

Spiritual Fellowship Journal

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The Spiritual Fellowship of Students of *The Urantia Book*

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

Guiding Principles¹

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

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

The Purpose of Religious Institutions is to:

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

Religious Institutions Should Avoid Dangers, Such As:

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

Central Objective

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

Such an institution would be “a gathering of persons who have accepted a common purpose, and a common discipline to guide the pursuit of that purpose, to the end that each involved person reaches higher fulfillment as a person, through *servicing and being served* by the common venture, than would be achieved alone or in a less committed relationship.”²

¹ See U. B. p. 966

² Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, Paulist Press, New York, 1977, p. 237.

**The Spiritual Fellowship
Journal**

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Editorials

New Religious Movements

Religions usually evolve around charismatic or prophetic personalities. When religious sentiments and practices achieve indigenous group identity and institutionalization in a society it becomes a permanent part of that culture. The theology, polity, and practice of a religion may undergo change over the years but it maintains its historic identity. Never has a new and advanced religious paradigm won over the power structure of the older religions.

The history of religion has many illustrations of the failure of reform movements to transform older religious traditions. The founder of Jainism, Mahavira, and the originator of Buddhism, Gautama, both started their teachings in an attempt to reform Hinduism, not start a new religion. Nanak, the architect of Sikhism, made yet another attempt to restructure Hinduism which would also include the followers of Islam. His message was "There is no Muslim and there is no Hindu." Nanak's teaching attracted both Hindus and Muslims.

There is a charming legend about his death. As Nanak was about to die his Hindu and Muslim followers had a dispute about disposing of his remains. Nanak, in an attempt to resolve the controversy, asked each group to place flowers beside him and the group whose flowers were still fresh could dispose of his body. When both factions agreed, Nanak covered himself with a sheet and during the night died. The next morning both sets of flowers were fresh, but the body of Nanak was gone. The result of Nanak's reform efforts is that neither Hinduism or Islam was changed but a new religion was born.

Jesus tried to up-step Judaism, and his followers started as a sect of Judaism, but in order to continue teaching their enlarged spiritual message they were forced to do so as a separate organization that became known as Christianity. Bahauallah attempted religious and social reforms in Islam but was imprisoned and executed, resulting in the formation of the Baha'i religion. Historic attempts to up-step religions have ended in failure. It is the nature of human society to resist change. Thomas S. Kuhn, in his classic book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, observes that considerable time elapses between the breakdown of a scientific paradigm and the emergence of a new orientation. And, he points out, the originators of the new paradigm are either very young or very new to the field where the new discoveries are made. Indoctrination and tradition seem to inhibit creative innovation.

This phenomenon of resistance to change applies to epochal revelations. All of the former epochal revelations have met with obstacles. The Fifth Epochal Revelation is experi-

encing some of the same difficulties. The Midwayer sponsors of *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* appear to be attempting to upstep Christianity. During the past forty years I have tried to get Christian theologians and ministers to seriously examine *The Urantia Book* with virtually no success. Even those ministers who recognize its quality and use its teachings do so covertly. It is clear that any religious organization stemming out of the Fifth Epochal Revelation will be a new religious organization. There obviously will be numerous such organizations in the centuries ahead. Hopefully, such organizations and institutions in their theology, polity, and practice will benefit from the spiritual wisdom of the Urantia Papers. During these early years of development preceding the advent of new religious organizations the mission of this Journal is to *Promote Theological, Philosophical, and Polity Discussions Germane to An Appropriate Symbolism and Socioreligious Expression of the Fifth Epochal Revelation*. Hopefully, these discussions will contribute to the spiritual wisdom that will be available when these new religious organizations make their appearance.

-MJS

No Credible Theology

Dr. Robert T. Osborn, professor emeritus of religion at Duke University, in an article, "The Possibility of Theology Today," (*Theology Today*, January, 1999) says that contemporary theology has lost its credibility — "it has lost contact with ultimate foundations." (p. 562) In our postmodern world "Religious studies has no interest in theology at all, for theology is without foundation." (p. 567) In the new pseudo theology of today, one must be "politically correct." It is time, Osborn declares, for theology to "say something foundational." (p. 568) But, he observes, Christology is a problem. In Trinitarian terms, theologians prefer to speak of God the Creator or of God the Holy Spirit.

In all of this theological confusion and anguish, students of *The Urantia Book* will recognize that the Most Highs are preparing our world for a new religious-theological paradigm. As Osborn's comment suggests, the religion *about Jesus* has become a stumbling block for the religion of Jesus: the Fatherhood of God and the brother/sisterhood of humankind. There is a general subliminal recognition that the religious cosmology of the Middle Ages and the prescientific theology of much of Christianity and the other religions of the world no longer speak creatively to the contemporary mind and soul.

We are experiencing the gestation of the enlarged spiritual vision of the Fifth Epochal Revelation in our society. The birth pangs of this new vision of spiritual Reality will extend well into the next century. But students of the Urantia Papers can live in its liberating message in the here and how!

-MJS

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Theology vs. Spirituality

Theology is the discipline of explaining faith. It often results in the intellectualization of faith. When theology masters religion, religion becomes more of a form than a force. The force and power of religion is its spirituality — its communication and mediation of truth, beauty, goodness, and love. Interest in spirituality is at an all time high in our society. “Spirituality in the U.S. is a mile wide and an inch deep,” says David Kinnaman of the Barna Research Group. “But”, he comments, “people are beginning to develop a hybrid personal faith that integrates different perspectives from different religions that may even be contradictory.” People today hunger for a fresh and dynamic infusion of spirituality. The power of the *Urantia Papers* is their ability to communicate a fresh vision of spirituality along with a new paradigm of reality that has superior rational credibility.

I was recently impressed with the ability of an individual holding a deficient and outmoded theology to present a powerful vision of spirituality. Philip D. Yancey in his book *What’s So Amazing About Grace?* (Zondervan, 1997) imparts a remarkably effective vision of spirituality in our day. Philip Yancey serves as Editor-at-large for *Christianity Today*. He was raised as a racist in a Southern fundamentalist church. Today Yancey’s theology is that of an evangelical Christian which most mainline Christians and students of *The Urantia Book* would find wanting.

In spite of his obsolete theology, Yancey gives an insightful and courageous picture of truth, beauty, goodness, and love applied to contemporary religion and society. He speaks more from the religion of Jesus than from the religion about Jesus. Readers of *The Urantia Book* will find many parallel concepts in his writing — such as the separation of religious organizations from secular alliances. “Politics, which always runs by the rules of ungrace, allures us to trade away grace for power, a temptation the church has often been unable to resist.” (p. 211) Yancey shows that the church is often a major obstacle to spirituality. It is refreshing to find such insights in evangelical Christianity.

-MJS

Contemporary Theology Anticipates *The Urantia Book*

The central theme of the articles in the October, 1998 issue of *Theology Today* is God’s relation to time and the finite creation. Theological discussion on this topic is effectively summarized by William R. Stoeger, S.J. in “God and Time: The Action and Life of the Triune God in the World.”

Stoeger opens his article by saying, “How to describe God’s action in the world in a coherent and acceptable Spring, 1999

way — faithful to the sources of revelation and at the same time understandable in the light of our scientific knowledge of creation — is the central question confronting theology today.” (p. 365) The principle contributors to this discussion in the last forty years are: Karl Barth, Claude Welch, Karl Rahner, Eberhard Jüngel, Jürgen Moltmann, Robert W. Jenson, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Catherine La Cugna, Duane Larson, and Ted Peters. (p. 373)

Stoeger observes, “We must affirm that creation is not yet complete — and in some sense, from our point of view, God is not complete — God is not yet all in all.” (p. 376) We see here contemporary theology anticipating the concepts of God the Supreme, God the Ultimate, and God the Absolute. “But,” he points out, “much more is needed. In particular, we need an adequate metaphysical framework that can serve to make these notions more precise and to relate them more formally with one another and to the full range of our experience. Using this flexible metaphysical framework, we must then model more precisely and carefully the relationship of the divine persons to one another and to created reality on different levels...” (p. 376)

Here Stoeger is expressing the need for a cosmological and creational framework that we have in the Fifth Epochal Revelation. He goes on to express the need for improved models of the Trinity and God’s relationship to the finite universe. He asks, “What is the destiny of each person and entity? What is the destiny of the universe as a whole?” (p. 387) The article concludes, “The Trinity continues to act among us as the ultimate ground and existential context of the universe — in a very profound yet hidden way — drawing us together with all creation to fulfillment in the Trinity’s own life. This is the mystery of God and time that embraces us and all things.” (p. 388)

If theologians were open enough to seriously examine a new paradigm of reality, *The Urantia Book*, they might just find what they are so diligently looking for! But they are put off by its esoteric appearance and further alienated by the purport of “new revelation.” Some day the light will dawn — even on theologians!

-MJS

“Christianity suffers under a great handicap because it has become identified in the minds of all the world as a part of the social system, the industrial life, and the moral standards of Western civilization; and thus has Christianity unwittingly seemed to sponsor a society which staggers under the guilt of tolerating science without idealism, politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without restraint, knowledge without character, power without conscience, and industry without morality.” p. 2086:6

Interface

Worship and the Urantia Community

As many in the Urantia movement consider and begin to work toward new forms of religious structure and community, there will no doubt be many different approaches. As a pastor in a mainline denomination for over 30 years, I'm constantly reminded of the diversity of the churches. That includes being embarrassed by, and at times ashamed of, the lack of unity in essential matters of the Spirit, and the contention and competition that often creeps into relations among churches, even within the same denomination.

Many in the Urantia community would like to avoid the obvious pitfalls of such diversity, and show the world a more unified spirit and common understanding on behalf of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Many, including myself, hesitate to venture too quickly into this new future for fear of adopting too easily and uncritically models we have grown comfortable with. We would like to see new and fresh models — “new wineskins” — in which to express our faith.

At the same time, I'm aware of some profound strengths in the community that gave me spiritual birth and sustenance. Despite all the more obvious imperfections of the community that one well known church leader once called “that fractious gang of adolescents,” there are some transcendent graces that regularly appear.

One of them is in worship. How pedestrian, pretentious, or just plain awkward, is so much of what we do. I'm convinced that 90% of the people 90% of the time would, in a heartbeat, trade real soul searching, Spirit led, and God conscious worship for entertainment. And yet, how often have I been surprised by grace, and ushered into a sense of the transcendent within the framework of a common liturgy. There is something to being a part of a community at worship that ushers us into the presence of God, if we come to it, and work at it, with any real sincerity and humility. It indeed often seems to come in spite of our efforts, rather than as a result. God's Spirit both leads us and enables us to worship, and the practice of the presence of God here on earth surely foreshadows the divine worship and true “Holy Communion” that so captivates the souls of all creatures in the higher realms.

Because it is so important, we would do well to listen for insights from the historic Christian community, even as we seek new avenues for expression. In the past year I've read, and re-read many parts of, a book on worship by Marva Dawn entitled, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*.¹ It is an analysis of worship in our contemporary culture and the idolatries and popular misconceptions that “dumb down” and numb our capacity for transcendent worship.

