temperatures or electrical excitation, thereby producing the observed optical spectra. At the time the Papers were being revealed, some physics books considered Planck’s constant to be a quantity, represented by the symbol “h”, while others considered it to be $h/(2\pi)$. If the latter had been referenced in the Papers, the number would have been 137 and not 860.

The Value of Alpha:

“A note on calculating alpha: If you look up these constants in a textbook, and form the indicated ratio, you may or may not get the advertised number. This is because in some systems of units, one must additionally divide by

4p and in others by a constant denoted by 4pe0. This does not mean that, a, depends on the system of units. Rather, it means that in different systems of units one must define the same physical constant, a, in different ways.

“Here is a rule that will give you, a, using the constants in a randomly chosen physics text: find the expression for Coulomb’s law, and use this to give you the magnitude F of the force between 2 electrons separated by a distance R. The expression will have the form $F = ke2/R2$.

“What k is will depend on the system of units the book is using. But whatever it is, the way to extract the fine structure constant from the numbers in the book is to calculate $a = ke2/h(\text{bar})c$.

“Another tricky point to note is that many books define something they call Planck’s constant and denote it by h rather than $h(\text{bar})$. The relation between these two is that $h(\text{bar}) = h/2p$.”

[<http://www.physicscentral.com/action/action-02-2c.html>]

“The Number \l “” is well-known throughout the physics community as the approximate inverse of the Fine Structure constant. It even has a name—alpha—which seems to be a supernatural coincidence given the context in which this number appears—John 1.1-5—and the numerous highly significant identities associated with the Greek word \l “”.

[http://www.biblewheel.com/GR/GR_Frame.asp?GRRef=FineStructure]

“The value of alpha can be found on the U.S. Government’s site: <http://www.nist.gov/>. The current value reported from NIST is: $\alpha = 7.297352533 \times 10^{-3} \pm 0.000000027 \times 10^{-3}$ $\alpha^{-1} = 137.0359997 \pm 0.0000006$

“The value of alpha is extremely well established, with an uncertainty of about 2.7×10^{-11} — i.e. about three parts in 100 billion. It appears in Quantum Electrodynamics (aka QED) as the probability of interaction between Light and Matter. It has been the subject of intense study—many of the best physicists have felt that there must be some connection between alpha and the

At the time the Urantia Papers were being revealed, some physics books considered Planck’s constant to be a quantity, represented by the symbol “h”, while others considered it to be $h/(2\pi)$. If the latter had been referenced in the Papers, the number would have been 137 and not 860.

underlying structure of the Universe. A light hearted review of some of the more famous attempts are described at: "<http://www.137.com/137>."

137—*An Echo of the Trinity*

"Without doubt, the most famous quote concerning alpha comes from Nobel Laureate Richard Feynman. In his comment on page 129 of his book QED, he refers to the "coupling constant, e"—the charge of the electron—which is proportional to alpha:

"There is a most profound and beautiful question associated with the observed coupling constant, e, the amplitude for a real electron to emit or absorb a real photon. It is a simple number that has been experimentally determined to be close to 0.08542455. (My physicist friends won't recognize this number, because they like to remember it as the inverse of its square: about 137.03597 with about an uncertainty of about 2 in the last decimal place. It has been a mystery ever since it was discovered more than fifty years ago, and all good theoretical physicists put this number up on their wall and worry about it.) Immediately you would like to know where this number for a coupling comes from: is it related to pi or perhaps to the base of natural logarithms? Nobody knows. It's one of the greatest d—n mysteries of physics: a magic number that comes to us with no understanding by man. You might say the 'hand of God' wrote that number, and 'we don't know how He pushed his pencil.' We know what kind of a dance to do experimentally to measure this number very accurately, but we don't know what kind of dance to do on the computer to make this number come out, without putting it in secretly!" [<http://www.nobel.se/physics/laureates/1965/feynman-bio.html>]

"There are many reasons great minds have been strongly attracted to this number. Not only is it prime, but is a beautiful prime made up of Unity (1, God) and a prime division of Ten ($10 = 3 + 7$), with echoes of the Trinity and Perfection, Fullness, Seven Spirits of God. Three united divine digits— \1⁰⁰⁰ - so different from the directional composites 4 (2D) and

6 (3D). To find this as the large prime factor governing the structure of the Divine Prologue—the premier text linking Creation and Light—is certainly intriguing, to say the least. This is all greatly amplified by the concepts associated through its value, such as The God of Truth, Miracle of the Lord, Kabbalah, Wheel, and Crucifix." [http://www.biblewheel.com/GR/GR_Frame.asp?GRRef=FineStructure]

The Fine Structure Constant

"The fine structure constant, alpha (a), describes how electromagnetic radiation affects charged particles. It has the numerical value 0.007297351, with an uncertainty of 6 in the last decimal place, and as such is one of the best-measured numbers in physics.

"Note that a is quite a small number, very nearly 1/137. This makes theoretical physicists happy, because it is much easier to calculate things when the forces are not very strong. The theory of radiation and charged particles, called Quantum

Electrodynamics (or QED for short), is probably the best understood and the most successful theory in all of physics. Some of its predictions have been verified experimentally to twelve decimal places.

"Another important property of a is that it is dimensionless. It is formed as a ratio of three of the fundamental constants of Nature: the electric charge of the electron, e; the speed of light, c; and Planck's constant, which is usually written as h(bar), and which is necessary to describe quantum phenomena. Each of these 3 constants has dimensions, that is, it changes when you change your system of units. For example, the speed of light is very close to 3x10⁸ meters per second, but if we want to know it in miles an hour, the answer is a different number, 6.7x10⁸. However, when we form alpha by taking the ratio $a=e^2/h(\bar{c})c$, all the dimensions cancel out. The result is a dimensionless number, whose value is 0.007297351 no matter what system of units we use.

"The fact that a is dimensionless has led some physicists to speculate that its value has some

"It's one of the greatest d—n mysteries of physics: a magic number that comes to us with no understanding by man. You might say the 'hand of God' wrote that number, and 'we don't know how He pushed his pencil.'"

Richard Feynman

fundamental significance. It describes a fundamental property of the universe, and the question is whether its value is just an accident of how the universe happened to be put together, or whether its value is determined by some deep principle that we have yet to discover.” [http://www.physicscentral.com/action/action-02-2c.html]

Part II of this article will be published in the next issue of Spiritual Fellowship Journal and will feature expanded information on the fine structure constant. Among the issues for further consideration will be:

- (1) The number is actually not exactly 137 and it is not constant under all conditions.
- (2) Cosmic evolution of alpha.
- (3) Numerous ways to measure it.
- (4) Modern relevancies; QED, etc.
- (5) Operationalism (remarks on the philosophy of physics)

Donald Briglia has been a casual reader of the Urantia Papers for fifteen years. After three years of military service, mostly in Germany, he studied Physics at Cornell and UCLA and Computer Engineering at Stanford. He did some Physics research (electron collision processes), then Engineering Physics in Scientific Instrument field (mostly semiconductor measurement instruments).

“Matter-energy is recognized by the mathematical logic of the senses; mind-reason intuitively knows its moral duty; spirit-faith (worship) is the religion of the reality of spiritual experience. These three basic factors in reflective thinking may be unified and coordinated in personality development, or they may become disproportionate and virtually unrelated in their respective functions. But when they become unified, they produce a strong character consisting in the correlation of a factual science, a moral philosophy, and a genuine religious experience. And it is these three cosmic intuitions that give objective validity, reality, to man’s experience in and with things, meanings, and values.” [p. 192]

A Service Adventure in Guatemala

by Micah Kruger

Micah Kruger represents a bold new generation of Urantians who grew up with the Urantia Papers. This new generation does not hesitate to identify themselves as Urantians. They do not carry the baggage or guilt of typical Christian dogma. These young Urantians are a rich, untapped resource. They have much to say, and we should listen. L.M.

The Director of the Peace Corps once said about third world countries: “These people suffer so much, but they don’t call it suffering, they call it life.” That comment has always stuck with me. I grew up in a society ridden with complacency and affectation. After serving in the Peace Corps, I now find it disturbing to live in a society with so much opportunity yet where so few live up to the potential they have been given.

I first thought of joining the Peace Corps towards the end of my time at the University of Colorado. I was chatting with some friends who had applied to the Peace Corps and were waiting to hear where they’d be placed. I had wanted to travel after college, but the Peace Corps? It had never crossed my mind. It would be an opportunity to see some of the world and serve my fellow men and women. It would be a great adventure, a real test of what I was made of.

A generation ago, the Vietnam War was a great challenge for men my age. Now, in my generation, young men and women have the opportunity to choose their future. In considering the Peace Corps, I was reminded of Jesus’ journeys as Ganid’s tutor. During that time, Jesus was able to observe how people of different cultures lived, and through his observations came to understand more thoroughly the minds of men.

The idea of the Peace Corps sounded better and better. I submitted my application and went through the selection process. Eventually this decision led me to spend 27 months living in a country I knew almost nothing about.

By means of experiences I would never have had living in the States, my time in Guatemala changed me in ways I could not have imagined. The challenge of learning a new language, culture, and

living a simpler life was thrilling. In retrospect, realizing how much I actually learned, I am aware that the learning curve was much more difficult than I would have thought. From the perspective of living in the States, I am rarely reminded of the realities of life in Guatemala. However, when I think back upon my months of service there, I do have new insights into our American culture.

What I miss most about Guatemala was having the opportunity to serve on a daily basis. Indeed, as a volunteer it was my job to serve. But I had no boss, no funding, and no concrete plan to keep me going. I was forced to be self-motivated and was driven only by my desire to help.

