

Meandering Through The Urantia Book

A personal journey exploring
The Urantia Papers

Rev. James Leese, UBM

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*I dedicate this book to my
good friend, whom I miss
every day.*

Raymon Miller

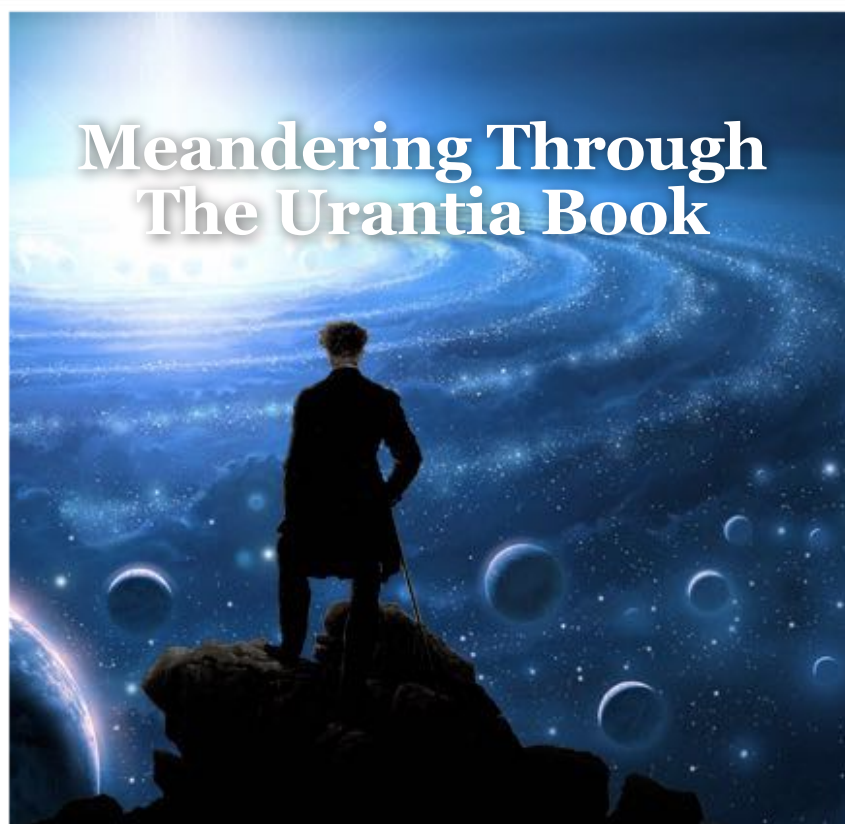
*And my sweetheart of so many
beautiful years,*

Michele Turns



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F O R E W O R D

THIS I BELIEVE, that religion is a personal experience; it doesn't come from a religious building of any sort. Nor does it come from any priest, minister, rabbi, or another. It comes from within, where its source lies. Thank you for reaching out.

And I believe it's not just a once-a-week thing for an hour or so; it's an all-the-time commitment. It is a way of living. It is living out of the heart and mind of what we know to be true, the truth of our being. We strive to be the absolute best we can, with the intention of doing good, being good, and being true, and to continue searching for truth, looking for the beautiful in everything and everybody.

It is to do no harm but to be of goodness to everyone we can be, even those we think don't deserve it; to help others that need our help; to offer all people at least a smile and the courtesy of kindness; to serve where I can and to be still when I need to be. It is to live a moral life of ethics, non-judgment, non-resistance, and love for others—to the best of my ability. And where I fall down, I know I am surrounded, within and without, by others who will pick me up, dust me off, and set me back on my path.

I know this because it is my intent. This, I believe, will be my path, and it does not cease. I will be who I was meant to be with God as my partner and friend, now and forever. My

belief is more than that; it is my FAITH. And as I progress in this never-ending life, it will become more.

So, here's how I want you to think of life. It is far more complex than science, philosophy, and materialism, as anyone alive knows. I also want you to keep an open mind about all that it could be, including spirit, religion, and supernatural-supermaterial existences. When you think about life, you will realize it is far more than we can ever know. This means it encompasses each of those, all together, and much, much more.

And as I progress in this never-ending life, it will become more. It will become my WISDOM.



An Invitation

I now invite you to open your mind to new ways of thinking and new ideas about life. I am referring to the completeness of life.