It is, in my opinion, the most insightful and helpful book on worship I've ever read. Most of its basic affirmations mirror those of *The Urantia Book*. I think this is a resource for dialogue with the best insights of the Christian tradition, a tradition whose treasures should not be ignored. I urge every *Urantia Book* reader to enter into that dialogue, and to use Marva Dawn's book as one of the resources.

-Merlyn Cox

¹ Dawn, Marva J. *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 1995*

Psalms Today

Beyond Tradition and Orthodoxy

Save us, Supreme Teacher, from the pride of learning, the arrogance of theological elitism, and the self-righteousness of tradition and orthodoxy.

Teach us to be mindful that your ways are open to the humble and the unlearned, but are often hidden by the self-interests of the proud, the affluent, and the sophisticated.

Enlighten our realization that even though intellectual comprehension may be partial or erroneous, understanding of spiritual truth may be real and genuine.

Your truth, Universal Father, cannot be imprisoned in creeds, dogmas, or theological treatise, but flows freely through living personalities.

The static forms of intellectualism fossilize your living and growing revelation of truth; but propohets in each generation advance the understanding of your progressive plan for humankind.

Deliver us, Supreme Teacher, from confusing political and economic action for the more basic spiritual transformation and dedication which is the foundation block of social justice.

Save our religious fellowships, Heavenly Father, from secular entanglements that they may have a clear vision of your will and way and proclaim your goals and objectives for humankind.

Undergird and guide them as they spiritually sustain and nourish those who labor in the vineyards of the world, that your will may increasingly be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Creative Outreach

Scientist Intrigued by *The Urantia Book*

“If something has become a religion in your experience, it is self-evident that you already have become an active evangel of that religion since you deem the supreme concept of your religion as being worthy of the worship of all mankind, all universe intelligences. If you are not a positive and missionary evangel of your religion, you are self-deceived in that what you call a religion is only a traditional belief or a mere system of intellectual philosophy.” (U. B., p.1780)

Dr. Sprunger began an energetic and programmed outreach to Christian ministerial colleagues decades ago. Such an appeal to individuals with degrees and professional expertise, for most of us lay persons, is out of the question. How can we hope to interest a professor or a professional religionist in the Urantia Papers? However, we should keep in mind that the Urantia Papers refer to Jesus as a layperson, and makes the comment that “ the world’s greatest religious teacher was indeed a layman.” (p. 2091)

J.J. Johnson of Phoenix recently achieved an important break-through by introducing the Urantia Papers to Dr. Mark A. S. McMenamin, a professor of Geology at Holyoke College. Because Johnson made a direct written appeal to this open-minded scientist, *The Urantia Book* received a favorable, if qualified, acknowledgement in several pages of a recent book by Dr. McMenamin. The professor generally lauded *The Urantia Book*’s early presentation of a continental drift theory, a presentation far advanced from the ideas of Wegener, who first proposed continental drift. McMenamin is noted for his ground-breaking discoveries, and his latest mainstream book: *The Garden of Ediacara*,¹ is published by the prestigious Columbia University Press.

J.J. Johnson of Phoenix recently achieved an important break-through by introducing the Urantia Papers to Dr. Mark A. S. McMenamin, a professor of Geology at Holyoke College. Because Johnson made a direct written appeal to this open-minded scientist, The Urantia Book received a favorable, if qualified, acknowledgement in several pages of a recent book by Dr. McMenamin.

An exchange of letters between Johnson and Dr. McMenamin was set into motion when Johnson spotted an article on one of the professor’s geological finds in the Phoenix newspaper. As a result, McMenamin examined the material in the Urantia Papers and agreed it was far ahead of its time, even allowing for the publication date of 1955. A few excerpts from Dr. McMenamin’s book, *The Garden of*

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Ediacara:

“Clearly we are not dealing here with an orthodox scientific treatise. Nevertheless, the anonymous members of the Urantia Corps hit on some remarkable scientific revelations in the mid-1930’s. They embraced continental drift at a time when it was decidedly out of vogue in the scientific community. They recognized the presence of a global supercontinent (Rodinia) and superocean (Mirovia), in existence on earth before Pangea.” (p. 174)

Another excerpt:

“Of course I am being selective here in my choice of quotations, and there are reams of scientifically untenable material in *The Urantia Book*. However, the concept of a billion-year-old supercontinent (the currently accepted age for the formation of Rodinia) that subsequently split apart, forming gradually widening ocean basins in which early marine life flourished, is unquestionably present in this book.

“Orthodox scientific arguments for such a proposal did not appear until the late 1960s, and a pre-Pangea supercontinent was never described until Valentine and Moores made the attempt in 1970. The Urantia Corps not only had the age of the formation of Rodinia approximately correct at 1 billion years, but they also were first to link breakup of Rodinia to the emergence of animals.... Furthermore, they even got the timing of that approximately correct at 650 to 600 million years ago (‘These inland seas of olden times were truly the cradle of evolution’)... one wonders how *The Urantia Book* authors arrived at the concept of a Proterozoic supercontinent, and the link between breakup of this supercontinent and the emergence of complex life in the ensuing rift oceans, 30 years before most geologists accepted continental drift and nearly four decades before scientists had any inkling that Rodinia existed.” (p. 174-5)

“I am not advocating an abandonment of a disciplined scientific peer review process, but I can’t help but wonder whether science would benefit by having scientists themselves or friends of science systematically scan the various nonscientific literatures for writings such as those appearing in The Urantia Book. Scientists would ordinarily ignore and dismiss such writings, but a discerning eye might pick up some gems.” (p. 176)

However, perhaps the key paragraph in Dr. McMenamin’s presentation is this one:

“I am not advocating an abandonment of a disciplined scientific peer review process, but I can’t help but wonder whether science would benefit by having scientists themselves or friends of science systematically scan the various nonscientific literatures for writings such as those appearing in *The Urantia Book*. Scientists would ordinarily ignore and

Spiritual Support Group, cont.

dismiss such writings, but a discerning eye might pick up some gems.” (p. 176)

It should be noted here that the Urantia Papers state on page 1109: “We full well know that, while the historic facts and religious truths of this series of revelatory presentations will stand on the records of the ages to come, within a few short years many of our statements regarding the physical sciences will stand in need of revision in consequence of additional scientific developments and new discoveries.” A reasonable question might arise here as to whether geologic history is possibly a kind of historic fact, especially since it appears in the Papers under Part III: “The History of Urantia.” Regardless of this, however, a precedent has been set, and the door is left open for additional dialogue.

There are other areas of Dr. McMenamín’s book that seek answers and impinge upon the information that could be supplied in *The Urantia Book*. These include the puzzle of parallel evolution: How could the precisely same evolutionary traits appear in species that were widely separated by environment? Dr. McMenamín postulates that evolution may have been largely determined by internally driven factors intrinsic to the species themselves, and only moderately adaptive to environment. This idea, of course, is presented in *The Urantia Book*.

It is unfortunate that Martin Gardner did not have a balanced evaluation of the science in *The Urantia Book* and completely ignored the authors’ observation that the science of the Papers would soon need to be revised. Now there is a fresh opportunity to reach scientists, especially those who would like the benefit of some insightful *Urantia Book* “gems.”

-Larry Mullins

¹ McMenamín, Mark A. S. *The Garden of Ediacara*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

“The great challenge to modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Monitor that dwells within the human mind. Man’s greatest adventure in the flesh consists in the well-balanced and sane effort to advance the borders of self-consciousness out through the dim realms of embryonic soul-consciousness in the wholehearted effort to reach the border land of spirit-consciousness—contact with the divine presence.” p. 2097:2

Disseminating the Teachings

Richard S. Omura

Disseminating the teaching of the Fifth Epochal Revelation is a *spiritual* mission, a calling of love and dedication. This mission can be undertaken by spiritually motivated individuals and religious organizations. History demonstrates that only religious organizations, institutional religion, is effective in infusing spiritual teachings into civilization and culture. The Urantia Foundation and *The Urantia Book* Fellowship, by their own admission, are not spiritual organizations. Promoting *The Urantia Book* and organizing study groups may be laying the foundations for bona fide religious organizations, but the Urantia movement at present is lacking a religious organization dedicated to disseminating the teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation throughout the world.

The Search for a Spiritual Organization

The salient message of *The Urantia Book* is spiritual. And yet there are no representative groups or organizations that have established spiritual unity among *Urantia Book* readers/believers based on the teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Readers/believers hunger for group spiritual expression founded on the teachings they believe in. Nature abhors a vacuum. When there were no such avenues of group spiritual expression, one evolved: the Teaching Mission. But this spontaneous phenomena does not appeal to the bulk of *Urantia Book* readers and believers, and is not a bona fide religious organization, and so the vacuum to a large degree is unfilled.

History demonstrates that only religious organizations, institutional religion, is effective in infusing spiritual teachings into civilization and culture.

Various people in the Urantia movement have had visions of starting a “Urantia Church,” and the mission statement of *The Spiritual Fellowship Journal* is “To Promote Theological, Philosophical, and Polity Discussions Germane to An Appropriate Symbolism and Socioreligious Expression of the Fifth Epochal Revelation,” but we are still lacking a spiritual organization dedicated to disseminating the teachings of *The Urantia Book* throughout the world. Even though there are substantial dangers in institutionalizing these teachings, it is still a mighty force that must be used for the spiritual awakening and mobilization of the people on our world.

How will this spiritual vacuum in the Urantia movement be filled? Is it better to wait for religious organizations to evolve haphazardly or is it better to accumulate group wisdom and experiential insights augmented with information given to us by the Fifth Epochal Revelation in this process? Will our religious organizations be created like the cities of the old world, with a structure that is based on a random set of circumstances, or will it be like some of the cities in the United States that were planned and laid out with care?

We know that religious organization cannot be “created” but must evolve in our society. Socialized religion must evolve, as does individual religion; however, this does not preclude intelligent planning and wise preparation. A plant grows naturally, but it does grow better with proper cultivation and nurturing. And so should a socialized religion be nurtured among readers and cultivated to produce the healthiest fruits.

Marketing The Urantia Book is important, just as distributing Bibles was important in the development of Christianity. But selling books is quite different than the spiritual mission of teaching its concepts and values that will transform lives and eventually our entire society.

Marketing *The Urantia Book* is important, just as distributing Bibles was important in the development of Christianity. But selling books is quite different than the spiritual mission of teaching its concepts and values that will transform lives and eventually our entire society. There are and have been many admirable efforts at selling the words. These efforts are worthy and necessary, but I wonder, when is anybody going to start spreading the teachings?

Hands-On Experience

If I wanted to teach carpentry in a land where carpentry is non-existent, I may at first want to publish a book on carpentry. But the art of carpentry will not flourish unless carpenters go out there and actually give hands-on experience on how it is to be done. Right now we have a group that publishes the book, the Urantia Foundation, and we have other groups that socialize people who have read that book; i.e., *The Urantia Book* Fellowship and the International Urantia Association. Who is there to actually do the hands-on spiritual training?