Not surprisingly, as there were so many ways to help in such a needy country, serving came easily. Gestures as simple as helping my neighbor haul sacks of supplies for his household store became daily habits for me.

Now, back in the States, my life seems largely barren of daily service. It was so easy to serve in Guatemala because there were so many people who actually wanted my help. Opportunities for service also arose because the people were so much more connected. While occasionally the need to serve seemed almost a nuisance, I now realize that the time I spent in a crowded bus, boat, or marketplace created precious and genuine contact with humanity. As a result, I forged many relationships, and thus came to better understand how people thought and lived.

The other day, sitting in my car at a red light, I found myself surrounded by other individuals, each in his or her separate car. We were so close, but still completely separated in our own metal boxes. Too much in our modern society has cut us off from each other.

Instead of speaking face to face we talk on phones; instead of handwritten greetings we send electronic messages that are all but devoid of the human touch. In our fast paced society people often try to communicate as little as possible. Take the gas station: one doesn't even have to say "hi" to the service station clerk, for there's the "pay outside"

option; at the supermarket we now have "self check."

Or why even leave the house at all? Everything we need can be bought on-line. Our superior information technology has left us more *disconnected* than ever before.

In Guatemala, it was not uncommon to have a stranger invite you for lunch. In many cases, several generations of a family lived in the same home. One of my chief occupations in Guatemala was building stoves for the people there. But, I not only built stoves but also made connections. I can say with confidence I had at least one meal with each family I worked with. People there had mutual interest in each other's lives. In contrast, in the United States, one would hardly think to invite the cable person or plumber for lunch!

I can say with confidence I had at least one meal with each family I worked with. People there had mutual interest in each other's lives. In contrast, in the United States, one would hardly think to invite the cable person or plumber for lunch!

I became intimately acquainted with Guatemalan culture and its many problems: political, economic, and social. Yet, perhaps the most valuable experience has been an intensified awareness of an acute level of complacency, apathy, and affectation that is present in American society.

I do believe a strength of our culture is that it rewards creativity and individualism, and these ideals have made this country great. However, the goal of individuality has too often become to acquire belongings that will project a desired image. Possessions have often come to function as ends in themselves, rather than simply a means to an end. And too many people put more energy into affectation than they do into their own spiritual growth.

It saddens me to see so many people who can hardly make basic changes in their lives when they live in a country so full of opportunity. We do not need to join the Peace Corps to realize that we can do quite literally most anything we can dream.

Some Urantians have found empowerment to dream and aspire through "Living the Teachings" groups. These groups hold each member responsible for their own spiritual progress, just as an AA member is responsible for his or her sobriety. In

turn, these people have learned, by means of spiritual progress, to realize their goals as well as tackle their fears.

The Urantia Book says that few people are real thinkers, and largely out of fear, most of us fail to live up to the potential we have inside. Fear fosters affectation, apathy, and compliance and leads people to accept the way things are.

I am reminded of a seminar I attended at the Fellowship's International Conference last summer. The seminar was about "Going the Second Mile." Similar to a "Living the Teachings" group, the seminar sought to motivate people to realize what characteristics were keeping their true potential from flowering. I was astonished to see how many readers were actually breaking down crying in realization of the fear and doubt they were living with, shocked by the new awareness of their lack of real trust in the Father's plan. The Urantia Papers tell us that *belief* becomes *faith* only when it alters the mode of living. The people who attended this seminar certainly *believed* in the revelation of the Book, but they had not yet achieved the *faith* required to be truly born of the spirit. It was a reawakening for many Urantians at the seminar.

Of course, like everyone else, I too have fears and doubts. I was terrified my first day in Guatemala, but I continually faced my fears. I am my own toughest critic, because one of my biggest fears is that I am not living up to my full potential.

This self-criticism motivates me in the struggle towards God's command, "be perfect even as I am perfect." It is easy to become complacent about the condition of things and to blindly follow society's norms. Affectation is often used by people to mask their passivity and complacency. I encourage you to break the mold, to do what scares you, and to fulfill your potential. Keep striving; if not for yourself, for the little girl in Guatemala who can only look forward to a future of hand-washing clothes and flipping tortillas for a family of six.

Micah Kruger is 25 and lives in Boulder, Colorado. He is one of a new generation of Urantia Book readers who grew up with the Book. Micah did not disclose it in his article, but one of the service projects he is now engaged in is forming a Urantia Youth Group in Boulder. Micah can be reached at krugermquat@hotmail.com

Let's Go Public by Ken Raveill

My wife and I discovered *The Urantia Book* in 1979 while visiting in the home of friends. It was prominently displayed on the coffee table in the living room. My wife casually began reading the book and then called it to my attention. We were interested enough to note the name of the publisher, and sent to Chicago for a copy. A few days later the Big Blue Book arrived and almost immediately we received a friendly phone call from Ila Hall, a complete stranger, inviting us to a Urantia Book Study Group that met in her home on Sunday afternoons. Ila and Loren Hall lived in Southwest Kansas City Missouri about 35 miles from our home in Independence, but we decided to accept the

***The Urantia Book Home Study Group
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invitation, at least for one time. We attended Ila Hall's study group for more than 10 years and learned to love Ila and Loren and share their love for the Urantia Book.

The Urantia Book Home Study Group has been and remains the basic method for attracting new readers while offering an opportunity for rich fellowship and spiritual growth. In Independence, Missouri, we have had two active study groups. One group met weekly and the other once a month. However our study groups were small. We wanted to share this wonderful book with new readers. We discussed this problem and decided we needed to do two things, if possible. One was to combine the two study groups, and meet once a week, and meet if possible at a convenient public location. The second action needed was to do some advertising and personal contacts. If we met in a public location

we all agreed it would be easier to invite others.

I was surprised to find several opportunities in Independence for our Urantia Book Study Group to meet in a public location. I first called on a branch of the Kansas City Public Library which I knew had two community rooms that were available to not-for-profit community organizations at no cost. I found that these rooms were booked up for weeks ahead and would not be available every week. I next called on the Mid Continent Public Library in Independence. They offered us a secluded corner location where we could meet every week but did not have a separate room for community groups.

However, the real break in our search came when two members of our study group, Linda and Bob Keller, who were buying books at Barnes & Noble bookstore, asked if it was possible for a book study group to meet there once a week. They were introduced to the Public Relations person who assured them that our study group would be welcome to meet every week at the bookstore. Barnes & Noble would advertise our event in their monthly newsletter, supply announcements to three local newspapers, and would also prepare a large sign stating that this space is reserved for The Urantia Study Group, Tuesday evening 7 to 10 PM.

This was the ideal solution to our search for a public location. The advantages of meeting at Barnes & Noble are many. We have a quite out-of-the-way location with tables and chairs furnished. There is a nearby Café for refreshments and for those who want to stay and talk after our study session. There are acres of parking and the location is easy to find.

The Barnes & Noble bookstore is a popular meeting place, especially for young people and is a location where we can feel free to invite anyone to meet with our study group. And best of all Barnes & Noble sells books, Urantia Books. It builds traffic for them and provides an opportunity for us to reach new readers in our community.

We decided to start our Barnes & Noble meetings in September after school started when our advertising would be most effective. I prepared printed invitations which we distributed to our local Uranita Society at our Jesus' Birthday celebration in late August. Our start day at Barnes & Noble was set for Tuesday, September 3rd. I also prepared two display ads for our local newspaper, *The Independence Examiner*. These display ads ran one week before the Tuesday meeting and also on the weekend before. I sent notices as well as invitations to churches in the area, to local radio stations, and to the local cable TV Community Calendar channel.

At our first study group meeting at Barnes & Noble on September 3rd, we had nineteen in attendance. While most of these were Urantia Book readers from other study groups in the area, we did have six attend who were non-readers. At this first public study group meeting we continued using recorded audio tapes of the Urantia papers as we had done for several years in our home study group.

When the Urantia Book audio tapes first came on the market, I purchased a set. The first thing I did was duplicate all 96 tapes so I would have a copy for frequent use while saving the original tapes in case I needed to replace a damaged tape. Using an audio tape in a study group session has many advantages, especially with new readers. Some people read better than others, as I am sure you are aware. Many Urantia Book words are difficult to pronounce. Some words are not even in a dictionary.

It is embarrassing, especially for a new reader, to stumble over vocabulary and be frequently corrected by others when reading an unfamiliar text. The most important benefit however is the fact that the recorded tapes are read with understanding by professional readers. Everyone listens to the recorded voice and follows the text with great interest and comprehension. At least that has been my experience. We do of course stop the tape frequently for questions and comments.

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It has been only three months into our experiment at Barnes & Noble, but I believe it has been successful and that this may offer important opportunities for other study groups who might be interested in moving to a public location. Last Tuesday evening for example, we had a new reader walk into our group after seeing the Community Events notice in the local newspaper. We also had two girls see our group and stopped to ask questions. We hope to see them again.

You may not have a Barnes & Noble bookstore nearby but there are community rooms available in most every town or city. Many times, banks and savings & loans offices, chambers of commerce or public libraries will have community rooms, at no cost, where your local study group could meet if you want to go public.

KEN RAVEILL has been a reader and student of the Urantia Papers since 1979. He states that it would take many pages of this Journal to describe the ways the teachings of the Book have blessed both he and his wife. "Even then, words alone could not express the peace, knowledge, and understanding we have received by the study of The Urantia Book." If you would like a sample of the printed invitations and the newspaper display ads mentioned above contact Ken at 600 E. Linwood St. Independence, MO. 64055 or kkraveill@cs.com

"All the great religions claim truth for their beliefs whether they deny there is truth in other religions or acknowledge that there is some measure of truth in some or all of the others. But, while claiming ... truth for their beliefs, all do not assume or acknowledge the obligation to proselytize — to undertake missionary activities throughout the world aimed at converting as many individuals as possible ... What is the significance of the fact that, while each of the great religions claim truth for its factual or moral beliefs ... only some religions undertake missionary activities and attempt to make converts, while others do nothing of the kind, and some even operate under the obligation not to proselytize or convert? If a religion claims truth for its beliefs, why does it not seek to universalize itself? Should not the truth its communicants espouse be shared as widely as possible?"