Is life more than materialism—matter and physical phenomena? If it were not, would we even be here to know it? I suspect the answer you will give is no, it is far more than material stuff. Is life more than your physical body? Or your body plus your brain? Is your brain your mind? Is your mind the result of electromagnetic and other phenomena impulses within your brain?

If that is all it is, that may explain a lot of your physical operation of seeing, hearing, tasting, and so on. But what about thinking? Or dreaming? Where do ideas come from? Are they our ideas, or are they coming from somewhere else entirely?

Why do we have the ideas we have in our brains? What of philosophy? Morals and ethics? How are these things connected to that brain activity?

Big questions, to be sure. However, the answers are even bigger.

But if our lives are a composite of the material and the mental stuff of the brain, where did they come from? An accident? A great big cosmic accident. Consider this: if there is a God, would all of this be an accident? Let's pretend there is no God. Now, what if you discovered the existence of a whole bunch of almost identical planets just like ours? More accidents? Or merely coincidences.

But before we get there, what is the origin of life? You and I know science thinks it will discover it someday and be able to replicate it, or rather, create it on its own. If life is all part of the "accident," a happenstance of time, how could it be some complex that science cannot even define yet?

So open your mind because what you will learn, if you did not know already, is reality, life, is far more thrilling, more

adventurous, more love-filled, and more than you or anyone ever thought possible.

The material that follows is a result of my reading *The Urantia Book* for the past sixteen or so years, taking courses offered by the Urantia University Institute and the Urantia Book Internet School, as well as facilitating a UB study group for almost as long.

Additionally, my interests have expanded to include other topics that are integrated into my thinking about *The Urantia Book*.

This is a book about what I believe to be the Truth of Reality. Some things we know to be true, while a great many others we only suspect may be true or not true. However, to have beliefs about what is Truth, that is something entirely different. I have organized these thoughts into groups of related ideas and beliefs.

Why do we believe we know what we know? What is belief? Our beliefs about what we know are based upon a multitude of things, from what we have learned through experience, what we have been told or taught through schooling or religious instruction, what our peers think and believe, what we see other people do and say, and even what we come up with all on our own.

Suppose you had four boxes, one labeled “A-Stuff I Know I Know,” one labeled “B-Stuff I Think I Know,” one labeled “C-Stuff I Don’t Think I Know,” and the last one labeled “D-Stuff

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I Don't Know but I Don't Know It." Of these many sources, how many of the sources of knowledge or belief would you put into which box?

C H A P T E R 1



Belief

The words I write are almost all mine, except where I have quoted a book or another source. In such a case, I will let you know. These words have come to me as a result of my several years of studying *The Urantia Book* intensely. Much of the writing was done while undertaking courses through the UrantiaUniversity Institute program of studies or through The Urantia Book Internet School courses.

Beyond those courses, I have continued to write about subjects that I believe or feel relate to *The Urantia Book*. My interests have expanded to include many other topics that have been integrated into my thinking about *The Urantia Book*.

This is a book about what I believe to be the Truth of Reality. Some things we know to be true, while a great many others we only suspect may be true or not true. However, to have beliefs about what is Truth, that is something entirely different.

I have organized these thoughts into groups of related ideas and beliefs.



The Limits of Our Belief Systems

For example, suppose you were asked, “Do you know if UFOs exist?” In which box would you place your answer? If you said Box A, could you prove it? Would you have to prove it to yourself if you simply knew it? Or prove it to someone else if they did not know it? On the other hand, if you answered Box B, you would be saying you think you

know that UFOs exist, but you would still face the same issues. At least you are being more candid in your answer by stating you only think they do. Box A and Box B can be very similar in one's own mind. The difference is that what you know is unequivocally true, whereas what you think you know could be true or false.

On the other hand, if you answered Box B, you would be saying you think you know that UFOs exist, but still have the same issues. At least you are being more candid in your answer by saying you only think they do. Box A and Box B can be very much the same in one's own mind. The difference is that what you know you know is unequivocally true, whereas what you think you know could be true or false.

How much of your life is filled with stuff in Box A as compared to stuff in Box B? I suspect a lot more is in Box B, and thus, a lot of it could be false or wrong. For example, most of the "intelligence" that is generated by intelligence agencies is in Box B, where a lot of it turns out to be false. We all think we know that from experience, right? Of course, we could be wrong ourselves, as what we mostly know about that kind of "intelligence" is in our Box C, the stuff we think we don't know—more like we know we don't know—and for that, we are correct."