Let’s look at it in another way. Just imagine that all *The Urantia Books* were suddenly destroyed, how would we begin to spread its teachings? It’s similar to what the apostles went through after Jesus went back home to our Father. They only had themselves to rely on. Even if Jesus had lived to a ripe old age in Nazareth, do you think he would have wanted the apostles going to the far ends of the earth saying, “You’ve got to go talk to the Master” (“You’ve got to read *The Urantia Book*”)? The idea is ludicrous. Jesus wanted them to teach and minister to those they met personally, according to their understanding of his gospel.

The idea is not to sell the book or to sell Jesus. The idea is to personally minister to others in our own words and through our own spiritual experience. Certainly the Bible, *The Urantia Book*, and other inspirational materials can be major sources of help in this ministry. We can engage in this mission as individuals or as a group. We can “pull on the rope of service” one at a time or we can pull in unison. Obviously, we are more effective when we pull in unison. Spring, 1999

And that means we need a unified, spiritual organization.

Spiritual evolution is a Supreme force in the universe. Negative attitudes and actions against spiritual growth will not prevail. The only thing that can prevent spiritual growth from happening is the free will choice of individuals. Conversely, spiritual growth can be enhanced by a supportive, spiritual organization, where as a group, we can engage in unselfish service, enlightened prayer, and loving worship. Such a religious organization can assist the individual in making wise choices and giving support in loving service.

Institutional Religion

The institutionalization of any religion is absolutely vital to its survival. “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) There have been various individuals and groups interested in forming a Urantia Church. The fear among some students of *The Urantia Book* that a Urantia Church would become a dogmatic, crystalized organization is highly unlikely if done according to the insights given us through *The Urantia Book*. *The Urantia Book* on page 1092 gives us wonderful guidelines on what to strive for and what to avoid in socializing a religion. I believe a certain amount of imagination, inventiveness, and purpose must go into guiding and nurturing the natural birth of this new socialized religion.

Creating religious organizations in the Urantia movement is not the same as creating a new religion. A new paradigm of religion based on the Fifth Epochal Revelation has already evolved in the hearts and minds of students of *The Urantia Book*. It needs to be integrated into a viable socialized religion. This new socialized religion will not be perfect. Even with whatever safeguards we can create to protect it from the dangers of institutional religion, it may degrade and crystallize in time, but hopefully not until it has transformed our civilization and culture.

A new paradigm of religion based on the Fifth Epochal Revelation has already evolved in the hearts and minds of students of The Urantia Book. It needs to be integrated into a viable socialized religion.

This new socialized religion based on the Fifth Epochal Revelation will initiate a new religious movement in the world. The Urantia Foundation will have as much power over it as do Bible publishers over Christian churches— none. The Fellowship will also cease to have an organic function in this new religious movement, unless it turns itself into such a spiritual organization. Some of the Fellowship Societies are already moving in this direction. It would be inspiring, in my opinion, to change the Fellowship mission statement to reflect “the real purpose in the socialization of religion” stated on page 1092.

Disseminating the Teachings, cont.

When such a spiritual organization is inaugurated, a new era in the dissemination of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* will have begun. It will be an era when the concepts themselves will come before the book. And living the teachings will come before the concepts. It will be a time when the spiritual messages in the book will begin to hold sway in the souls of the mortals of Urantia.

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But we're not there yet. Many of us are still mired in negative thinking—how something or someone is trying to block off our avenues of spiritual outreach. That idea is a myth. Pure fantasy! Spiritual outreach cannot be effectively halted by opposition or laws. The avenue before us lies wide open. It is time we use our intelligence, our courage, our love, our wisdom and all the resources at our command to cultivate a spiritual organization that will fulfill the highest purposes of a socialized religion without succumbing to its dangers. The question that needs answering is *not*, “Can we do it?” This planet will undergo spiritual growth with us or without us. The question is, “Who will help?”

If you are willing to help, let us begin to think about the mission statement of *The Spiritual Fellowship Journal*: “To Promote Theological, Philosophical and Polity Discussions Germane to An Appropriate Symbolism and Socioreligious Expression of the Fifth Epochal Revelation.” How can we create an organizational structure that will incorporate “the real purpose of the socialization of religion” along with safeguards that prevent “the dangers of formalized religion?” This is the time for creative and insightful discussion. The seed has already been planted. The sprout will soon break the ground. In time it will need proper nourishment and direction. This is the time to plan with wisdom so that in the “fullness of time” we can act with courage and spiritual insight.

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Meta-Values

The Reality Thermals of the Universe: Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and Love

Larry Mullins

Note: The term “Meta-Values” was coined originally by Abraham Maslow. Dr. Maslow believed a “Science of Values” should be developed, an idea that has yet to be realized. Urantians can readily grasp the concept of Meta-Values, and can use it to improve their ability to live the teachings of the Urantia Papers.

“Truth, Beauty and Goodness form a triad of terms which have been discussed together throughout the tradition of western thought. They have been called ‘transcendental’ on the ground that everything which is, is in some measure or manner subject to denomination as true or false, good or evil, beautiful or ugly. But they have also been assigned to special spheres of being or subject matter—the true to thought and logic, the good to action and morals, the beautiful to enjoyment and aesthetics. They have been called ‘the three fundamental values’ with the implication that the worth of anything can be exhaustively judged by reference to these three standards”¹

“The goal of humanistic studies was defined as the good, the beautiful, and the true....”²

“By experiencing something—such as goodness, truth and beauty—by experiencing nature and culture or, last but not least, by experiencing another human being in his uniqueness—by loving him.... by love we are enabled to see the essential traits and features of the beloved person; and even more, to see that which is potential in him; which is not yet actualized but which ought to be actualized”³

“The concept of truth might possibly be entertained apart from personality, the concept of beauty may exist without personality, but the concept of divine goodness is understandable only in relation to personality. Only a person can love and be loved. Even beauty and truth would be divorced from survival hope if they were not attributes of a personal God, a loving Father.... Truth, beauty, and goodness are divine realities, and as man ascends the scale of spiritual living, these supreme qualities of the Eternal become increasingly co-ordinated and unified in God, who is love.”⁴

Meta-Values and How They Can Change Your Life

Understanding how to work with Meta-Value energies can be as important as anything a Urantian will ever learn. Meta-Values can continuously point you in the right direction, ceaselessly inspire growth choices, and unfailingly energize you beyond any material force or agency. The concept of Meta-Values is woven throughout the Papers of *The Urantia Book*. Urantian scholars are now pulling together the information and ideas about Meta-Values from the Urantia

Papers, and developing them into pragmatic applications that will change lives.

The four pivotal quotes at the beginning of this article are distilled from over twenty-five years of the study of values and Meta-Values. These quotes deserve careful consideration, for they represent insights of three of the great minds of this century, and they provide a keystone of the evolutionary human knowledge about Meta-Values. This human foundation is enriched and expanded by the revelatory information provided in the Urantia Papers. From this composite of evolutionary knowledge and revelation, the following cascading set of premises of an expanded theory of Meta-Values can be formulated.

1) The transcendental Meta-Values are Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Of these three, Goodness may be said to be most accessible and personal because it relates most clearly to, and can best be understood through, personal relationships.

2) All three Meta-Values may be said to be unified and understood in the ultimate Meta-Value, which is Love.

3) The source of Meta-Values is the Highest Power in the universe, God the Father, who may also best be understood by the concept of Love. Meta-Values — Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Love — in computer jargon may be said to provide deity “bytes” that help make God understandable.

4) God is contactable within our minds and hearts as the Thought Adjuster. We draw upon his energy and insight most readily by means of exercising our highest and most enlightened skills of Meta-Value recognition. These recognition skills are directly related to our maturity, and become increasingly effective as we make circle-progress, or “actualize.”

5) It is by means of these Meta-Value insights that we are set free in the inner life to use our visionary creative skills to the highest degree, limited only by our faith.

6) Creative imagination, energized and inspired by Meta-Values, is the tool by which your mind and your will may visualize and propose a better life, and set into motion the mental and physical processes for achieving it.

7) Your ultimate human freedom is the incontestable right you have to choose your own attitudes when confronted by any given situation. Meta-Values facilitate greater insight and perspective so that you can make and act out, in the face of any other alternative, choices of growth and freedom in preference to choices of fear and avoidance. Growth choices are decisions which are completed by means of faith-actions, and faith-actions are activities which in turn move us toward actualization, more life, and higher realities.

Freedom and Responsibility

The seven cascading premises of Meta-Values, when put into action, lead us to what Jesus called a place of spiritual advantage, a condition of freedom and responsibility: freedom, in the sense of sovereignty to choose—and Spring, 1999

responsibility in the sense that we are accountable for our choices. Each of these premises have been demonstrated as viable, and are illustrated in the Urantia Papers as theory, and by means of the authentic life experiences of Jesus of Nazareth. I do not claim this interpretation to be infallible or irrefutable, but rather that it is reasonable and consistent, and it is worthy of careful examination for any Urantian who longs for peace and freedom.

However, Meta-Values may as well not exist for those who do not put them into action. To “come alive” Meta-Values require an expert practitioner who will dare to put them to use. Exactly how do Meta-Values work? How do we apply Meta-Values to our lives?

Three Things are Essential to Activate Meta-Values in Our Lives

1) *Insight*. Insight is the intellectual gateway by which the spiritual energy of Meta-Values enters the mind. We must open our minds to the experience of Meta-Values as realities — not as platitudes, or furniture for our minds. We must perceive values as power-factors with limitless potential. We need a personal, living, growing, inner core of Meta-Values — not the “Sunday morning” values that too many Urantians have in common with many church-goers.

2) *Faith-Action*. We must take Faith-Actions to make Meta-Values visible to others. Even God cannot guide a docked boat or steer a parked car. We must learn to foster wise, balanced growth decisions. Yet we must decide boldly, and know that a decision is never complete until it has been acted out. Viktor Frankl’s precious Meta-Value insights would have never inspired future generations had he not put them into action to defeat the evil of the Nazi death camp. When told her mission in India had helped thousands of people, Mother Teresa replied to the effect that: “If I had never picked up my first diseased and hungry person, and held and comforted him, I would never have picked up thirty-five thousand of them.” Indeed, Faith-Action is the process by which we actualize Meta-Values, or make the reality of Meta-Values visible for others. Faith is a gift from the Highest Power; Faith-Action is the human response to this gift which validates its acceptance. Faith-Action is the wondrous leap Urantians must take into the sublime uncertainty that seems to continually confront us.

3) *Lightness*, or *In the Zone*. To be in the zone means we are poised between Confidence and Compassion. We are actively-centered, or dynamically-balanced. This is a state of energized harmony between meta-action and meta-reflection. This may also be considered a state of great lightness, immeasurable peace, or energized joy. Balance is the platform from which Faith-Action may be launched; integrity is manifested when our actions match our core values. We cannot be “light” and “in the zone” if we carry burdens of guilt, resentment, excessive self regard, and

fear, or are overly concerned about results.