MORTIMER ADLER

Truth in Religion ... the Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth

Compare

by Tom and Karen Allen

One of the important purposes of revelation, we are told in the Urantia Papers, is to preserve concepts and ideas that have already been achieved by humankind—and are in danger of being lost. Tom and Karen Allen of Oklahoma City began last year to collect conceptual parallels and send them out via email to Urantians. Here is a small sampling of some of their discoveries.

"No mistake is more common and more fatuous than appealing to logic in cases which are beyond her jurisdiction."

- Samuel Butler, writer (1835-1902)

P.69 - par.1 *It is well-nigh impossible for human logic and finite reason to harmonize the concept of divine immanence, God within and a part of every individual, with the idea of God's transcendence, the divine domination of the universe of universes.*

"Civilization has been thrust upon me... and it has not added one whit to my love for truth, honesty, and generosity."

- Chief Luther Standing Bear (Oglala Sioux 1838-1939)

P.196 - par.1 *Civilizations are unstable because they are not cosmic; they are not innate in the individuals of the races. They must be nurtured by the combined contributions of the constitutive factors of man—science, morality, and religion. Civilizations come and go, but science, morality, and religion always survive the crash.*

"To be a man is to feel that one's own stone contributes to building the edifice of the world."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900-1940)

P.1284 - par.6 *The great challenge that has been given to mortal man is this: Will you decide to personalize the experiential value meanings of the cosmos into your own evolving selfhood? or by rejecting survival, will you allow these secrets of Supremacy to lie dormant, awaiting the action of another creature at some other time who will in his*

way attempt a creature contribution to the evolution of the finite God? But that will be his contribution to the Supreme, not yours.

“You can never solve a problem on the level on which it was created.” - Albert Einstein, physicist, Nobel laureate (1879-1955)

P.116 - par.9 *It may be possible that the finalizers will partially attain the Deity Absolute, but even if they should, still in the eternity of eternities the problem of the Universal Absolute will continue to intrigue, mystify, baffle, and challenge the ascending and progressing finalizers, for we perceive that the unfathomability of the cosmic relationships of the Universal Absolute will tend to grow in proportions as the material universes and their spiritual administration continue to expand.*

“Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart ...

Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.” - Carl Jung (1875-1961)

P.1220 - par.2 *The advances of true civilization are all born in this inner world of mankind. It is only the inner life that is truly creative. Civilization can hardly progress when the majority of the youth of any generation devote their interests and energies to the materialistic pursuits of the sensory or outer world.*

“Each indecision brings its own delays and days are lost lamenting over lost days... What you can do or think you can do, begin it. For boldness has magic, power, and genius in it.” - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

P.1002 - par.10 *You must make a wholehearted choice of the divine will. You must obliterate the dead center of indecision.*

“Love is an act of endless forgiveness, a tender look which becomes a habit.”

- Peter Ustinov, actor, writer and director (1921-)

P.1470 - par.2 *It was not so much what he said that touched this man's heart as the kindly look and the sympathetic smile which Jesus bestowed upon him at the conclusion of his remarks.*

“No one has ever become poor by giving.”

- Anne Frank, Holocaust diarist (1929-1945)

P.1883 - par.4 *For a moment they sat down by the treasury, watching the people drop in their contributions: the rich putting much in the receiving box and all giving something in accordance with the extent of their possessions. At last there came along a poor widow, scantily attired, and they observed as she cast two mites (small coppers) into the trumpet. And then said Jesus, calling the attention of the apostles to the widow: “Heed well what you have just seen. This poor widow cast in more than all the others, for all these others, from their superfluity, cast in some trifle as a gift, but this poor woman, even though she is in want, gave all that she had, even her living.”*

“Praise, like gold and diamonds, owes its value to its scarcity.” - Samuel Butler, poet (1612-1680)

P.1550 - par.1 *His (Andrew's) temperamental handicap was his lack of enthusiasm; he many times failed to encourage his associates by judicious commendation. And this reticence to praise the worthy accomplishments of his friends grew out of his abhorrence of flattery and insincerity.*

P.1740 - par.6 *Seek no unearned recognition and crave no undeserved sympathy. Love, freely receive from both divine and human sources regardless of your deserts, and love freely in return. But in all other things related to honor and adulation seek only that which honestly belongs to you.*

“Don't forget to be kind to strangers. For some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it.” - Hebrews 13:2

P.1314 - par.1 *Never, throughout the seven years of*

this assignment, was this Trinity Teacher Son wholly persuaded as to the identity of his seraphic associate. True, all seraphim during that age were regarded with peculiar interest and scrutiny. Full well we all knew that our beloved Sovereign was abroad in the universe, disguised as a seraphim, but never could we be certain of his identity. Never was he positively identified until the time of his attachment to the bestowal mission of this Trinity Teacher Son. But always throughout this era were the supreme seraphim regarded with special solicitude, lest any of us should find that we had unawares been host to the Sovereign of the universe on a mission of creature bestowal.

“Every tomorrow has two handles. We can take hold of it with the handle of anxiety or the handle of faith.” - Henry Ward Beecher (1813-87)

P.557 - par.5 19. *Anxiety must be abandoned. The disappointments hardest to bear are those which never come.*

P.1243 - par.2 *The angels really find it hard to understand why you will so persistently allow your higher intellectual powers, even your religious faith, to be so dominated by fear, so thoroughly demoralized by the thoughtless panic of dread and anxiety.*

P.1658 - par.5 *Many of the cures effected by Jesus in connection with his ministry in behalf of Elman's patients did, indeed, appear to resemble the working of miracles, but we were instructed that they were only just such transformations of mind and spirit as may occur in the experience of expectant and faith-dominated persons who are under the immediate and inspirational influence of a strong, positive, and beneficent personality whose ministry banishes fear and destroys anxiety.*

Tom and Karen Allen are longtime readers of the Urantia Papers. They live in Oklahoma City with their family of four boys. Tom has served in the Urantia Book Fellowship's Oklahoma Society and General Council from 1985-1994. Karen is the daughter of veteran Urantians Dick Johnson and the late Peggy Johnson of Phoenix.

Our Urantian in Pakistan: Excerpts of Nadia's Letters to J.J. Johnson

“JJ” Johnson is serving our country as a civilian in a very dangerous place, Islamabad, Pakistan. This Marine (there is no such thing as an ex-Marine) is “Semper Fi” to the Urantia Papers as always. JJ is helping some of the truth-starved people there to the Urantia Papers ... especially the Life and Teachings of Jesus. Here are a few communications from one of the most courageous and wonderful young ladies who has taken to the Revelation. **L.M.**

From: nadia
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2002 12:30 PM
Subject: A beautiful Angel for my family

Hi JJ,

How are you doing sir? I am fine by the grace of mighty Lord and hope the same from you. JJ I am very happy to receive beautiful e-mails from different Urantian people, and I love to reply them all. JJ me and my family are so happy that you are doing really good for me, believe me in my life we didn't have anyone like you, and I can't get some one like you in my life but I pray from God to have some one like you in my life, kind, God fearing and helpful person.

Especially you introduced me, my family, my cousins and my friends the “Treasure of life” the beautiful gift of life that changed our lives and now we have some purpose of life to live but before we were like dead bodies, we were empty from inside, we were seems to alive but having nothing that attracts others but thanked God now we have a special living purpose after having the UB with us. Me and my family members can't forget your greatness in our lives. You are really an angel for us.

JJ, the man who took the responsibility of the translation, he refused to do that because he is a fundamentalist so I given it to someone else who did it for me. Now I got the translation with me, JJ we are giving your both articles in the newspaper and will give as it is one article because you know it is only a Christian newspaper. So we can put it in the newspaper as it is one, so now we got the

booking for the newspaper so I hope that we can see our article very soon. JJ, this country and the religions people have to do the things by force, they can't do what they like the most in their lives by their freewill. So gradually everyone will know about the truth, but it takes some time very slow.

JJ, you don't forget to talk to your friend Jerry in (NHS) narcotics, just make him remind again about my problems and all that I am a poor Christian fellow and having lots of problems. JJ we will have a beautiful Urantia study group tomorrow, so see you tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.
God bless you,
Nadia

From: nadia
Sent: Saturday, September 21, 2002 8:27 PM
To: Subject: My Loving Service

Dearest JJ,

I discussed with you this afternoon about what is my next planning, B. my my friend and also a Urantian, was thinking that as she have the "Treasure of Life" with her, she is already sharing with others, but I am glad that she discussed with me that she loves to share a religious revelation of epochal significance to our planet, with her old parents who are living in the village, she thinks that they are very old so before they die, she loves to help them by providing the truth epochal revelation of life. I need to go with her with all my lessons that you are giving me every week, I mean the study we are doing together, I have some of them in Urdu Translation and will have more till I move to the village. I hope that me and B., will able to share the Heavenly Father's love and the Spirit of Truth with the people in the village and with B.'s Friends.

The village is very far from here, it takes to reach there like eight hours from here, but no

problem, I am ready to have any challenge for my beautiful UB, I am planning to take two Urantia Books with me to place in some library there, and when later on I will have some study group there, I will try to send them the Urdu Translation, after every week and try to visit them every month, because they will be the new students and will need me to share with them more.