If you answered Box C, you are admitting you do not really know if they exist or not, and not only are you thinking they might or might not exist, but you are not even saying you do not know; just thinking that you don't know.

Now, Box D is tricky, because it is the box where you find stuff that you don't know, but had no clue that you didn't know. The question arises: Should you have known it? If you don't know you don't know it, how can you have known it? Well, to me, this is where life can be really interesting. If there is stuff out there that I don't know, and I don't even know what that stuff is, should I know about it? My response is yes, if—and I mean IF—that stuff would make a difference in how I get to what is truer for my life than if I did not know it. I certainly have beliefs, but to what extent are they reflective of reality and truth? However, let's return to boxes A and B.

As you can see, what we believe we know or believe we think we know are two separate things. Much of our world revolves around what we believe we know, simply because we do. For instance, the Earth revolves around the sun. How do we “eally know it. It is because it has been claimed to be this way for centuries now, despite the fact that for many more centuries it was not thought to be that way. But now we absolutely know it. Could we prove it? Not by ourselves, probably, but with the help of science, it can be done. Score one for science.

Box C, or the stuff we think we do not know, should be easy. But is it that easy? There are billions upon billions of things in our world and universe, even in you own lives, that we do not know, or we think we don't know. I would be there are some things that you think you do not know but you really do. For instance, how do you know you can breathe and

drink water at the same time? I bet you never really thought about it (assuming you are like most folks), so you don't really know how you can. But you can, and you know it. So now you do know it after all.

As for Box D, the information you're unaware of but don't even realize you're unaware of, there are many things that are known to some but not to many. And much of it is kept from you on purpose or inadvertently by others, or even willfully by yourself.

An example is what happens when a currency undergoes a revaluation, as is currently happening in Iraq, Vietnam, and some other countries. The same thing that happened in Kuwait after the "Desert Shield" war, when it revalued its currency: a small number of people who knew about it made fortunes. In both cases, governments sometimes choose not to disclose information to the public for several reasons. One reason is that if they did know about it, there would be a lot more folks with a lot of money, and that is not what the government wants to happen. They want to keep the money within their control. (However, the word did get out regarding Iraq, and about 15 million U.S. citizens are holding Iraqi and other currencies, waiting for the revaluation.)

Another example: What if you learned there was much more to the truth of Jesus' life than organized religious institutions want you to know? Is there source material that is far superior to the Bible or any other sacred books or histories? Is that something that would be worth knowing about? Well, there is and it is not known outside of small circles of people

who search for it and find it, it is available to everyone. You didn't know that, did you? It's because you didn't know it, and you didn't realize you didn't know it. That's how buried it is in our civilization. If many more people were aware of it, it would change the entire dynamic of how we live on Earth.

But that is now a sufficient reason for us to think what we think, because no matter the number of sources for information, right or wrong, we can only take in so much. And that so much is usually dependent upon our unique interests at heart. If I am a gun-toting ultra-right conservative republican or a tree-hugging, progressive, you can bet I am unique in either situation when compared to any other conservative or progressive. No two of us are alike.

Getting back to belief, the question you should ask yourself is how important your beliefs are in your life. What are they, these beliefs, anyway?

Someone said that beliefs are merely what we have been thinking for a long time, that they become instilled in us as "truths" that then need constant support from the outside world to sustain them. Thus, if they are attacked or in some way come under suspicion as being wrong, they can tear us apart emotionally and mentally. At the same time, physically, they can cause tremendous damage to ourselves and others—for example, the current upheavals over same sex marriages. Worse still, the system of beliefs one holds can be the catalyst for destruction all by itself. Witness the rise of the "Islamic state." Death and violence worldwide in the guise of a belief.

There is some good news. Inherent in ourselves are things that we know but we don't know we know them. This calls for another box. Each of us has built into us certain influences—we might call them circuits or even spirits—that are with us all the time. These influences know everything. And sometimes they reach out to us....