In this article I will offer ideas on the action process, and how to apply the Meta-Value solution to ourselves and our lives. However, I want to go beyond a “call to action.” Many pop psychology books urge us to action, explaining psychological tricks and methods to temporarily “un-paralyze” the will and give it a confidence-booster to enable it to assert itself through action.

The Urantia philosophy concerning Meta-Values is a quest for a permanent healing of our fears, a state of spiritual advantage in which we are poised for active, productive responses to the continuous opportunities and challenges of secular life.

Continuous Operation in “The Zone” of Spiritual Insight

Now let’s examine the three factors by which we set into motion the process of aligning with the Meta-Values that will lift us to this superb state of peace and freedom. These are: Insight, Faith-Action and Lightness. In “The Life and Teachings of Jesus” we have a model of a circle-achieving (or self-actualizing) person as one who is dynamically balanced between compassion for others, or Goodness, and action—the process of the manifestation of the will of the Father through self-actualization.

In other words, we may reasonably define a circle-achieving or self-actualizing person as an individual of both supreme self-confidence and deep sensitivity to the needs of others. Such a person makes courageous growth choices that are modulated with concerns about how these choices will affect others. However, most psychologists who study human potential have estimated that less than two percent of the population may be considered to be self-actualizing. Another three percent are active and aggressive, but lack compassion for others—tending to be ruthless and ends-oriented. We mortals must draw most of our leaders from this five percent composite of people who are confident enough to believe they have something to offer to the world.

About 95% of the general population is essentially reactive, and lack the assertive-conviction to be proactive: to set goals, make plans, and set them into motion. That is, 95% of people are impeded by a lack of belief about their own self-worth, and so they are figuratively “standing around,” waiting for something to happen, while they, as Jesus described, resent and regret the past, whine over the present, and dread the future. The loss of the creative possibilities of non-actualizing people is unimaginable. What is the spiritual solution to this syndrome of self-defeat that has plagued humanity for untold centuries? Indeed, beyond psychology and theory, what are the spiritual deficiencies that cause us to shrink from fulfilling our destinies? Why

does the Will-to-Fail overrun our spiritual goals and crush so many worthy projects and aspirations?

In other words, we may reasonably define a circle-achieving or self-actualizing person as an individual of both supreme self-confidence and deep sensitivity to the needs of others. Such a person makes courageous growth choices that are modulated with concerns about how these choices will affect others.

The Urantia Papers assure us that spiritual insight will yield the answers we need to these questions. More important, spiritual insight will tell us why we, as individuals, generally operate from fear rather than faith. Spiritual insight is a continuous process, a gift that emerges unconsciously, and is most favorably nurtured by one or more of three general activities:

1) *Service to Humankind.* Service done with a loving, wholehearted, and selfless attitude. According to the Urantia Papers, loving service is the shortest, surest path to the place of spiritual advantage that favors spiritual insight. (p. 1000) Such insight emerges effortlessly as we “forget ourselves” in loving, unselfish service, or a noble mission that is more important than self.

2) *Regular, Meditative Prayer.* Spiritual insight can also be facilitated or augmented by means of relaxation and receptivity through meditative prayer. We can also define this activity as a conscious effort to align with the reality-forces of the universe, as described in detail in the Rodan section of the Urantia Papers.

3) *Hitting Bottom.* A peak-experience, at a moment of total despair, has set the stage for a down-grasp of spiritual insight that may lead to a lifetime of dedication to a project or cause that is more important than self.

Regardless of how a spiritual insight occurs, we know that the human will is necessary to capture a spiritual insight and bring it to the material level manifestation or actualization by means of action. Jesus taught the human will-to-do emerges from self-respect, and the conviction that one can do, and that we have something worthwhile to offer. We believe our action will have meaning. When the will-to-do merges with the belief that one-can-do, the composite manifests itself as an assertive drive to be proactive and make something happen. Yet pure assertiveness, regardless of its justification, could ruthlessly overrun and exploit other people, absolving itself by declaring that the “the ends justify the means.” Clearly, assertiveness is a necessary quality, but something else is needed if we are to be aligned with Meta-Values. Jesus saw this clearly: “In bringing men into the kingdom, do not lessen or destroy their self-respect. While overmuch self-respect may destroy proper humility and end in pride, conceit, and arrogance, the loss of self-respect often ends in paralysis of the will.

It is the purpose of this gospel to restore self-respect to those who have lost it and to restrain it in those who have it. Make not the mistake of only condemning the wrongs in the lives of your pupils; remember also to accord generous recognition for the most praiseworthy things in their lives. Forget not that I will stop at nothing to restore self-respect to those who have lost it, and who really desire to regain it.” (p. 1765)

The Will-To-Do—Plus the Will-To-Do Good Things

*True religion demands that we do something. Our In-dwelling Spirit has an ideal plan for our lives. The primary requirements of this plan are loving fellowship and creative action, both of which achieve their highest expression in service. Following the guidance of the spirit is never easy; it pushes us to our limits. Our responsibility is to act; the results are worked out in the divine overcontrol of creative evolution. Eternal truth, transcendent beauty, unceasing goodwill, and boundless love will conquer the world!*⁵

Furthermore assertiveness, even assertiveness of extreme magnitude, is “pulled” into the effective “zone” when it is balanced and modulated by goodness—compassion and respect for others. Assertiveness or aggressiveness, when modulated and orchestrated by an equal measure of benevolence, effectively align an individual with the creative flow of the universe—the Meta-Value energies. However, assertiveness or aggressive acts which lack compassion (or Goodness) may be defined as attempts to bend the reality of the universe to one’s own will and desires. The core motivation for one driven by raw assertiveness is always self-interest usually manifested as power, money, or glory. In a spiritual sense, it is important to understand that “the zone” is best achieved when we are dynamically balanced between compassion and assertiveness. Jesus taught that we acquire this productive dynamic balance by cultivating our weaker characteristic, not by repressing our stronger one. For example, a person who is excessively compassionate and allows himself to be exploited should strive to cultivate assertiveness and enlightened self-interest, rather than seeking to curb his sensitiveness and consideration of others.

Daring deeds, Faith-Actions, are not only feasible, they are necessary to keep in alignment with the flow of energy toward the source of all things.

When I was a young man, I had a different problem. I struggled with my aggressive nature. I tried to curb and stifle it. In later years I learned from the teachings of Jesus that assertiveness and even aggressiveness can be wonderful gifts when modulated with an appropriate degree of compassion for others. What I lacked was a mature, authentic consideration and respect for people. When I learned to cultivate a sincere concern for my fellow children of God, I began to notice an immediate “change” in the attitudes of

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other people toward me. No longer did I feel resisted and hampered at every turn; people began to help me.

The Will-to-Beauty and the Will-to-Goodness

An enlightened will-to-do could be expressed in spiritual terms as the Will-to-Beauty. The enlightened will-to-do is the desire to manifest Beauty, and this is a natural, energetic drive that needs to be orchestrated, not curbed. The Will-to-Beauty is, however, manifested in a material domain.

Assertiveness or aggressiveness, when modulated and orchestrated by an equal measure of benevolence, effectively align an individual with the creative flow of the universe—the Meta-Value energies.

Ends, even beautiful ends, are never justified by flawed means, and the Will-to-Goodness, or compassion for others, is the necessary modulating ingredient for the Will-to-Beauty. Together, the Will-to-Beauty and the Will-to-Goodness synthesize as Love in action, the ultimate zone of dynamic alignment with the Truth of Meta-Values. In this zone we may safely act in virtually complete freedom. Love, the highest reality, may be said to be made visible by means of Faith-Actions.

And yet, when an individual achieves an optimum degree of self-respect and respect for others, from a cosmic perspective she is more than simply “safe.” She is in sync with the cosmic flow of emerging reality of a benevolent universe, and thus creative and immensely effective actions are possible. Life-changing growth decisions can be made and acted out. Daring deeds, Faith-Actions, are not only feasible, they are necessary to keep in alignment with the flow of energy toward the source of all things.

Faith-Actions are dramatic moves that could not be predicted by those who know us, for they are the result of synergy, rather than energy. Energy alone cannot do it. Faith alone, without the works, cannot do it. When the energy and passion of self-respect is aligned with faith, the resulting activity “enters the zone” and achieves harmony and synchronism. Spiritual insight has then become the most powerful and aggressive force on the face of the earth—spiritual drive. This is not an emotional state, but rather a state of unfathomable peace. Spiritual drive is so unimaginably powerful because it is activity that is aligned with the reality factors that drive the universe: Meta-Values.

How We Know We are in the Zone—the “Lightness” Test

How can we Urantians be sure our actions are faith-driven? How can we be certain whether we are operating in sync with the flow of Meta-Values? Fortunately, we have been given an inner, infallible gauge that operates instantly in the inner life. When the world turns gray and “dangerous” and our energies flag, we are out of the zone.

When we are hysterically energetic, and the world seems to obstruct and frustrate everything we try to do, we are too far into aggression and out of the zone. When we feel exploited, drained and used, when we allow our rights to be overrun, we are into an unwise degree of “goodness.” To the extent we experience lightness, self-forgetfulness, timelessness, inexpressible joy and peace, we are in the zone. When doors fly open and remarkable “coincidences” help us, and the world moves aside for us to offer our gift, we are in the zone. Rodan expressed these concepts in these beautiful words:

“Jesus has taught us that God lives in man; then how can we induce man to release these soul-bound powers of divinity and infinity? How shall we induce men to let go of God that he may spring forth to the refreshment of our own souls while in transit outward and then to serve the purpose of enlightening, uplifting, and blessing countless other souls? How best can I awaken these latent powers for good which lie dormant in your souls? One thing I am sure of: Emotional excitement is not the ideal spiritual stimulus. Excitement does not augment energy; it rather exhausts the powers of both mind and body. Whence then comes the energy to do these great things? Look to your Master. Even now he is out in the hills taking in power while we are here giving out energy. The secret of all this problem is wrapped up in spiritual communion, in worship. From the human standpoint it is a question of combined meditation and relaxation. Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit; relaxation determines the capacity for spiritual receptivity. And this interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship.” (p. 1777)

¹ Adler, Mortimer J. “Great Ideas,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1992, p. 49

² Maslow, Abraham. *Values and Peak Experiences*. Arkana, 1994, p. 8

³ Frankl, Viktor. *Man’s Search for Meaning*. Washington Square Press, 1985, pp. 133-134

⁴ *The Urantia Book*, Pathways Edition, 1994, pp. 31 & 43

⁵ Sprunger, Meredith J. *Spiritual Psychology* (p. 97). Wilmette: Jemenon, 1992

This material has been adapted from Chapter 17 of a work in progress by Larry Mullins, The Step Beyond. © Copyright 1998, Larry Mullins, Boulder, CO. Part II of Meta-Values, in the Fall issue of the Journal, will offer an organized system that may be useful in our Urantian pursuit of Truth. Larry Mullins is a consultant in advertising and marketing. He is an editorial consultant to the Journal and author of Immature People with Power and Jesus: God and Man.