We need your prayers because it is our new mission to Introduce the UB in villages with very poor people. JJ, now day by day our study group is increasing, like now we have the Teenagers group [names deleted]. I hope that one day every one will have this Epochal Revelation of Truth with them.
Peace & Joy
Nadia.

From: nadia
Sent: Tuesday, October 01, 2002 7:35 PM
To: Subject: Good News

Hi JJ,

Thanked God that our article of UB is published in the newspaper, all my family members and all the Urantians are very happy to see our article and especially because of that people will read our article and will take interest and believe on UB. As you know that this country is Islamic country and also too much fundamentalist people are living here, so its very hard to do these kind of things and also very slow to introduce something, so we have to be very careful and also to have a patience to introduce the Epochal Revelation of Truth.

On Friday night, the lady who was helping me alot for the article, she called the press to confirm that what happened? the article is publish or not? someone told her that the article is published but they didn't published the website of UB and the e-mail address, because of some priest and fundamentalist people, so she requested [name deleted] to help her before the distribution of the newspaper in all Pakistan. Otherwise the

publishing of article is useless, so [name deleted] decided to write the website of the UB, and the e-mail address under the article with hand writing in all newspapers, and did that on around 7000-8000 newspaper all Friday night. JJ, I believe that God and Angels are helping us alot.I hope that next time for the other article, God will help us alot, that lady promised me that will publish the other article by the next month.

Much Love,
Nadia.

From: nadia
Sent: Tuesday, October 01, 2002 8:28 PM
Subject: Great Idea

JJ,

Me and B. are trying very hard to move to the village in the mid of this month, we have enough Urdu translation to share this Epochal Revation of Truth, and Heavenly Father's love with our sisters and brothers in poor village. We all have a great idea and a plan that in beginning we will talk about our Heavenly Father's Love, Truth, and the Life and Teachings of Jesus. As I told you that the poor people are more receptive so we have to be very slow with them and should start it with the IV part. Yesterday B. had given the UB to her nephew who was interested in UB, as he felt that we all are the believer and very much enthusiastic for the UB.

Anyways, I hope that God will help us to continue our mission, because we have a good purpose of this loving service. Hope to listen from you soon.

Love & Prayers,
Nadia.

From: nadia
Sent: Tuesday, October 22, 2002 9:28 PM
Subject: Someone very special

Hi JJ,

I had a good study group last evening, after coming from your place, with [names deleted].

B. did not come because of she was not feeling well. I tried to explain them about Melchizedek our third Epochal Revelation, they all like to listen about Melchizedek. My brother was very happy to hear that our heavenly father have a special love for us. I am very blessed and fortunate that I got this beautiful "Treasure of Life" and especially I am very thankful to you that you are really giving me a lot of your precious time and sharing the heavenly father s love and teaching me about the Urantia

book. I will never forget your greatness in my whole life that I was thirsty for truth and there was no charm in my life, it was empty and was bored but you introduced me this true Epochal Revelation and its changed my life. When my heavenly father felt mercy on me and send this Treasure for me so I am sharing the Heavenly father s love with all my spiritual sisters and brothers on this planet.

*JJ, when sometimes I am
writing e-mails to you
or reading the UB,
I am having tears in my eyes that
how fortunate I am
that I have something special
with me and how much
I am thankful to you that you
shared with me.*

JJ, when sometimes I am writing e-mails to you or reading the UB, I am having tears in my eyes that how fortunate I am that I have something special with me and how much I am thankful to you that you shared with me.

Your sister in faith,
Nadia.

From: nadia
Sent: Sunday, October 27, 2002 9:11 PM
To: jj606joh@isb.paknet.com.pk
Subject: It's a difficult task but

Hi JJ,

JJ I had a good visit with some friends in Islamabad. I am very happy that today I got a chance to discuss with some people about the UB. Sir, whenever someone meets all my family members, first of all we would like to share UB with them whether they like to listen that any more or not. I am always holding the UB with me so some people like to ask me that what's this? so like this I can have the chance to talk about the UB. I hope to see a majority of people in a few years that they will reconize this

Epochal Revelation of Truth here in Pakistan.

Now I just finished talking to [name deleted], so I asked him that what about my article? is it coming tomorrow in the newspaper or not? so he asked me its really very hard to publish religious stuffs in the any newspaper, only Islamic matters can be publish easily, so he explained me that if they are going to publish the article as it is then they would be in great difficulty so they have to change that little bit and have to edit the article, they have to change the heading also, so the religious people cannot be angry on the news paper staff, he explained me that they could be hang or could be in the jail forever or they could be fire from their services so its really a big risk, sir, they have to change the article otherwise I could be in big trouble so..... he told me that the circulation of the newspaper is about like 7,000 people around Pakistan. The article will be in tomorrow news paper and it is going in all embassies and all government departments and in all book stores. The other article will be publish today and hope to see that tomorrow morning and when she will call me, and will show me the article along with its website and e-mail address.

I have to explain my brother and my all family members about the billion worlds of Havona, because my brother needs to know about it again. Me and other urantians are so happy that our articles of the UB is now in the different news papers, its just the beginning and hope to see it is spreading in all the world. (That is my dream) and hope that one day it will come true.

Love and Prayers,
Nadia

JJ Johnson is a member of the U.S. State Department Foreign Service, currently stationed in Islamabad, Pakistan. He has been a wholehearted believer in and student of The Urantia Book since 1975. JJ has also been a member of The Urantia Book Fellowship for over twenty-five years. He is known as a vigorous evangel for the Urantia Papers, virtually always carrying his Book with him. If you would care to write a note to Nadia it would be deeply appreciated. Communicate with her through JJ, at:

jj606joh@isb.paknet.com.pk

The Man Nobody Knows A Discovery of the Real Jesus

by Bruce Barton

PART 1 OF 3 PARTS

I was one of those who are called by some: "the unchurched." As a Urantian, I felt at times this gave me great advantages over many other readers. For one thing, I had almost no religious baggage — I had my own acquired idea of what Jesus was really like. I almost never attended church, and although the family was technically Catholic, I knew almost nothing of the religion. One day, at about the age of nine, I came across an old book in a box in our basement. It was titled: "The Man Nobody Knows ... a Discovery of the Real Jesus." It was written by Bruce Barton, who (I would discover many years later) was a famous advertising man. This book made a great impression on my young mind. Somehow I retained this book over the years. As a Urantian, many years later, I am amazed how close Bruce Barton came in 1924 to describing what I believe was the real Jesus. I hope you enjoy these excerpts.

L.M.

HOW IT CAME TO BE WRITTEN

The little boy's body sat bolt upright in the rough wooden chair, but his mind was very busy. This was his weekly hour of revolt. The kindly lady who could never seem to find her glasses would have been terribly shocked if she had known what was going on inside the little boy's mind.

"You must love Jesus," she said every Sunday, "and God."

The little boy did not say anything. He was afraid to say anything; he was almost afraid that something would happen to him because of the things he thought.

Love God! Who was always picking on people for having a good time, and sending little boys to hell because they couldn't do better in a world which he had made so hard! Why didn't God take some one his own size? Love Jesus! The little boy looked up at the picture which hung on the Sunday-school wall. It showed a pale young man with flabby forearms and a sad expression. The young man had red whiskers.

Then the little boy looked across to the other wall. There was Daniel, good old Daniel, standing off the lions. The little boy liked Daniel. He liked David, too, with the trusty sling that landed a stone square on the forehead of Goliath. And Moses, with his rod and his big brass snake. They were winners — those three. He wondered if David could whip Jeffries. Samson could! Say, that would have been a fight!

But Jesus! Jesus was the “Lamb of God.” The little boy did not know what that meant, but it sounded like Mary’s little lamb. Something for girls — sissified. Jesus was also “meek and lowly,” a “man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He went around for three years telling people not to do things.

Sunday was Jesus’ day; it was wrong to feel comfortable or laugh on Sunday. The little boy was glad when the superintendent thumped the bell and announced: “We will now sing the closing hymn.” One more bad hour was over. For one more week the little boy had got rid of Jesus.

Years went by and the boy grew up and became a business man. He began to wonder about Jesus.

He said to himself: “Only strong magnetic men inspire great enthusiasm and build great organizations. Yet Jesus built the greatest organization of all. It is extraordinary.”

The more sermons the man heard and the more books he read the more mystified he became. One day he decided to wipe his mind clean of books and sermons. He said, “I will read what the men who knew Jesus personally said about him. I will read about him as though he were a new historical character, about whom I had never heard anything at all.”

The man was amazed.

A physical weakling? Where did they get that idea? Jesus pushed a plane and swung an adze; he was a successful carpenter. He slept outdoors and spent his days walking around his favorite lake. His muscles were so strong that when he drove the money-changers out, nobody dared to oppose him!

A kill-joy? He was the most popular dinner guest in Jerusalem! The criticism which proper

people made was that he spent too much time with publicans and sinners (very good fellows, on the whole, the man thought) and enjoyed society too much. They called him a “wine bibber and a gluttonous man.”

A failure? He picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world. When the man had finished his reading, he exclaimed, “This is a man nobody knows.”

“Some day,” said he, “some one will write a book about Jesus. Every business man will read it and send it to his partners and his salesmen. For it will tell the story of the founder of modern business.”

So the man waited for some one to write the book, but no one did. Instead, more books were published about the “Lamb of God” who was weak and unhappy and glad to die.

The man became impatient. One day he said, “I believe I will try to write that book, myself.” And he did.

He picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world. When the man had finished his reading, he exclaimed, “This is a man nobody knows.”

I: THE EXECUTIVE

It was very late in the afternoon in Galilee.