Why We Think What We Think

As mentioned above, we hold certain views for various reasons. And besides peers, parents, and priests as we were younger, we are bombarded with all kinds of facts, information, rumors, speculations, television and movies, magazines, books, video games, falsehoods, Facebook, Twitter, emails and e-newsletters, and other sources of material (to name a few) coming to us every hour of every day. Is it any wonder each of us had a different view on almost everything? Even within the same small community, there can be a huge gulf between the opinions of one individual and another, one group and another.

But that is now a sufficient reason for us to think what we think, because no matter the number of sources for information, right or wrong, we can only take in so much. And that so much is usually dependent upon our unique interest at heart. If I am a gun-toting ultra-right conservative republican or a tree-hugging, progressive, you can bet I am

unique in either situation when compared to any other conservative or progressive. No two of us are alike.





Why do we even think what we think?

So I am unique, but why? I have almost the exact same DNA as my parents, my neighbors, and even my countrymen. In fact, it is almost exactly the same as every person on the planet, and very, very close to frogs. So that must not be it.

Is it something integral to my brain? Probably not, since most brains are similar as well. What about the mind? Now there is something that could be unique, and is. Just think of all the external influences out there in the world (as mentioned above) that have an impact upon the mind, not to mention things like drugs. Is it no wonder everyone's is different? And what about internal influences upon the mind? Well, yes, there are some of those, too, such as chemical imbalances or other internal factors that alter the mind. And some that science does not recognize yet, perhaps never will, since they can't be proven.



Can we choose what to think?

But some of the most significant influences on what we believe and think come from within. After all, it is up to us what we think about, when we think it, why we choose to think it, and how we approach our thinking. In most cases, the choice is ultimately ours. For example, if someone pokes

you in the eye, it is up to you how to construct a response. If you lack self-control, you may lash out. However, that is still a choice. First, you chose not to exercise self-control, and then you decided to strike back. You could have realized it was probably a mistake and refrained from striking back. Even if it was intentional, you could have chosen to respond with just an “ouch.” Or you could choose to “turn the other cheek.”

The choices we make regarding what to think about often lead us to make our most significant life decisions. Whom to befriend, whom to date, or whom to marry; which school to attend; which job to take; what I want to be when I grow up? Fortunately, most of these decisions, while very significant in our lives, stem from relatively simple processes that begin with our best beliefs about who we are and who we want to become. Few of us are hindered by strict religious protocols or other cultural mores when making these choices. However, that is not as true in other parts of the world.



How is belief different from knowledge?

People can believe a wide range of things. Some of these beliefs are based on facts, some on wishful thinking, some on experience, some on education, some on peer pressure, and some on dogma from religion or political viewpoints derived from outside sources. And some from actual intellectual processes that involve reason, intuition, revelation, and a combination of some or all of these things.

To think you know something is not enough. True knowledge involves a combination of clear thinking, intellectual insight, and a good deal of faith.



“Faith? How did that get in there? Think of it this way. Everything you know, or think you know, is processed through your mind. You never actually have any real evidence except that which is mind-processed. So the faith part comes into play as you make the leap from what you think you know to what you actually do know, that you are so positive that what you know is true that there cannot be much else out there for you to discover.

Now, this is not the same as what we call “blind” faith, such as saying, “Sure, it will all work out.”



Why our commonplace understanding of science leads us to erroneous thinking.

To most folks, unless you are an unusually insightful scientist, you take science as the answer to all our problems: curing diseases, traveling to distant planets, solving intricate crimes with nothing but circumstantial evidence, and living longer and healthier lives through chemistry. However, while science has been viewed by many for centuries as the savior of the human race, it has also provided us with numerous false starts, misleading knowledge, and unreliable guideposts. It seems that science evolves alongside us, and what was once considered a fact may no longer be so today.

As I see it, science is handicapped by two very large and erroneous ideas: one, it limits its understanding of the known world to evidence derived from experimentation and observation; and two, it projects its presumptuous arrogance into the future, assuring us of its ability to solve all problems. I know this is an oversimplification, but it reflects the reality of our common understanding. Whether a scientist would agree that this is what is going on is immaterial; this is the perceived reality of the power of science.