The Only Life Worth Living

Rev. Gregory Young

I should like to pose a rhetorical question: “Do you think that the only life worth living is one based on truth and dedicated to loving God and humankind?” Many of us would probably agree that this is a noble ideal. In the light of this ideal, look at your life and bring to mind everything that you are wholeheartedly committed to. What are you really willing to make sacrifices for?

The worthwhile things of our world are the result of the activities of truly committed people, people passionately dedicated to their work, to each other, to beliefs, and causes. Have you ever attempted to do something that your heart wasn’t really into doing? How did it turn out? How well did you do it? It doesn’t really work if we don’t fully consecrate ourselves to doing something. How many of us kind of “dabble around the edges of life,” and don’t make commitments because we feel the personal price we might have to pay is just too high?

The worthwhile things of our world are the result of the activities of truly committed people, people passionately dedicated to their work, to each other, to beliefs, and causes.

In a sense Jesus shows us by his life and tells us in his teachings that the only life worth living is a life lived with passionate commitment. In order to really feel alive you have to first be committed to something. Jesus said that we must be willing to lose our life in order to find it. In other words, it is only as we invest ourselves fully, only when and where we make total commitments that we find the abundant, worthwhile life.

Francis Parkman, the American historian, is an example of amazing commitment. During the greater part of his life he suffered so acutely that he could not work for more than five minutes at a time. Parkman’s eyesight was so wretched that he could only scrawl a few gigantic words on a manuscript at a time, yet he contrived to write twenty magnificent volumes of history! This achievement, obviously, took total commitment for a severely handicapped man. As we observe people like Francis Parkman, we might wonder how various aspects of our life that did not turn out so well might have been changed had we been more committed. We usually get out of life what we put into it.

How many of you have computers in your home? How many of you know how to use them? Now I know that some of you are real computer experts. You have made significant commitments in learning how computers work and have a deep appreciation for what they can do. But many of us kind of “dabble around the edges.” And some of us won’t even venture to turn it on; it is just too intimidating, too difficult we assume. For those of us who have overcome this initial

reluctance and have started using computers, we are amazed how things begin to fall into place. This is true of all of life. It takes courageous commitment to grow in knowledge and achievement.

This necessity of commitment is especially true in spiritual growth. Half-hearted faith and hesitating devotion is unavailing. It is only when we really invest ourselves in faith, in making spiritual realities the centerpiece in our lives that we grow from that experience. How many of us tend to compartmentalize our lives? We worship God on Sunday, but when Monday rolls around we kind of stick the spiritual aspects of our lives in another compartment—that is, until we get into a tough spot.

Authentic spiritual commitment requires us to make spiritual realities an integral part of all of our life and experience. We need not, however, wear religion on our sleeves; but live it in our heart, at the core of our being. Let it be the source and center of who we are; let it guide us and support and strengthen every aspect of our life. When we dedicate ourselves to doing the will of God, when we give God all that we have, then does God make us more than we are. This becomes a wonderful partnership with God that enriches every aspect of our lives.

Commitment in living action becomes persistence. To carry out our commitment we must become persistent in our action. Dogged persistence is the key to accomplishment—which reminds me of a bulldog story. One morning a husband and wife were sitting in their kitchen having their morning cup of coffee looking into their back yard where they kept a couple of large hunting dogs. Their dogs started barking and they took a closer look to see what was causing their dogs to get so excited. They saw a little old bulldog coming down the alley by their yard. The bulldog squeezed himself under the fence into their yard, and immediately their two hunting dogs tore into the little bulldog. After a while the bulldog was able to crawl back under the fence and went snorting his way back up the alley to lick his wounds.

The very next morning at the same time, that little bulldog came back down the alley, crawled under the fence with the same result. After the bulldog had had enough, he crawled back under the fence and went snorting back up the alley once again to lick his wounds. The following morning the husband had to leave town for a few days on a business engagement and when he returned he inquired about the little bulldog.

“It was amazing,” his wife said, “every day that little bulldog would come down the alley and into our yard with the same result. Then one day when the little bulldog came snorting down the alley, our dogs whined and retreated to our back porch—they had had enough. And that little bulldog squeezed himself under the fence and strutted around our back yard like he owned the place.” Sometimes bulldog persistence can make our dreams come true in spite of

overwhelming odds.

Only living faith can give us strength to persist, to persevere when everything else tells us to quit. The indwelling presence of God is our eternal resource, a strength beyond our strength. Knowing that God is our steady companion, our partner, our strength and guide as we struggle with the problems of living can give us comfort and inspiration. Allowing the Spirit of God to bring forth the vision of the real motive, the final aim and eternal purpose of this sometimes difficult struggle of life can sustain us and give deep meaning to our days and years.

The folklore surrounding Poland’s famous concert pianist and prime minister, Ignace Paderewski, relates the story of a mother, wishing to encourage her young son’s progress at the piano, bought tickets for a Paderewski performance. When the night arrived, they found their seats near the front of the concert hall and observed the majestic Steinway waiting on the stage.

Soon the mother found a friend to talk to and the boy slipped away. When eight o’clock arrived, the spotlights came on, the audience quieted, and only then did the mother notice her son on the stage sitting on the piano bench innocently picking out “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Before she could retrieve her son, the master appeared on stage and quickly moved to the keyboard. “Don’t quit—keep playing,” he whispered to the boy. Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in the base part. Soon his right arm reached around the other side, encircling the child, to add a running obligato. Together, the old master and the young novice held the crowd mesmerized.

In our lives, unpolished as though we may be, it is the Master who surrounds us and whispers in our ear, time and again, “Don’t quit—keep playing.” And as we do, he augments and supplements until a work of amazing beauty is created. When you are discouraged and feel like quitting, turn to the indwelling presence of God. Be aware that God supports and surrounds you in your efforts. God is there to whisper words of encouragement in your heart, to help you get up and on the road of life again. God surrounds us in love and says, “Don’t stop! Keep playing!”

Let us, therefore, go forward as spiritual pioneers; learning to feast upon life’s uncertainties, to fatten upon disappointment, to even enthuse and be undaunted by apparent defeat, to invigorate in the presence of difficulties, to exhibit indomitable courage in the face of immensity, and to exercise unconquerable faith when confronted with the challenge of the inexplicable. Let our life-long battle cry be: “In liaison with God, nothing, absolutely nothing is impossible!”

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DOING THE FATHER'S WILL

David E. Glass

Doing the Father's will is a multi-faceted enterprise. Doing God's will is a complete lifestyle which relates not only to what one does to fulfill the Father's will, but also as to *how* one performs the will of God—the spirit with which the son or daughter of God approaches, discerns, and takes action regarding his or her highest concept of the Father's will. However, many planetary mortals don't know much about God's will. Even some *Urantia Book* readers are not always certain about what the Father's will may be: first, in their personal relationship with God; second, in their service to their brothers and sisters; and third, with reference to the information presented in the newly received revelation. In life we all perform many functions: familial, economic, intellectual, social, and spiritual; and they are each relevant to one or more aspects of the Father's will.

One aspect of the Father's will is work. Many people on Urantia seem to identify themselves with their mode of making a living, their line of work, and one's program for gainful employment is relevant to the Father's will. You may recall that a revelator states that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation. And even in work there is a sense of brotherhood. Do you remember that there was a song in the Broadway musical and movie, "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," entitled, "There is a Brotherhood of Man?" I feel, of course, that the Father also has more and other activities in mind for accomplishment by each mortal during his lifetime on his nativity world.

Jesus' Example

Let's consider Jesus' life. He began professional work at the age of fifteen, because of his father's untimely accidental death and because he was the eldest son in a large family. Jesus did not limit himself during his lifetime to only one method of acquiring funds; he worked briefly or for a few years at different vocations. Jesus excelled as a carpenter, a fisherman, a boat designer and boat builder; he worked as a miner, and a blacksmith. He was an ideal tutor for Ganid, an effective translator for Gonod, and a skilled caravan captain. Jesus completely fulfilled his obligation of earning a material livelihood, an experience required of all Paradise Bestowal Sons during their planetary sojourns. This was for him, as it is for us, an aspect of the Father's will. Factually, Jesus had completed his material mortal maturation, and spiritually, he had earned his universe sovereignty of Neadon by the time he was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist.

Another aspect of the Father's will is that we solemnly consider and affirmatively choose eternal personality survival. Some of our dear brothers and sisters throughout Urantia feel trapped in their various religions because they have been mistaught that assent and adherence to a reli-

gious code are indispensable to everlasting survival. Life without survival is meaningless and pointless intellectually, dismaying and paralyzing to the will, absurd, baffling, and demeaning to the personality, and ultimately sorrowful and tragic to the unbelieving individual mortal. Have you examined atheistic existential philosophy or agnostic humanistic theology? These are currently prominent thought systems in our global society and in our universities and schools. Isn't it a part of our divine assignment, part of the Father's will, for us to comfort, enlighten, and liberate our spiritual siblings? God loves each of them even as he loves all personalities—unconditionally and infinitely. But, have no fear: 97% of Americans and a huge majority of people all around the world believe in God and almost as many have faith in personal survival after death. And let us recall the statement of the revelator who affirms that there is much more goodness in the world today than evil.

While there are difficulties in sharing the revelation, considering its length, breadth, and depth, I have found that there is almost no resistance to forthrightly sharing Jesus' simple, twofold gospel of sonship or daughterhood with God and brother-or-sisterhood with all people. The truth about God is appearing, and eventually all individuals are destined to be delivered from the debilitating condition of the relative unavailability of bona fide truth on our world. All religions contain truth, and many share Jesus' self-changing and world-transforming teaching of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Only transformed individuals can transform the world.

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Jesus understands this predicament fully; he knows first hand the immobility of traditional religious beliefs and man's tendency towards an intractable resistance to truth. None of this situation is God's fault, of course, and most of it is not man's fault either. The predicaments of the world are not the product of a supposed inherent sinfulness of the human individual. God has many reasons for not miraculously transforming Urantia into a perfect planetary Utopia. First of all, evolution is the main objective in creating the grand universe—God wants us all to have the thrilling experience of co-creating with him a grand universe of light and life. Secondly, God is making provision for a complete and fair judgment to be rendered regarding the iniquitous participants in the Lucifer Rebellion—whom he still loves and desires not to lose. However, mercy must be desired to be effective, and the Father refuses to coerce the rebels to accept forgiveness, rehabilitation, and renewed participation in the progressive

perfectionization of Urantia and the rest of our quarantined local system. Doing the Father's will and accepting eternal life must be a free will choice.

Throughout his mortal life, Jesus was increasingly devoted to the non-required aspects of service to his planetary fellows. Jesus' activities after his baptism were almost entirely composed of extra, additional, and unmandated service to his mortal children, both to those on Urantia and to those on the other 3,840,180 inhabited planets scattered far and wide throughout Nebadon. He felt it was a part of the Father's will so to serve. And Jesus taught us that it is God's will that we, likewise, go the second mile in service to our fellow mortals.