If you would like to learn the measure of a man, that is the time of day to watch him. We are all half an inch taller in the morning than at night; it is fairly easy to take a large view of things when the mind is rested and the nerves are calm. But the day is a steady drain of small annoyances, and the difference in the size of men becomes hourly more apparent. The little man loses his temper; the big man takes a firmer hold.

The dozen men who had walked all day over the dusty roads were hot and tired, and the sight of a village was very cheering, as they looked down on it from the top of a little hill. Their leader, deciding that they had gone far enough, sent two members of the party ahead to arrange for accommodations, while he and the others sat down by the roadside to wait. After a bit the messengers were seen returning, and even at a distance it was apparent that something unpleasant had occurred. Their cheeks were flushed, their voices angry, and as they came nearer they quickened their pace, each wanting to be the first to explode the bad news. Breathlessly they

told it — the people in the village had refused to receive them, had given them blunt notice to seek shelter somewhere else.

The indignation of the messengers communicated itself to the others, who at first could hardly believe their ears. This back-woods village refuse to entertain their master — it was unthinkable! He was a famous public character in that part of the world. He had healed sick people and given freely to the poor. In the capital city crowds had followed him enthusiastically, so that even his disciples had become men of importance, looked up to and talked about. And now to have this country village deny them admittance as its guests — “Lord, these people are insufferable,” one of them cried. “Let us call down fire from Heaven and consume them.” The others joined in with enthusiasm. Fire from Heaven — that was the ideal! Make them smart for their boorishness! Show them that they can’t affront us with impunity! Come, Lord, the fire!

There are times when nothing a man can say is nearly so powerful as saying nothing. Every executive knows that instinctively. To argue brings him down to the level of those with whom he argues; silence convicts them of their folly; they wish they had not spoken so quickly; they wonder what he thinks. The lips of Jesus tightened; his fine features showed the strain of the preceding weeks, and in his eyes there was a foreshadowing of the more bitter weeks to come. He needed that night’s rest, but he said not a word. Quietly he gathered up his garments and started on, his outraged companions following. It is easy to imagine his keen disappointment. He had been working with them for three years ... would they never catch a true vision of what he was about? He had so little time, and they were constantly wasting his time. . . . He had come to save mankind, and they wanted him to gratify his personal resentment by burning up a village!

Down the hot road they trailed after him, awed by his silence, vaguely conscious that they had failed again to measure up. “And they went to another village,” says the narrative — nothing more. No debate; no bitterness; no futile conversation. In the mind of Jesus the thing was too small for comment.

In a world where so much must be done, and done quickly, the memory could not afford to be burdened with a petty slight.

“And they went to another village.”

Eighteen hundred years later an important man left the White House in Washington for the War Office, with a letter from the President to the Secretary of War. In a very few minutes he was back in the White House again bursting with indignation. The President looked up in mild surprise.

“Did you give the message to Stanton?” he asked. The other man nodded, too angry for words. “What did he do?”

“He tore it up,” exclaimed the outraged citizen, “and what’s more, sir, he said you are a fool.”

The President rose slowly from the desk, stretching his long frame to its full height, and regarding the wrath of the other with a quizzical glance.

“Did Stanton call me that?” he asked. “He did, sir, and repeated it.”

“Well,” said the President with a dry laugh, “I reckon it must be true then, because Stanton is generally right.”

The angry gentleman waited for the storm to break, but nothing happened. Abraham Lincoln turned quietly to his desk and went on with his work. It was not the first time that he had been rebuffed. In the early months of the way when every messenger brought bad news, and no one in Washington knew at what hour the soldiers of Lee might appear at the outskirts.

Other leaders in history have had that superiority to personal resentment and small annoyances which is one of the surest signs of greatness; but Jesus infinitely surpasses all. He knew that pettiness brings its own punishment. The law of compensation operates inexorably to reward and afflict us by and through ourselves. The man who is mean is mean only to himself. The village that had refused to admit him required no fire; it was already dealt with. No miracles were performed in that village. No sick were healed; no hungry were fed; no poor received the message of

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encouragement and inspiration—that was the penalty for its boorishness. As for him, he forgot the incident immediately. He had work to do.

Much theology has spoiled the thrill of his life by assuming that he knew everything from the beginning — that his three years of public work were a kind of dress rehearsal, with no real problems or crises. What interest would there be in such a life? What inspiration? You who read these pages have your own creed concerning him; I have mine. Let us forget all creed for the time being, and take the story just as the simple narratives give it — a poor boy, growing up in a peasant family, working in a carpenter shop; gradually feeling his powers expanding, beginning to have an influence over his neighbors, recruiting a few followers, suffering disappointments and reverses, finally death. Yet building so solidly and well that death was only the beginning of his influence!

Stripped of all dogma this is the grandest achievement story of all! In the pages of this little book let us treat it as such. If, in so doing, we are criticized for overemphasizing the human side of his character we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that our overemphasis tends a little to offset the very great overemphasis which has been exerted on the other side. Books and books and books have been written about him as the Son of God; surely we have a reverent right to remember that his favorite title for himself was the Son of Man.

Nazareth, where he grew up, was a little town in an outlying province. In the fashionable circles of Jerusalem it was quite the thing to make fun of Nazareth — its crudities of custom and speech, its simplicity of manner. “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” they asked derisively when the report spread that a new prophet had arisen in that country town. The question was regarded as a complete rebuttal of his pretensions.

The Galileans were quite conscious of the city folks’ contempt, but they bore it lightly. Life was a cheerful and easy-going affair with them. The sun shone almost every day; the land was fruitful; to make a living was nothing much to worry about.

There was plenty of time to visit. Families went on picnics in Nazareth, as elsewhere in the world; young people walked together in the moonlight and fell in love in the spring. Boys laughed boisterously at their games and got into trouble with their pranks. And Jesus, the boy who worked in the carpenter shop, was a leader among them.

Later on we shall refer again to those boyhood experiences, noting how they contributed to the vigorous physique which carried him triumphantly through his work. We are quite unmindful of

When and how and where does the eternal miracle occur in the lives of men and women destined for greatness? At what hour, in the morning, in the afternoon, in the long quiet evenings, did the audacious thought enter the mind of each of them that he or she was larger than the limits of a country town, that his life might be bigger than his father’s?

chronology in writing this little book. We are not bound by the familiar outline which begins with the song of the angels at Bethlehem and ends with the weeping of the women at the cross. We shall thread our way back and forth through the rich variety of his life, picking up this incident and that bit of conversation, this dramatic contact and that audacious decision, and bringing them together as best to illustrate our

purpose. For that purpose is not to write a biography but to paint a portrait. So we pass quickly over thirty years of his life, noting only that somehow, somewhere there occurred in those years the eternal miracle — the awakening of the inner consciousness of power.

When and how and where does the eternal miracle occur in the lives of men and women destined for greatness? At what hour, in the morning, in the afternoon, in the long quiet evenings, did the audacious thought enter the mind of each of them that he or she was larger than the limits of a country town, that his life might be bigger than his father’s? When did the thought come to Jesus? Was it one morning when he stood at the carpenter’s bench, the sun streaming in across the hills? Was it late in the night, after the family had retired, and he had slipped out to walk and wonder under the stars? Nobody knows. All we can be sure of is this — that the consciousness of his divinity must have come to him in a time of solitude, of awe in the presence of Nature. The western hemisphere has been fertile in material progress, but the great religions have all come out of the East. The deserts are a symbol of the infinite;

the vast spaces that divide men from the stars fill the human soul with wonder. Somewhere, at some unforgettable hour, the daring filled his heart. He knew that he was bigger than Nazareth.

Another young man had grown up near by and was beginning to be heard from in the larger world. His name was John. How much the two boys may have seen of each other we do not know; but certainly the younger, Jesus, looked up to and admired his handsome, fearless cousin. We can imagine with what eager interest he must have received the reports of John's impressive success at the capital. He was the sensation of that season. The fashionable folk of the city were flocking out to the river to hear his denunciations; some of them even accepted his demand for repentance and were baptized. His fame grew; his uncompromising speeches were quoted far and wide.

The business men of Nazareth who had been up to Jerusalem brought back stories and quotations. There was considerable head-wagging as there always is; these folk had known of John as a boy; they could hardly believe that he was

as much of a man as the world seemed to think. But there was one who had no doubts. A day came when he was missing from the carpenter shop; the sensational news spread through the streets that he had gone to Jerusalem, to John, to be baptized.

John's reception of him was flattering. During the ceremony of baptism and for the rest of that day Jesus was in a state of splendid exultation. No shadow of a doubt darkened his enthusiasm. He was going to do the big things which John had done; he felt the power stirring in him; he was all eager to begin. Then the day closed and night descended, and with it came the doubts. The narrative describes them as a threefold temptation and introduces Satan to add to the dramatic quality of the event. In our simple story we need not spend much time with the description of Satan. We do not know whether he is to be regarded as a personality or as an impersonalization of an inner experience. The temptation is more real without him, more akin to our own trials and doubts. With him or without him, however, the meaning of the experience is clear. *This is its meaning:* the day of supreme assurance

had passed; the days of fearful misgiving had come. What man of outstanding genius has ever been allowed to escape them? For how many days and weeks do you think the soul of Lincoln must have been tortured? Inside himself he felt his power, but where and when would opportunity come? Must he forever ride the country circuit, and sit in a dingy office settling a community's petty disputes? Had he perhaps mistaken the inner message? Was he, after all, only a common fellow—a fair country lawyer and a good teller of jokes? Those who rode with him on the circuit testify to his terrifying moods of silence. What solemn thoughts besieged him in those silences? What fear of failure? What futile rebellion at the narrow limits of his life?