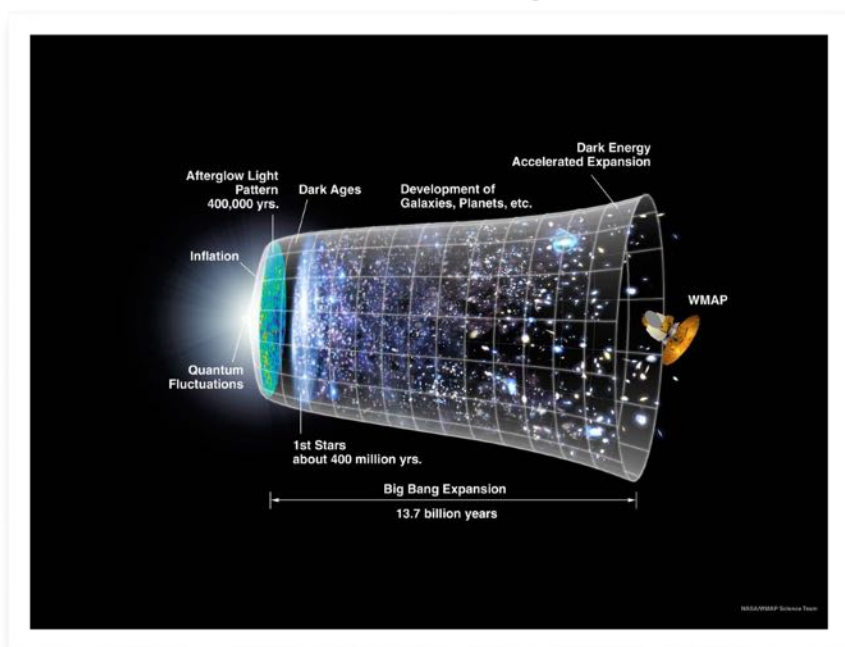
The same idea applies to the power of medical science as well—that medicine will eventually solve all our health problems. Added to this is that medical science goes even further, to the extent of hindering the exploration of

alternative approaches to tackling many of today's health issues. The effects of placebos suggest there is more to science than meets the microscope.

Science would be better served if it admitted its limitations and let it go.

C H A P T E R 2

The Limits of Scientific Thinking



First cause... or causes?

Science struggles with a first cause, but cannot come up with a satisfactory answer. The explanation of the Big Bang is the best it can do for the origin of our universe. How

did it come to that? Perhaps cosmic evidence suggests such a beginning, but are there other alternative “beginnings”?



Evidentiary requirements

The lack of other evidence that can be proven is what prevents science from going there. Notice that science has not proven the Big Bang either, certainly not its cause; it is just a hypothesis based on a scientific understanding of the universe. The world is full of stuff that science cannot prove or disprove. And because it can not prove something, it is said to be non-existent. Yet the history of science shows us thousands of things that science once believed but were proven false when later scientific evidence came along. The Earth was once believed to be flat; the sun and stars circled around our planet. Ether (also “aether”) was “...*a space-filling substance or field, thought to be necessary as a transmission medium for the propagation of electromagnetic or gravitational forces...*,” including light, sun, and other rays. It was argued as “...*an attempt has been made to explain electromagnetic phenomena by means of mechanical action transmitted from one body to another by means of a medium occupying the space between them.*” So much for ether.



Imagined supremacy of science

From my background in urban design, I understand the limitations of scientific theory as applied to the design and functioning of cities. Certain features of a city are important for creating a lively, thriving, and safe environment—this is not something that science can fully comprehend or theorize about. If it does attempt to do so, it becomes philosophy rather than science, as much of human thought, feeling, and behavior lies beyond the scope of scientific inquiry.

Similarly, this is what happens when science attempts to tackle subjects such as the origin of life or life on other planets. It succumbs to mere philosophy since it is trying to deal with forces far outside its understanding and provability.

While we like to think, if only for reasons of self-assuredness, that science helps us understand the underlying structure of life and the universe, as it certainly does with the physical laws of this universe as far as we have discovered it really is also stumbling its way through history, sometimes being right and sometimes not. Notice I said “as far as we have discovered them,” because we know that we have not discovered everything there is to know about our physical world, our material universe. In fact, I suspect we have only scratched the surface of what remains to be learned, let alone understood.

An example: The science of mathematics, physics, or chemistry could never have predicted that the union of a single atom of oxygen, a gas, with two hydrogen atoms, also a gas, could have resulted in the most amazing liquid that we know as water.