As I see it, while, technically, we find ourselves in our Fifth Planetary *Epoch*, we are also still in our Post-Bestowal Son Age. We are in the first century of our Fifth Epoch, and we are 2,000 years into Michael's Post-Bestowal Son Age. Now, Post-Bestowal Son Ages are ordinarily 10,000 to 100,000 planetary years long. I think it is the Father's will, not only that we disseminate the teachings of the Fifth Epochal Revelation, but also that we function in our Bestowal Son Age by continuing Michael's efforts to proclaim the gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Seen from a revelation-enhanced perspective, the brother-sisterhood of humankind is not just a concept or a rallying slogan; it is already a present spiritual reality, seeing that all normally minded and morally responsive people are sons and daughters of God by virtue of their identical origin. Spiritually, all human beings have the same Paradise Parent. And factually, they are all sons and daughters of God because they are all indwelt by perfect, infallible Thought Adjusters.

A Unique Destiny

While the Father's will includes a plan and a destiny for our planet and for the universe as a whole, God also has a plan and purpose for each planetary mortal. Such plans include, for example, the enlightening experience of parenthood, and such a requirement will be fulfilled in the Probationary Nursery on the Finaliter's World if it is not experienced during mortal life.

The unique plan and purpose for each individual extends beyond planetary life to include: the local universe morontia career, the superuniverse spiritual ascension, the Havona experience, citizenship on Paradise, and, as members of the Mortal Corps of Finality, assignments in the other six superuniverses, and, beyond supremacy, administrative adventures in the Master Universe Outer Space Zones, and then never-ending activities in the unfathomable eternity of our postulated Cosmos Infinite careers. Such plans are probably known, I would suggest, only by the Father, by one's particular Thought Adjuster, and perhaps by the Eternal Son and the Infinite Spirit. The Father's will for the individual is, as we see, limitless. As a revelator writes, "The quest for Spring, 1999

God is endless!" (p. 1169) While it seems to be the Father's will that his children on Urantia know of this overwhelming future eternal destiny, a revelator also states that, at any given time, the work of one's present life and current residential sphere is foremost in importance.

It is a part of the Father's will that we know him—that we become God-conscious. "[God] has mobilized the resources of divine wisdom in a never-ending effort to reveal himself to the children of his universal domains." (p. 62) For me, this is best achieved through the techniques of prayer, meditation, and worship. I find reading *The Urantia Book*, beneficial service to others, and socialization with other God-knowing mortals to be especially helpful. And, as Jesus taught, "It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to *feel the presence of God*. When you once begin to find God in your soul, presently you will begin to discover him in other men's souls and eventually in all the creatures and creations of a mighty universe." (p. 1733)

Concerning the proclamation of the gospel of sonship-or-daughterhood with God, Jesus trained his apostles experientially in order to convince them directly that such tactics as emotional appeal, miracle performance, physical healing, or simply feeding people do not necessarily create spiritually devoted human disciples and believers

On the subject of doing the Father's will, a Divine Counselor writes, "The affectionate dedication of the human will to the doing of the Father's will is man's choicest gift to God; in fact, such a consecration of creature will constitutes man's only possible gift of true value to the Paradise Father." (p. 22) And a Solitary Messenger also testifies, "[T]he doing of [God's] will is the secret of survival and of perfection in survival.... [W]hen the creature personality consents—chooses—to subject the creature will to the Father's will.... [s]uch a creature choice is not a surrender of will. It is a consecration of will, an expansion of will, a glorification of will, a perfecting of will.... [And] this choosing does not so much consist in the negation of creature will—'Not my will but yours be done'—as it consists in the creature's positive affirmation: 'It is *my* will that *your* will be done.'" (p.1221)

Loving Relationships

It is the Father's will (as revealed by Jesus) that all his mortal children love and serve their spiritual brothers and sisters with the wholeheartedness and devotion with which Jesus loved and served mankind. Jesus enjoined fatherly (not just brotherly or sisterly) love for all and service to all. And happily this is generally becoming a goal for students of *The Urantia Book* throughout the world.

Now because of the scope of the revelation, we also know

Doing the Father's Will, cont.

that truth teaching and the encouragement of family-like fellowship among mortals began on our world (far prior to Michael's bestowal mission) some 500,000 years ago with the advent of our then loyal Planetary Prince, Caligastia, and his serviceful staff. And, even earlier, the promotion of positive and fair personality relationships—as the will of the god of the “Great Beyond”—was hinted at and partially established by Onagar, the first truth teacher, almost a million years ago.

Concerning the proclamation of the gospel of sonship-or-daughterhood with God, Jesus trained his apostles *experientially* in order to convince them directly that such tactics as emotional appeal, miracle performance, physical healing, or simply feeding people do not necessarily create spiritually devoted human disciples and believers. We are immeasurably blessed to have the written account of how Jesus did go about training leaders to perform effectively as kingdom builders, because we can now look and learn from their experiences before we leap into planetary gospel proclamation. We have much material from which to formulate wise ways of proclaiming the gospel in accordance with the Father's will, while it is necessary for us to adapt them to conditions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Let us respond to Jesus' charge, “As the Father sent me into this world, even so now send I you.” (p. 2044)

Jesus taught that, by doing the Father's will, we will attract others' interests and lead our fellows to inquire of us as to the source of our optimism, the cause for our service motivation, and the reason for our devoted living.

It is our Father's will that we devote time to the pursuit of our own progress in the conquest of the seven psychic circles. We are to progress individually; but with each step of spiritual discovery, we are to find new and more effective means of utilizing such insights in helpful forms of service and in the formulation of accomplishable, practical goals for humanity. The ideals for human progress are born in the inner life of the individual mortal—in his highest thinking guided by the divine Adjuster.

Of course, it is the Father's will that we study *The Urantia Book*. Ultimately, it was God's will that this revelation be given to us. The preparation and bestowal of Urantia's Fifth Epochal Revelation was mandated by the Ancients of Days, who speak for the Paradise Trinity, which, in turn, can sometimes be seen to be primarily the will of the Father himself. It was never intended that man should live and progress without revelation. A revelator states that revelation is *indispensable* to the materialization of the brotherhood of man on Urantia. Purely human sources of idealism and mortal catalyzers of a positive, en masse mobilization of effort on the part of planetary mortals toward the actualization of a higher and global civilization, without relevant

revelation, would be inadequate and unavailing.

Jesus taught that, by doing the Father's will, we will attract others' interests and lead our fellows to inquire of us as to the source of our optimism, the cause for our service motivation, and the reason for our devoted living. Thereby will they find access to the revelational truths that have transformed our lives. This seems to be the wisdom circulated by many of the students of *The Urantia Book* today.

Jesus encouraged his apostles and Ganid to inform themselves of the beliefs of others, and *The Urantia Book* provides a detailed but succinct summary of all the great world religions. Ecumenical studies and interfaith dialogue are therefore clearly a part of the Father's will for Urantia.

God's will includes the material and scientific study of the cosmos as well as the spiritual pursuit of increasingly meaningful cosmic citizenship. Just as we may devote some of our time during our Paradise ascension careers to functioning as star students of the physical cosmos, so will we also continue to be evolving contributors to the emerging Supreme Being. Science and spirituality are to be associated and balanced through improving cosmic philosophy stimulated by the new information afforded to all Urantian thinkers in the Fifth Epochal Revelation, and by art, the pursuit of the Beautiful.

Loving God

It is stated on the very first page of the (post-Foreword) text that one of God's principle reasons for peopling the innumerable spheres of the universe of universes with love-experiencing beings is so that God would have more and more intelligent personalities to love, “beings who could know God, receive the divine affection, and love him in return.” (p. 21) Thus being loved by God and loving him back is one of the best and most enjoyable forms of doing the Father's eternal will while experiencing his infinite love.

Let us all continue to pray for the ongoing progress of our entire planetary community toward greater education about and knowledge of God's will. God loves each personality infinitely and unconditionally. Certainly we all want to serve our Father wisely and well as we seek to discern the overall and the specific aspects of his will for all of us collectively and for our individual lives. Our Father is giving to each individual mortal: infinite love, astounding revelation, a divine Thought Adjuster, and eternal life. Let us all respond by striving to discern and to do the Father's will. As a dear friend of mine frequently liked to say: “May God's will be done—by *you!*”

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UNDERSTANDING EVIL IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Meredith J. Sprunger

The ultimate problem in theism is the enigma of evil. How can one reconcile belief in an all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful God with the destructiveness of nature, the unjust and arbitrary suffering of people, and the social evils which are endemic and culminate in events like Dachau and Auschwitz?

The history of religion is replete with attempts to answer this question. All of these theodicies have more or less failed to give a satisfying answer to these divine-human incongruities. Traditional theological answers to the problem of evil are rooted in a geocentric and prescientific understanding of the nature of the universe. The central ambiguities and incomprehensible nature of the problem of evil in human experience center in our immature and simplistic understanding of reality and God's relation to the finite universe. Scientific discovery has greatly expanded our knowledge of the size and complexity of the material universe. *The Urantia Book*, in a similar way, has enlarged our conceptualization of spiritual cosmology and opened a view of the astonishing complexity and variation of the forms of reality.

Man can find the love of God without facts, and man can discover the laws of God without love, but man can never begin to appreciate the infinite symmetry, the supernal harmony, the exquisite repleteness of the all-inclusive nature of the First Source and Center until he has found divine law and divine love and has experientially unified these in his own evolving cosmic philosophy. (U. B., p. 1222)

The Finite Universe

How, then, do we unify divine law and divine love in human experience? First, we need to realize that God does not act as a transcendental puppeteer in the finite universe. Except for a fragment of God indwelling the human mind, God is not *directly* involved in the direction and functions of the finite universes. The First Source and Center of all things and beings is actualizing his wise and loving purposes for the finite creation by delegating creative power and administrative functions to his Creator Sons and Local Universe Daughters. Second, we need to understand the basic nature and methodology of finite reality. The finite universes were created to actualize two basic divine purposes: to evolve intelligent beings with free will, who could participate, in cooperation with the indwelling Spirit of God, in their own growth toward perfection (God's will); and at the same time factualize a finite, experiential aspect of Deity known as the Supreme.

To accomplish these purposes a special form of reality was created through the evolutionary process. It is unique in nature, methodology, and control. Starting with elemen-

tal energy particles that are governed and controlled by indigenous, finite universe laws that include a complex mix of random chance and purposeful direction, the physical universe evolved over billions of years. Within the evolutionary process, physical mechanisms evolve and combine to establish a base through which mind (control functions) can operate. These physical-mindal mechanisms evolved over millions of years to produce many kinds of organisms, plants, and animals.