The days of Jesus' doubt are set down as forty in number. It is easy to imagine that lonely struggle. He had left a good trade among people who knew and trusted him—and for what? To become a wandering preacher, talking to folks who never heard of him? And what was he to talk about? How, with his lack of experience, should he find words for his message? Where should he begin? Who

would listen? Would they listen? Hadn't he perhaps made a mistake?

He could go to Jerusalem and enter the priesthood; that was a sure road to distinction. He could do good in that way, and have the satisfaction of success as well. Or he might enter the public service, and seek political leadership. There was plenty of discontent to be capitalized, and he knew the farmer and the laborer; he was one of them; they would listen to him.

For forty days and nights the incessant fight went on, but once settled, it was settled forever. In the calm of that wilderness there came the majestic conviction which is the very soul of leadership—the faith that his spirit was linked with the Eternal, that God had sent him into the world to do a work which no one else could do, which—if he neglected it—would never be done. Magnify this temptation scene as greatly as you will; say that God spoke more clearly to him than to any who has ever lived. It is true. But to every man and woman of vision the clear Voice speaks; there is no great leadership where there is not a mystic. Nothing splendid has

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ever been achieved except by those who dared believe that something inside themselves was superior to circumstance. To choose the sure thing is treason to the soul.

If this was not the meaning of the forty days in the wilderness, if Jesus did not have a real temptation which might have ended in his going back to the bench at Nazareth, then the forty days' struggle has no real significance to us. But the temptation was real, and he conquered. The youth who had been a carpenter stayed in the wilderness, a man came out. Not the full-fledged master who, within the shadow of the cross could cry, "*I have overcome the world.*" He had still much growth to make, much progress in vision and self-confidence. But the beginnings were there. Men and women who looked upon him from that hour felt the authority of one who has put his spiritual house in order, and knows clearly what he is about.

Success is always exciting; we never grow tired of asking what and how. What, then, were the principal elements in his power over men? How was it that the boy from a country village became the greatest leader?

First of all he had the voice and manner of the leader — the personal magnetism which begets loyalty and commands respect. The beginnings of it were present in him even as a boy. John felt them. On the day when John looked up from the river where he was baptizing converts and saw Jesus standing on the bank, he drew back in protest. "*I have need to be baptized of you,*" he exclaimed, "*and you come to me?*" The lesser man recognized the greater instinctively. We speak of personal magnetism as though there were something mysterious about it — a magic quality bestowed on one in a thousand and denied to all the rest. This is not true. The essential element in personal magnetism is a consuming sincerity — *an overwhelming faith in the importance of the work one has to do.*

Emerson said, "What you are thunders so loud I can't hear what you say." And Mirabeau, watching the face of the young Robespierre, exclaimed, "That man will go far; he believes every word he says."

Most of us go through the world mentally divided against ourselves. We wonder whether we are in the right jobs, whether we are making the right investments, whether, after all, anything is as important as it seems to be. Our enemies are those of our own being and creation. Instinctively we wait for a commanding voice, for one who shall say authoritatively, "I have the truth. This way lies happiness and salvation." There was in Jesus supremely that quality of conviction. Even very successful people were moved by it. Jesus had been in Jerusalem only a day or two when there came a knock at his door at night. He opened it to find Nicodemus, one of the principal men of the city; a member of the Sanhedrin, a supreme court judge.

Jesus had been in Jerusalem only a day or two when there came a knock at his door at night. He opened it to find Nicodemus, one of the principal men of the city; a member of the Sanhedrin, a supreme court judge.

One feels the dramatic quality of the meeting — the young, almost unknown, teacher and the great man, half curious, half convinced. It would have been easy to make a mistake. Jesus might very naturally have expressed his sense of honor at the visit; he might have said: "I

appreciate your coming, sir. You are an older man and successful. I am just starting on my work. I should like to have you advise me as to how I may best proceed." But there was no such note in the interview — no effort to make it easy for this notable visitor to become a convert. One catches his breath involuntarily at the audacity of the speech: "Verily, verily, I say to you, Nicodemus, except you are born again you can not see the kingdom of Heaven." And a few moments later, "If I have told you earthly things and you have not believed, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" The famous visitor did not enroll as a disciple, was not invited to enroll; but he never forgot the impression made by the young man's amazing self-assurance.

In a few weeks the crowds along the shores of the Sea of Galilee were to feel the same power and respond to it. They were quite accustomed to the discourses of the Scribes and Pharisees — long, involved arguments backed up by many citations from the law. But this teacher was different. He quoted nobody; his own word was offered as sufficient. He taught as "one having authority and not as the scribes." Still later we have more striking proof of the power that supreme conviction can carry. At this date he had become so large a public

influence as to threaten the peace of the rulers, and they sent a detachment of soldiers to arrest him. They were stern men, presumably immune to sentiment. They returned, after a while, empty-handed.

“What’s the matter?” their commander demanded angrily. “Why didn’t you bring him in?” And they, smarting under their failure and hardly knowing how to explain it, could make only a surly excuse. “You’ll have to send some one else,” they said. “We don’t want to go against him. Never man so spake.”

They were armed; he had no defense but his manner and tone, but these were enough. In any crowd and under any circumstances the leader stands out. By the power of his faith in himself he commands, and men instinctively obey. This blazing conviction was the first and greatest element in the success of Jesus. The second was his wonderful power to pick men, and to recognize hidden capacities in them. It must have amazed Nicodemus when he learned the names of the twelve whom the young teacher had chosen to be his associates. What a list! Not a single well-known person on it. Nobody who had ever made a success of anything. A haphazard collection of fishermen and smalltown business men, and one tax collector—a member of the most hated element in the community. What a crowd!

Nowhere is there such a startling example of executive success as the way in which that organization was brought together. Take the tax collector, Matthew, as the most striking instance. His occupation carried a heavy weight of social ostracism, but it was profitable. He was probably well-to-do according to the simple standards of the neighborhood; certainly he was a busy man and not subject to impulsive action. His addition to the group of disciples is told in a single sentence: “*And as Jesus passed by, he called Matthew.*”

Amazing. No argument; no pleading. A smaller leader would have been compelled to set up the advantages of the opportunity. “Of course you are doing well where you are and making money,” he might have said. “I can’t offer you as much as you are getting; in fact you may have some difficulty in making ends meet. But I think we are going to have

an interesting time and shall probably accomplish a big work.” Such a conversation would have been met with Matthew’s reply that he would “have to think it over,” and the world would never have heard his name.

There was no such trifling with Jesus. As he passed by he called Matthew. No executive in the world can read that sentence without acknowledging that here indeed is the Master. He had the born leader’s gift for seeing powers in men of which they themselves were often almost unconscious.

One day as he was coming into a certain town a tremendous crowd pressed around him. There was a rich man named Zacchaeus in the town; small in stature, but with such keen business ability that he had got himself generally disliked. Being curious to

see the distinguished visitor he had climbed up into a tree. Imagine his surprise when Jesus stopped under the tree and commanded him to come down saying, “*Today I intend to eat at your house.*” The crowd was stunned. Some of the bolder

spirits took it upon themselves to tell Jesus of his social blunder. He couldn’t afford to make the mistake of visiting Zacchaeus, they said. Their protests were without avail. They saw in Zacchaeus merely a dishonest little Jew; he saw in him a man of unusual generosity and a fine sense of justice, who needed only to have those qualities revealed by some one who understood. So with Matthew — the crowd saw only a despised tax-gatherer. Jesus saw the potential writer of a book which will live forever.

So also with that “certain Centurion,” who is one of the anonymous characters in history that every business man would have liked to meet. The disciples brought him to Jesus with some misgivings and apology. They said, “Of course this man is a Roman employee, and you may reprove us for introducing him. But really he is a very good fellow, a generous man and a respecter of our faith.” Jesus and the Centurion looking at each other found an immediate bond of union — each responding to the other’s strength. Said the Centurion:

“Master, my servant is ill; but it is unnecessary for you to visit my house. I understand how such things are done, for I, too, am an executive; I say to this man ‘Go’ and he goes; and to another ‘Come,’

His addition to the group of disciples is told in a single sentence: “And as Jesus passed by, he called Matthew.”

and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it. Therefore, speak the word only, and I know my servant will be healed."

Jesus' face kindled with admiration. "I have not found anywhere such faith as this," he exclaimed. This man understood him. Both were executives. They had the same problems and the same power; they talked the same language.

Having gathered together his organization, there remained for Jesus the tremendous task of training it. And herein lay the third great element in his success—his vast unending patience. The Church has attached to each of the disciples the title of Saint and thereby done most to destroy the conviction of their reality. They were very far from sainthood when he picked them up. For three years he had them with him day and night, his whole energy and resources poured out in an effort to create an understanding in them. Yet through it all they never fully understood. We have read and heard of their petulance. The narratives are full of such discouragements.

In spite of all he could do or say, the apostles were persuaded that he planned to overthrow the Roman power and set himself up as ruler in Jerusalem. Hence they never tired of wrangling as to how the offices should be divided. Two of them, James and John, got their mother to come to him and ask that her sons might sit, one on his right hand and one on his left. When the other ten heard of it they were angry with James and John; but Jesus never lost his patience. He believed that the way to get faith out of men is to show that you have faith in them; and from that great principle of executive management he never wavered.

Of all the disciples Simon was most noisy and aggressive. It was he who was always volunteering advice, forever proclaiming the staunchness of his own courage and faith. One day Jesus said to him, "Before the cock crows tomorrow you will deny me three times." Simon was indignant. Though they killed him, he cried, he would never deny! Jesus merely smiled — and that night it happened. A lesser leader would have dropped Simon. "You have had your chance," he would have said, "I am sorry but I must have men around me on whom I can depend." Jesus had the rare understanding that the same man

will usually not make the same mistake twice. To this frail, very human, very likable ex-fisherman he spoke no word of rebuke. Instead he played a stroke of master strategy. "Your name is Simon," he said. "Hereafter you shall be called Peter." (A rock.) It was daring, but he knew his man. The shame of the denial had tempered the iron of that nature like fire; the day would come when there was no faltering in Peter, even at the death.

John the Baptist could renounce, but he could not construct. He drew crowds willing to repent at his command, but he had no program for them after his repentance. They waited for him to organize them into some kind of effective service, but John was no organizer. So his followers drifted away and his movement gradually collapsed. The same thing

Within a very few years after his death, it was reported in a far-off corner of the Roman Empire that "these who have turned the world upside down have come here also."

might have happened to the work of Jesus. He started with much less reputation than John and a much smaller group of followers. He had only twelve, and they were untrained simple men, with elementary weakness and passions. Yet because of the fire of his personal conviction, because of his marvelous instinct

for discovering their latent powers, and because of his unwavering faith and patience, he molded them into an organization which carried on victoriously. Within a very few years after his death, it was reported in a far-off corner of the Roman Empire that "these who have turned the world upside down have come hither also." A few decades later the proud Emperor himself bowed his head to the teachings of this Nazareth carpenter, transmitted through common men.

THE OUTDOOR MAN

To most of the crowd there was nothing unusual about the scene. That is the tragedy of it. The air was filthy with the smell of animals and human beings herded together. Men and women trampled one another, crying aloud their imprecations. At one side of the court were the pens of the cattle; the dove cages at the other. In the foreground, hard-faced priests and money-changers sat behind long tables exacting the utmost farthing from those who came to buy. One would never imagine that this was a place of worship. Yet it was the Temple—the center of the religious life of the nation. And to the crowds who jammed its courts, the spectacle seemed

perfectly normal. That was the tragedy of it.

Standing a little apart from the rest, the young man from Nazareth watched in amazement which deepened gradually into anger. He had not been in the Temple since his twelfth year, when Joseph and Mary took him up to be legally enrolled as a Son of the law. He had witnessed the turmoil in the outer courts, but this day was different. He had heard some of the pilgrims mutter about the extortions of the money-changers. A woman told how the lamb which she had raised with so much devotion the previous year, had been scornfully rejected by the priests, who directed her to buy from the dealers. An old man related his experience. He had brought down the month's savings to purchase his gift, and the money-changers converted his provincial currency into the temple coin at a robber's rate. Other pilgrims had similar stories. Today the young man faced the sordid reality with cheeks flushed.

A woman's shrill tones pierced his revelry like a knife; he turned to see a peasant mother protesting vainly against a ruthless exaction. An unruly animal threatened to break through the bars, and a part of the crowd fell back with cries of terror. The young man had picked up a handful of cords from the pavement and was now braiding them into a whip, watching the whole scene silently. And suddenly, without a word of warning he strode to the table where a fat money-changer sat and violently turned it over. The startled robber lurched forward, grasping at his gains, lost his balance and fell sprawling on the ground. Another step and a second table was overturned, and another, and another.

The crowd which had melted back at the start began to catch a glimmering of what was up, and surged forward around the young man. He strode on, looking neither to right nor left. He reached the counters - here the dove cages stood - with quick sure movements the cages were opened and the occupants released. Brushing aside the group of dealers who had taken their stand in front of the cattle pens, he threw down the bars and drove the bellowing animals out through the crowd and into the streets, striking vigorous blows with his little whip. The whole thing happened so quickly that the priests were swept off their feet.

The young man cried. "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations,' but you have made it a den of robbers." Stung by his taunt, the priests hesitated, and in their moment of hesitation were lost. The soldiers turned their backs; it was nothing that they cared about. But the crowd burst forth in a mighty cheer and rushing forward bore him out of the Temple, the priests and the money-changers scurrying before him. That night his action was the talk of the town. "Did you hear what happened in the Temple today?" "Not a man of them dared stand up to him." "Dirty thieves — it was coming to them." "What's his name?" "Jesus ... he used to be a carpenter up in Nazareth."

This is a very familiar story, much preached upon and pictured. But almost invariably the pictures show him with a halo around his head, as though that was the explanation of his triumph. The truth is so much simpler and more impressive.

This is a very familiar story, much preached upon and pictured. But almost invariably the pictures show him with a halo around his head, as though that was the explanation of his triumph. The truth is so much simpler and more impressive. There was, in his eyes, a flaming moral purpose; and greed and oppression have always shriveled before such fire. But with the majesty of his glance there was something else which counted powerfully in his favor. As his right arm rose and fell, striking its blows with that little whip, the sleeve dropped back to reveal muscles hard as iron. No one who watched him in action had any doubt that he was fully capable of taking care of himself. No flabby priest or money-changer dared to try conclusions with that arm.

There are those to whom it will seem almost irreverent to suggest that Jesus was physically strong. They think of him as a voice, a presence, a spirit; they never feel the rich contagion of his laughter, nor remember how heartily he enjoyed good food, nor think of what his years of hard toil must have done to his arms and back and legs. Look for a minute at those first thirty years. There was no soft bed for his mother on the night he entered the world. He was brought forth in a stable, amid animals. He was wrapped in rough garments and expected, almost from the beginning, to look after himself. When he was still an infant the family hurried away into Egypt. On the long trip back, some years later, he was judged old enough to walk, for there were younger children. And so, day after day,

he trudged beside the little donkey, or scurried into the woods by the roadside to find fuel. It was a hard school for babyhood but it gave him a hardness that was an enormous asset later on.

Early in his boyhood Jesus, as the eldest son, went into the family carpenter shop. The practice of carpentry was no easy business in those simpler days. Doubtless the man who took a contract for a house assumed responsibilities for digging into the rough hillside for its foundations; for felling trees in the forest, and shaping them with an adze. In after years those who listened to the talk of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, and heard him speak of the "man who built his house upon a rock" had no doubt that he knew what he was talking about. Some of them had seen him bending his strong clean shoulders to deliver heavy blows; or watched him trudge away into the woods, his ax over his shoulder, and return at nightfall with a rough-hewn beam.

So he "waxed strong" as the narrative tells us, a phrase which has rather been buried under the too-frequent repetition of "the meek and lowly" and "the lamb." As he grew in stature and experience he developed with his personal skill an unusual capacity for directing the work of other men so that Joseph allowed him an increasing responsibility in the management of the shop. And this was fortunate, for the day came when Joseph stood at the bench no longer — having sawed his last board, and planed it smooth — and the management of the business descended upon the shoulders of the boy who had learned it so thoroughly at his side. Is it not high time for a larger reverence to be given to that quiet unassuming Joseph? To Mary, his wife, the church has assigned a place of eternal glory. It is impossible to estimate how great an influence has been exerted for the betterment of woman's life by the fact that millions of human beings have been taught from infancy to venerate a woman.

But with the glorification of Mary, there has been an almost complete neglect of Joseph. The same theology which has painted the son as soft and gentle to the point of weakness, has exalted the feminine influence in its worship, and denied any large place to the masculine. This is partly because Mary lived to be known and remembered by the

disciples, while nobody remembered Joseph. Was he just an untutored peasant, married to a superior woman, and baffled by the genius of a son whom he could never understand? Or was there, underneath his self-effacement, a vigor and faith that molded the boy's plastic years? Was he a happy companion to the youngsters? Did he carry the youngest, laughing and crowing on his shoulders from the shop? Was he full of jokes at dinner time? Was he ever tired and short tempered? Did he ever punish?

The strange stirrings that had gone on inside him for years, setting him off more and more from his associates, were crystallized by the reports of John's success. The hour of the great decision arrived; he hung up his tools and walked out of town.

To all these questions the narrative gives no answer. And since this is so, since there is none who can refute us — we have a right to form our own conception of the character of this vastly significant and wholly unknown man, and to be guided by the one momentous fact which we do know. It is this.

He must have been friendly and patient and fine; he must have seemed to his children to be an almost ideal parent — for when Jesus sought to give mankind a new conception of the character of God, he could find no more exalted term for his meaning than the one word "Father."

Thirty years went by. Jesus had discharged his duty; the younger children were big enough for self-support. The strange stirrings that had gone on inside him for years, setting him off more and more from his associates, were crystallized by the reports of John's success. The hour of the great decision arrived; he hung up his tools and walked out of town.

What sort of looking man was he that day when he appeared on the bank of the Jordan and applied to John for baptism? What had the thirty years of physical toil given him in stature and physique? Unfortunately the Gospel narratives supply no satisfying answer to these questions; and the only passage in ancient literature which purports to be a contemporary description of him has been proved a forgery.

Nevertheless, it requires only a little reading between the lines to be sure that almost all the painters have misled us. They have shown us a frail man, under-muscled, with a soft face — a woman's face covered by a beard—and a benign but baffled look, as though the problems of living were so grievous that death would be a welcome release.

This is not the Jesus at whose word the disciples left their business to enlist in an unknown cause. And for proof of that assertion consider only four aspects of his experience: *the health* that flowed out of him to create health in others; *the appeal of his personality to women* — weakness does not appeal to them; *his lifetime of outdoor living*; and the *steel-like hardness of his nerves*. First, then, his power of healing.

He was teaching one day in Capernaum, in a house crowded to the doors, when a commotion occurred in the courtyard. A man sick in bed for years had heard reports of his marvelous power, and persuaded four friends to carry him into the house. Now, at the very entrance, their way was blocked. The eager listeners would not give way even for a sick man; they refused to sacrifice a single word. Sorrowfully the four friends started to carry the invalid back to his house again. But the poor fellow's will was strong even if his body was weak. Rising on his elbow he insisted that they take him up the stairway on the outside of the house and lower him through the roof. They protested, but he was inflexible. It was his only chance for health and he would not give it up until everything had been tried. So at length they consented, and, in the midst of a sentence the teacher was interrupted dramatically; the sick man lay helpless at his feet. Jesus stopped and bent down, taking the flabby hand in his firm grasp; his face was lighted with a wonderful smile. "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee," he said.