Inherent in the evolutionary process are mindal stimuli, "adjutant mind spirits," which are able to make contact with physical-mindal organisms at different levels of development. When evolving mind capacities reach the level of intelligence that can be contacted by the spirit of worship and the spirit of wisdom, human beings with truth, beauty, and goodness perception have evolved. Capping the Universal Father's plan to create independent mortals who have free will is the bestowal of a fragment of his Spirit in each mind that has truth, beauty, and goodness perception.

When finite, imperfect beings are given free will, mistakes, violation of universe law (evil), and deliberate transgression of spiritual truth (sin), are virtually inevitable. If human beings are to grow toward wisdom and spiritual perfection, certain environmental conditions are necessary. Experience is the basic medium of learning and education. Spiritual growth requires certain learning experiences which serve as guides to spiritual reality. To develop courage we must live amid surroundings that necessitate struggling with hardship and danger. If hope is to evolve, then must one be constantly confronted with insecurities and uncertainties. In order to establish the love of truth in the human heart, one must live in a world where error is present and the evils of falsehood confronted. Unselfishness is acquired when we repeatedly discover the unhappiness brought on by an ego continually clamoring for pleasure, honor, and recognition. Evolutionary beings must live in an environment of relative and potential evil in order to experience and learn the validity of the higher spiritual realities of the universe. In the finite, evolutionary universe, a certain amount of evil and suffering is necessary to guide intelligent, free will beings toward spiritual growth.

The confusion and turmoil of Urantia do not signify that the Paradise Rulers lack either interest or ability to manage affairs differently. The Creators are possessed of full power to make Urantia a veritable paradise, but such an Eden would not contribute to the development of those strong, noble, and experienced characters which the Gods are so surely forging out on your world between the anvils of necessity and the hammers of anguish. Your anxieties and sorrows, your trials and disappointments, are just as much a part of the divine plan on your sphere as are the exquisite perfection and infinite adaptation of all things to their supreme purpose on the worlds of the central and perfect universe. (U. B., p. 258)

God's Relation to the Finite Universe

In the finite universe the Universal Father has chosen to work primarily through the intrinsic control of autonomous universe laws. The many violent activities of nature such as floods, fires, storms, and atmospheric cataclysms, are the outworking of universe laws and are not the direct or personal activities of God. Within the apparent randomness of physical activities, there is an integration of universe laws which makes for checks and balances in nature and an overall purposefulness creating a condition favorable to intelligent manipulation. Through the process of experience and scientific discovery, we are learning the dynamics of natural laws, so that we can utilize them to improve our safety and health, and design natural phenomena for the benefit and welfare of humankind.

God's *personal* contact with humanity is through his indwelling Spirit in our minds. Neither God nor subordinate universe administrators, such as angelic beings, normally intervene to suspend or countermand the operation of natural laws in our lives. The Universal Father is neither a cosmic puppet master nor an anthropomorphic trouble shooter whom we must call upon to change the realities of creation to shield us from problems and suffering. The design and purpose of the finite universe is to encourage and enable us, through our own intelligence and ingenuity, to meet and cope with the problems, frustrations, and tragedies of mortal experience. God's purpose for our lives is to help us evolve into spiritually mature people who are stimulated by perplexities, difficulties, and suffering, and who know that in partnership with God all things eventually work for good. This requires a life predicated on courage, invigorated by hardships, and inspired by divine fellowship and guidance.

Intelligent and effective prayer does not ask God to suspend natural law or perform "miracles," but seeks God's support and guidance in finding the solution of our problems. Through the guidance of his indwelling Spirit, we are often led to initiate activities which do change the outcome of natural laws. Sometimes, in extreme or critical conditions, which we do not adequately understand, guardian angels, or other supermortal personalities, may intervene to give special help that seems to change the outcome of natural law.

We see, then, that God's presence in the finite universe is primarily an immanent, indigenous reality—even in his personal, indwelling relationship with each person. The traditional religious dichotomy of the natural and the supernatural is an illusion resulting from a lack of knowledge of how God acts in the finite universe. It may be meaningful to speak of material, mindal, or spiritual reality, but anything which the creative action of God effects in any of these categories is an immanent, endogenous event. All spiritual ministrations to finite beings must be down-stepped. This is the essence of the incarnation message.

The divine plan for the finite universe was to evolve an imperfect creation in which mortals could start as the lowest beings who have the capacity for God-consciousness, and through their own free will decisions and actions, evolve immortal souls of Paradise potential. The finite creation is designed as an essentially closed evolutionary system where God works through indigenous laws, mechanisms, and overcontrol functions, instead of direct (transcendent) Deity control. This self-limitation of God is basic to the actualization of the great and good universe plan to evolve in human personality a unique quality of being which could be produced in no other way.

Everything divine which the human mind grasps and the human soul acquires is an experiential attainment; it is a *reality* of personal experience and is therefore a unique possession in contrast to the inherent goodness and righteousness of the inerrant personalities of Havona .

The creatures of Havona are naturally brave, but they are not courageous in the human sense. They are innately kind and considerate, but hardly altruistic in the human way. They are expectant of a pleasant future, but not hopeful in the exquisite manner of the trusting mortal of the uncertain evolutionary spheres. They have faith in the stability of the universe, but they are utter strangers to that saving faith whereby mortal man climbs from the status of an animal up to the portals of Paradise. They love the truth, but they know nothing of its soul-saving qualities. They are idealists, but they were born that way; they are wholly ignorant of the ecstasy of becoming such by exhilarating choice. (U.B., p. 52)

Irrational Aspects of Evil

Once we understand the divine plan for the finite creation, much of the imperfection and suffering in human experience makes sense. Through the educational process encountered in the vicissitudes of human experience, the creative evolutionary process is forging out of humankind the beginnings of a noble, strong, and thoroughly experienced being whose potentials transcend our fondest dreams. Human anxiety, trials, and suffering are just as much a necessary part of a wise divine plan for universe education as the lessons of childhood, the rigors of school days, and the psychic suffering of adolescence are basic to developing character in our contemporary development. There is historical, scientific, and experiential evidence which gives considerable support to this purposeful view of suffering in human experience.

Nevertheless, many troubling questions remain unanswered regarding the catastrophic and irrational aspects of the problem of evil. The first major source of such incomprehensible forms of evil in human experience are the anomalies of nature. Floods, fires, tornadoes, disease, and many forms of malfunction readily come to mind. These imperfections are germane to the nature of reality in the evolutionary finite

universe. In, with, and under the apparent random behavior of the energy and mechanisms of universe laws there is divine intelligence and purpose. These innate balance and control forces and mechanisms take aeons of time to establish and consolidate their effect. Many centuries are required for the indigenous integrative and synergistic influences to become dominant. These melioristic forces are greatly assisted by human ingenuity as we learn how to use universe laws to accelerate the evolutionary process.

The second major source of evil in human experience is centered in finite personalities. Much of the suffering experienced in our world is the result of human evil—the ignorant violation of universe law and spiritual truth, and in humankind’s sinful behavior—knowing and deliberate infraction of natural law and the will of God. These innumerable human forms of evil and sin precipitate crime and violence, and are socially compounded, resulting in brutalities like Dachau and Auschwitz and in wars with mass destruction like Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Over and above the imperfections of natural phenomena and human evil and sin, the most destructive effect on human welfare was brought about by the misadaptations and rebellion of supermortal beings who are native to the finite universe. Our planet has suffered extensive setbacks through sinful improvisations and mistakes in superhuman universe administration. The Lucifer rebellion and the Adamic default were catastrophes of major proportions that have temporarily handicapped the outworking of the divine plan.

When we contemplate the pervasive openness and inherent autonomy, guided by benign intrinsic spiritual purpose designed into the evolutionary universe, we catch a glimpse of the enormous forbearance and love of the Universal Father. Knowing the potential hazards of sin and rebellion in the finite universe, the Universal Father has established rescue and salvaging plans. This reclamation plan uses methods which are harmonious with autonomy and self-determination. In addition to the Father’s indwelling presence in the human mind, other immanent guidance techniques, such as supermortal incarnation and other forms of epochal revelation are bringing the Father’s saving ministry to humanity. God’s transcendent love in many down-stepped, immanent forms is at work on our world. Slowly but surely the reality dominance of spiritual truth and the drawing power of divine love is winning the struggle with evil and sin without violating humankind’s complete personal-spiritual independence. God’s creativity in the evolutionary cosmos begins at the lowest levels but is destined to achieve the highest ends.

Summary Statement

We have observed that the divine plan for the finite universe is to create beings with a unique spiritual-reality quality through evolutionary experience. God’s purpose is for humankind to participate in its own development and destiny without divine coercion. This requires both freedom
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of will, and an imperfect environment where learning is possible, where the foundations of reality are intrinsically present in the material-mindal world of experience. Here human beings can discover the enduring and dependable verities in daily living, taste the bitterness and suffering of evil and sin, and repeatedly verify the fulfilling and synergistic character of truth, beauty, and goodness. In this educational atmosphere we are free to make our own value decisions and evolve immortal souls.

The unsurpassed educational character of this kind of experience, along with the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God, is the reason that, even in the face of intense and irrational suffering, the great majority of humankind remain courageous in their coping ability and steadfast in their faith in the ultimate triumph of good. God’s wise, loving, and farsighted design for the finite universe will not fail. The Universal Father, therefore, does not arbitrarily “step in” with transcendent power to alter the divine evolutionary methodology for overcoming evil and sin. Indeed, error and spiritual rebellion are more clearly seen for what they are if allowed to run their evolutionary course. Over the centuries, more good will accrue in the lives of individuals and in society by this experiential process than would occur through forced, arbitrary, or revolutionary solutions.

The final answer to the problem of evil for each person resides in fellowship with the Spirit of God which indwells the human mind. Although we live in a world and universe where Immanent Intelligence is detected by inference, where the knowledge of God is mediated through all reality, we know God personally only through inner experience. By faith and spiritual fellowship we establish a God-consciousness and a living partnership with the Universal Father. As we then face the problems and perplexities of life, we are aided by divine wisdom. When suffering and tragedy enter our experience and we have exhausted our own ability to cope, an augmented inner peace, a new understanding, a fresh combination of resources undergird our life. Those who establish this inner relationship with the Father are invulnerable to life’s most crushing blows. These children of the finite universe are learning “to feast upon uncertainty, to fatten upon disappointment, to enthuse over apparent defeat, to invigorate in the presence of difficulties, to exhibit indomitable courage in the face of immensity, and to exercise unconquerable faith when confronted with the challenge of the inexplicable.” They are discovering that “in liaison with God, nothing—absolutely nothing—is impossible.” (U. B., p. 291)

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Significant Books

A New Morality from Science: Beyondism

Raymond B. Cattell

Pergamon Press, Inc., 1972

In Dr. Cattell's preface he opens to us his personal reasons for being concerned about the many unguided directions in which moral changes seem to be going. He is cogent in his thinking and clear in his explanation of the emotional problems which may sometimes resist the development of new logical ideals, should they appear opposed to long cherished traditions.

This is not a book for careless skimming. Dr. Cattell is that rare combination, a meticulous scientist, and also a liberally educated man, highly literate. He writes with a high density of significant and connected concepts per paragraph. He says that this book is for "readers ready to follow an argument wherever it may lead, yet disciplined enough to be critical in reasoning, and mature enough to consider momentarily unpleasant conclusions." (Pg. 6) Therefore, plan to "Drink deep or taste not" the Cattellian spring.

He writes, "The concern of every sane and thoughtful man with what life is about boils down to, 'What am I?' 'Where am I?', and 'What ought I to do?'" (Pg. 3) He submits (that simple verb covers several pages of tightly knit reasoning) that the first two questions are fairly well answered by science, but frankly recognizes that science's answers are "given as factual systems that are admittedly incomplete, couched in theories that are recognized as likely to change in structure; and with the understanding that science proceeds by successive approximations." (Pg. 7) One of the things which I respect in this book is Dr. Cattell's openness in recognizing, not only opposing arguments, but also possible weaknesses in his own arguments.

Though always scholarly, he is not without his gentle bits of pointed humor. "No increase in the general level of education — still less any rise in the noise level of mass communication — can be a substitute for the patient and creative pursuit of necessary, new, ethical values." (Pg. 6)

Dr. Cattell's main thesis is *that which is best for us, both as individuals, and as social groups, is that which we ought to do*. He has chosen to define "that which is best for us" as "that which is most prosurvival for us." He offers several criteria for judging what is prosurvival. Obviously, groups which do not survive "are inadequate in some respect compared with those that do." Given the same terrain, food supply, parasites and predators, the more abundant (be it species, or group of people) is the more prosurvival. More important, the groups more capable of adapting to changes in the environment are more prosurvival. Most important,

the groups more capable of understanding and changing their environment are more prosurvival. (Pg. 88) He expects that future thinkers may improve upon these criteria, but he will use them until better appear.

Dr. Cattell suggests three gateways to the understanding of life: religion, the liberal arts, and science. While knowledgeably citing the many contributions of both religion and the arts to human progress, he argues (more pages of skillfully constructed reasoning) that science is best equipped to research various behaviors and their consequences, and thus, their prosurvival values. He is arguing that science is better equipped to discover prosurvival — that is, moral — values than is religion, or the arts.

One of Dr. Cattell's important concepts is that of *co-operative competition*. That is, of two groups differing in some moral perception, each should be willing to say to the other, "We will go our way, and we will allow you to go your way, and then let us see if there develops (over a sufficient period of time) some clear indication of which group is more prosurvival." With modern statistical techniques, this description can be extended to include a number of groups, differing in a number of moral perceptions. The important idea is, "let us see...."

For example (my example, not his), scientists are collecting data which is indicating, more and more clearly, that smoking shortens life, and hence, is contrasurvival. But the competition between smokers and non-smokers is hardly cooperative! Smokers: "You non-smokers have no right to deprive us of our simple little pleasures!" Non-smokers: "You smokers have no right to shroud us in your second hand smoke!" (Plus the legal controversy over paying all the medical bills!) Cooperative or not, the data is accumulating, and Dr. Cattell's *Beyondism* would have to say that smoking increasingly appears to be immoral. Note that this kind of research does not require that all smokers be gathered together in one physical location, and all non-smokers in another. It does require the collection of a lot of data over a long period of time, and lengthy statistical analyses of all that data, something at which computers are getting better and better. Note even more importantly that scientists' solidifying conclusion that smoking is contrasurvival comes not from anyone's inspiration, nor from any inspired writings, nor from anyone's emotional feelings about smoking. It comes from the repeatable statistical analyses of verifiable data, the scientific method.

One of Dr. Cattell's examples: "Of all factors contributing to group survival, preventing cultural breakdown, and avoiding dissolution into scattered primitive brutishness, that morale which goes with the virtues of unselfishness, considerateness, honesty, loyalty, and love of one's neighbor is probably the most important." (Pg. 100) This statement comes, not from personal conviction, religious inspiration, or emotional feelings, but rather from correlational research

across national cultures; research which has been published, and can be repeated. (Cattell, R. B. and Gorsuch, R. "The Definition and Measurement of National Morale and Morality," *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1965)

So modern scientific research finds that Jesus was absolutely right! But I am not surprised, for if God is truly a God of love, then it is reasonable that He would want for us that which is best for us. I find it highly plausible that science, the carefully logical human attempt to ascertain God's ordained physical laws, might be able to establish intelligent morals, since both come from the same God-ordained laws.

The remainder of the book cites several examples of research which appear to have moral implications, and thoughtfully discusses the techniques and problems of implementing a much broader search for scientifically establishable morals.

Students of *The Urantia Book* should be particularly interested in what Dr. Cattell has to say, for *The Urantia Book*, while giving high spiritual insights, carefully avoids telling us what specific morals we should develop.¹ "Jesus would make all men Godlike and then stand by sympathetically while these sons of God solve their own political, social, and economic problems." (Pg. 1581) "Jesus offered no rules for social advancement...." (Pg.2083) But this is precisely the gap that Dr. Cattell proposes we should answer for ourselves by the methods of science. His book is profoundly thought provoking reading for anyone who cares, "What ought I to do?"

Bud Bromley

¹With one notable exception, the "biologic disfellowshipping (sterilizing?) of your more markedly unfit, defective, degenerate, and antisocial stocks." (Pg. 585) And the concept is also mentioned elsewhere.

"Mistake not! there is in the teachings of Jesus an eternal nature which will not permit them forever to remain unfruitful in the hearts of thinking men. The kingdom as Jesus conceived it has to a large extent failed on earth; for the time being, an outward church has taken its place; but you should comprehend that this church is only the larval stage of the thwarted spiritual kingdom....The kingdom of the divine brotherhood is still alive and will eventually and certainly come forth from this long submergence, just as surely as the butterfly eventually emerges as the beautiful unfolding of its less attractive creature of metamorphic development."
p. 1866:4

Sharing the Revelation

J. J. Johnson

I strongly identify with these statements: "*If you are not a positive and missionary evangel of your religion, you are self-deceived in that what you call a religion is only a traditional belief or a mere system of intellectual philosophy.*" (p. 1780) "*Freely you have received of the good things of the kingdom; freely give.*" (p. 1801)

The revelators, I have been told, challenged the Contact Commission to realize the importance of the Papers they received. From the moment I first read the section on "The Reality of God" in Paper 1, I intuitively knew this did not come from mere humans. I wore out the hard cover of my first *Urantia Book* by carrying it wherever I went. I still carry it wherever I go, with few exceptions. I do this automatically: it is like carrying my car keys, I would feel naked without it.

I never know when I'll get a comment about our wonderful revelation just because it is made available to the eyes of everyone I come into contact with. This doesn't happen every day, but quite often I do get comments: at the airport, check-out counters, movie theaters or anywhere. Do I have to carry it around? Of course not! But after over twenty years (and fifteen readings!) of carrying the book, it is just one way for me to expose the Fifth Epochal Revelation to whomever I come into contact with.

The truths revealed in *The Urantia Book* should so illuminate our hearts that we are overjoyed in being able to share these wonderful teachings with our brothers and sisters. I just never tire in sharing this great revelation, and am eternally thankful to have the privilege and joy to do this. Whatever talents we have (great or small) we can be an evangel of our religion. I really get excited when someone expresses their gratitude because I brought *The Urantia Book* to their attention. This usually happens when I am working on a project or get into a conversation. Generally, I'm not thinking about introducing them to the book—it just happens as I am enthusiastically sharing the Father's love that overflows in my heart. So when I do make contact with a truth seeker, the rewards are beyond words.

I have tried many different avenues in bringing this revelation to our planet. If I arrive on the mansion worlds and am greeted on Mansonia One with: "J.J., we observed the manner in which you shared the revelation on Urantia and we must say that sometimes your efforts could have been better channeled in other ways." I could deal with that and would reply, "I would appreciate your help; please point me in the direction to better share my love of truth."

However, it would send a chill up and down my morontia spine if I were told: "J. J., remember that handicapped lady at the bus stop? Why didn't you share *The Urantia Book* with her? Look at what a box of chocolates did for Forest Gump when he shared them at the bus stop...."

Significant Books

Consilience

The Unity of Knowledge

Edward O. Wilson

Knopf, 1998, 298 pp.

Edward O. Wilson is one of the world's great scientists and a Francis Bacon-like synthesizer of the twentieth century. He is a professor in the field of biology at Harvard, the author of two Pulitzer Prize-winning books, *On Human Nature* (1978) and *The Ants* (1990), as well as the recipient of many fellowships, honors, and awards. Dr. Wilson's encyclopedic knowledge of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and humanities, leads him to postulate the unity of all knowledge.

Wilson believes the thinkers of the Enlightenment who believed in the unity of all knowledge, individual human rights, natural law, and indefinite human progress, were on the right track. He reviews the history of the Enlightenment that set the stage for the scientific revolution. Christianity's mistake, he believes, was to allow revelation to dominate reason.

All behavior, he postulates, is guided by epigenetic rules that, in turn, are the result of the interaction between heredity and environment. "Gene-culture coevolution is, I believe, the underlying process by which the brain evolved and the arts originated." (p. 218) In philosophical orientation, he states, "I am an empiricist. On religion I lean toward deism but consider its proof largely a problem in astrophysics." (p. 241)

Many readers of *Consilience* will find they are exhausted, snowed, or bored with the endless recital of facts and information. But Wilson's erudite and comprehensive discussion of the underlying unity of knowledge is an important contribution to laying the intellectual foundations for the advent

of the Fifth Epochal Revelation on our planet.

Professor Wilson would disagree. "Is there a way to erase the dilemma, to resolve the contradiction between the transcendentalist and the empiricist world views? No, unfortunately, there is not." (p. 264) He goes on to say that the eventual result of the competition between these two views "will be the secularization of the human epic and of religion itself." (p. 265)

He recognized that we are drowning in information while starving for wisdom. Synthesis, he believes, is the answer to this dilemma. In the latter part of the book Wilson points out that we are entering a new epoch in human history when genetic evolution will become conscious and volitional. He closes the book with a detailed description of the dangers of overpopulation and environmental pollution. "In the course of all of it we are learning the fundamental principle that ethics is everything." (p. 297)

Steve Pope in reviewing *Consilience* in the *Christian Century* says, "This approach is flawed in several ways. First, Wilson seeks to unify knowledge by construing all knowledge as the kind of objective, empirically verifiable information intended by the natural sciences. This project rides on the dubious assumption that there is only one kind of truth, the kind of empirically established explanations attained by scientists. (p. 1031)

"Wilson at least shows us what the world looks like from the point of view of a secular, scientifically educated person who recognizes the need for intellectual integration and moral integrity." (p. 1033)

The only greater and more comprehensive description of the unity of science, philosophy, the arts, and religion with which I am acquainted is *The Urantia Book*. Theologians long for this kind of unity of knowledge. Hopefully, these religious leaders and people like Edward Wilson will discover it.

-MJS

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