"Rise, take up thy bed and walk." The sick man was stupefied. "Walk!" He had never expected to walk again. Didn't this stranger understand that he had been bedridden for years? Was this some sort of cruel jest to make him the laughing-stock of the crowd? A bitter protest rushed to his lips; he started to speak and then halting himself, he looked up — up to the calm assurance of those eyes, the supple strength of those muscles, the ruddy skin that testified to the rich red blood beneath — and the healing occurred! It was as though health poured out of that strong body into the weak one like electric current from a dynamo. The invalid felt the blood quicken in his palsied limbs; a faint flush crept into his thin drawn cheeks; almost involuntarily he tried

to rise and found to his joy that he could!

"Walk!" Do you suppose for one minute that a weakling, uttering that syllable, would have produced any result? If the Jesus who looked down on that pitiful wreck had been the Jesus of the painters, the sick man would have dropped back with a scornful sneer and motioned his friends to carry him out. But the health of the teacher was irresistible; it seemed to cry out, "Nothing is impossible, if only your will power is strong enough." And the man who so long ago had surrendered to despair, rose and gathered up his bed and went away, healed — like hundreds of others in Galilee — by strength from an overflowing fountain of strength.

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One day later, as Jesus walked in a crowd, a woman pushed forward and touched his garment; and by that single touch was cured. The witnesses acclaimed it a miracle and so it was; but we need some definition of that word. He himself was very reticent about his "miracles." It is perfectly clear that he did not interpret them in the same way that

his followers did, not attach the same importance to them. He was often reluctant to perform them, and frequently insisted that the individual who had been healed should "go and tell no man." And on one celebrated occasion — his visit to his home town Nazareth — the narrative tells us clearly that the miraculous power was powerless, and for a very interesting and impressive reason. The people of Nazareth were his boyhood acquaintances and they were skeptical; they had heard with cynical scorn the stories of the wonders he had performed in other towns; they were determined not to be fooled; he might deceive the world, which knew him only as a teacher; but they knew him better—he was just Jesus, their old neighbor, the son of the local carpenter. So of that visit the gospel writers set down one of the most tragic sentences in literature. "He could do there no mighty work," they tell us, "because of their unbelief." Whatever the explanation of his miraculous power may be, it is clear that something big was required of the recipient as well as the giver. Without a belief in health on the part of the sick man, no health was forthcoming. And no man could have inspired that

belief unless his own health and strength were so perfect as to make even the impossible seem easy.

Men followed him, and the leaders of men have very often been physically strong. But women worshiped him. This is significant. The names of women constitute a very large proportion of the list of his close friends.

They were women from widely varying stations in life, headed by his mother. Perhaps she never fully appreciated his genius; certainly she was not without her periods of serious doubt as we shall discover later on; yet her loyalty to his best interests, as she conceived them, remained true, and she stood tearful but unwavering at the foot of the cross. There were Mary and Martha, two gentle maiden ladies who lived outside Jerusalem and in whose home with Lazarus, their brother, he enjoyed frequent hospitality; there was Joanna, a rich woman, the wife of one of Herod's stewards — these, and many others of the type which we are accustomed to designate as "good" women, followed him with a devotion which knew no weariness or fear.

The important, and too often forgotten, fact in these relationships is this — that women are not drawn by weakness. The sallow-faced, thin-lipped, so-called spiritual type of man may awaken maternal instinct, stirring an emotion which is half regard, half pity. But since the world began no power has fastened the affection of women upon a man like manliness. The men who have been women's men in the finest sense, have been the vital, conquering figures of history.

The other sort of women came into contact with him, too — women of less fortunate experience and reputation — whose illusions regarding men were gone, whose eyes saw piercingly, and whose lips were well-versed in phrases of contempt. As he taught in the temple, one of them was hurried into his presence by a vulgar crowd of self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees. She had been taken in the act of infidelity, and according to the Mosaic law — she could be stoned to death. Shrinking, embarrassed, yet with a look in which defiance and scorn were mingled too, she stood in his presence, and listened while their unclean lips played with the story of her

shame. What thoughts must have raced through her mind — she who knew men and despised them all, and now was brought to judgment before a man! They were all alike, in her philosophy; what would this one do and say?

To her amazement, and the discomfiture of her critics, he said nothing. He "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." They craned their necks to see what he wrote and continued to taunt him with their questions: "Moses says stone her; what do you say?" "Come now, if you are a prophet, here's a matter for you to decide." "We found her in the house of So and So. She is guilty; what's your answer?"

All this time he had not once looked at the woman's face, and he did not look at her now. Slowly he "lifted himself up," and facing the evil-minded pack, said quietly: "He who is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her." And again, says the narrative, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. A painful silence fell upon the crowd; he continued writing. Writing what? Some have ventured the

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conjecture that he traced names of people and places that brought a blush of shame to men in that crowd. That may be so, but it is more impressive to think that he wrote nothing of significance; that he merely busied his finger in the sand, not to add to her discomfiture by looking in her eyes. He wrote—and one by one the thick-lipped champions of morality drew their garments around them and slipped away, until the court was empty except for him and her. Then, and only then, his glance was lifted. "Woman, where are your accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" he inquired, as if in surprise.

Amazed at the sudden turn of affairs she could hardly find her voice. "No man, Lord," she murmured. "Neither do I condemn thee," he answers simply. "Go, and sin no more." From the moment when the noisy vulgar throng had broken in upon him, he was complete master of the situation. Those were men not easily abashed, but they slunk out of his presence without waiting for his command. And she, who knew men so much more truly than men ever know each other, felt his mastery, responded to his power, and spoke to him reverently as "Lord."

All his days were spent in the open air — this is the third outstanding testimony to his strength. On the Sabbath he was in the synagogue because that was where the people were gathered; but by far the greater part of his teaching was done on the shores of his lake, or in the cool recesses of the hills. He walked constantly from village to village; his face was tanned by the sun and wind. Even at night he slept outdoors, when he could — turning his back on the hot walls of the city and slipping away into the healthful freshness of the Mount of Olives. He was the type of outdoor man whom our modern thought most admires; and the vigorous activities of his days gave his nerves the strength of steel.

Napoleon said that he had met few men with courage of the “two o’clock in the morning variety.” Many men can be brave in the warmth of the sun and amid the heartening plaudits of the crowd; but to be wakened suddenly out of sound sleep, and then to exhibit instant mastery — that is the type of courage which is rare indeed. Jesus had that courage, and no man ever needed it more. In the last year of his public work the forces of opposition took on a form and coherency whose significance was perfectly clear. If he refused to retreat or to compromise, there could be but one end to his career. He knew they would kill him, and he knew how they would kill him. More than once in his journeys he had passed the victims of the justice of that day, writhing, tortured beings nailed to crosses and waiting piteously for release. Sometimes they wilted for days before the end. The memory of such sights must have been constantly with him; at every sunset he was conscious that he had walked just one day nearer to his own ordeal. Yet he never faltered. Calmly, cheerfully he went forward, cheering the spirits of his disciples, and striking those fiery blows against hypocrisy and oppression which were to be echoed by the hammer blows upon his cross.

And when the soldiers came to arrest him, they found him ready and still calm. The week of his trial and crucifixion takes up a large portion of the gospels. For that week alone we can follow him almost hour by hour; we know where he ate and slept, what he said and to whom; we can trace the gathering storm of fury which finally bore him down. And this is the magnificent thing to remember — that through all that long torture of imprisonment, court trials, midnight hearings, scourgings, loss of food and loss of sleep, he never once ceased to be the

Master. His accusers were determined. They thronged the courtyard before the palace, clamoring for his blood, yet even they felt a momentary awe when he appeared before them on the balcony.

Even Pilate felt it. The two men offered a strange contrast standing there—the Roman governor whose lips were so soon to speak the sentence of death, and the silent, self-possessed ex-carpenter—accused and doomed—yet bearing himself with so much majesty, as though he were somehow beyond the reach of man-made law, and safe from the hurt of its penalties. In the face of the Roman were deep unpleasant lines; his cheeks were fatty with self-indulgence; he had the colorless look of indoor living. The straight young man stood inches above him, bronzed and hard, and clean as the air of his loved mountain and lake. Pilate raised his hand; the shouting and the tumult died; a deathly stillness descended upon the crowd. He turned and faced the figure at his side, and from his coarse lips there burst a sentence which is a truer portrait than any painter has ever given us. The involuntary testimony of the flabby cynical Roman in the presence of perfect strength, perfect assurance, perfect calm:

“Behold,” he cried, “the man!”

The Urantia Papers — The Fifth Epochal Revelation — provides us this additional, and revelatory, information:

“Indeed, the fear-ridden Roman governor little dreamed that at just that moment the universe stood at attention, gazing upon this unique scene of its beloved Sovereign thus subjected in humiliation to the taunts and blows of his darkened and degraded mortal subjects. And as Pilate spoke, there echoed throughout all Nebadon, “Behold God and man!” Throughout a universe, untold millions have ever since that day continued to behold that man, while the God of Havona, the supreme ruler of the universe of universes, accepts the man of Nazareth as the satisfaction of the ideal of the mortal creatures of this local universe of time and space. In his matchless life he never failed to reveal God to man. Now, in these final episodes of his mortal career and in his subsequent death, he made a new and touching revelation of man to God.”

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“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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