Or, *“The philosophy of the universe cannot be predicated on the observations of so-called science. If such a metamorphosis could not be seen, a scientist would be inclined to deny the possibility of developing a butterfly out of a caterpillar.”*



What science may someday discover

There are sources of information that come to us from beyond our world, and they come all the time. The fact that science, nor anyone on this plane of existence, cannot prove the information coming to us— as they cannot prove the existence, scientifically, of the source of this information — does not make it less of a fact. While many things can or cannot be proved, facts are facts; they are not hypotheses, concepts, beliefs, or philosophical ideas.

Here are some of the things that science will likely someday discover, but has not as yet.

- * There is a source of energy that has yet to be discovered on Earth.

- * There is indeed life on other planets that is very similar to ours.
- * The natural source of the process of healing living tissue will be uncovered.
- * There are millions of other inhabited planets in the universe, yes, universe, plural.
- * All self-conscious, willful—that is, those that have free will—are very similar to us humanoids.
- * The universe is benign; that is, there are very few beings bent upon destroying other beings, unlike the ones on this world.
- * That true science is never in conflict with reality, nor even true religion.
- * That evolution of species has within it great gaps that are truly gaps; nothing was in between them.

DNA is Not Life

One author I recently came across, while attempting to explain what life plasm was, has suggested that it is what we now call DNA. Life plasm is that which the Life Carriers implant into the newly evolving worlds to start life. It is also the mechanism by which Caligastia's 100 take on the qualities of human beings by being implanted with the life plasm of normal earthly humans 500,000 years ago. But, DNA cannot be the same as life plasm, since it itself does not have life. If these were the same, Jurassic Park would be real. So, life plasm is still something we will likely never understand or be able to create ourselves.

- * That life, like energy, cannot be destroyed; it can change forms, and often does.
- * Some evolutionary species “suddenly” come into existence; this was built into their DNA.

That in this “both-and” world, there is no battle between Creationism and Evolution as they are both coexistent and operating all the time, everywhere.



What science will never discover or be able to prove

- * Science cannot create life.
- * Science’s best explanation of the soul is our consciousness, but it is not our consciousness.
- * There is life after death, even life eternal, for those who choose it.
- * There was no singularity called the Big Bang, but something much more was at work.
- * There is a God and there are angels and other celestial beings that work for our good all of the time.



The problem with science as truth

“Science is man’s attempted study of his physical environment, the world of energy-matter; ... philosophy has been developed by man’s mind effort to organize and

correlate the findings of these widely separated concepts into something like a reasonable and unified attitude toward the cosmos.” (UB103:6.9)

“Science is the source of facts, and mind cannot operate without facts. They are the building blocks in the construction of wisdom which are cemented together by life experience.” (UB111:6.5)

Science deals with material things, ideas, and concepts. The trouble with science is the world is made up of far more than materialistic phenomena. Even the mind that works with scientific phenomena is more than any science can fathom. The limitations of science and the mind that wholly embraces it can result in many falsehoods. Or another way of saying it is that much ignorance, error, and evil can flow from the unfettered embracing of science without due consideration of other, and more important, phenomena at work.

However, as science progresses in the coming centuries, it will increasingly approach the truth, at least as we can understand it. And with it will come new and better understandings of our world through higher philosophies and greater insights of mind, even those we call spiritual.

“Mathematics, material science, is indispensable to the intelligent discussion of the material aspects of the universe, but such knowledge is not necessarily a part of the higher realization of truth or of the personal appreciation of spiritual realities. Not only in the realms of life but even in

the world of physical energy, the sum of two or more things is very often something more than, or something different from, the predictable additive consequences of such unions. The entire science of mathematics, the whole domain of philosophy, the highest physics or chemistry, could not predict or know ...” the result of those combined atoms of hydrogen and oxygen would have resulted in water.”
(UB12:9.3)

“The reason of science is based on the observable facts of time; the faith of religion argues from the spirit program of eternity. What knowledge and reason cannot do for us, true wisdom admonishes us to allow faith to accomplish.”
(UB102:1.2)

“But the promise of science is this: “...man is beginning to unlock the storehouse of the secrets of the natural realms, and his science is slowly but effectively destroying his superstitions while at the same time providing a new and enlarged factual basis for the comprehension of the meanings of philosophy and the values of true spiritual experience.” (UB118:10.1)

C H A P T E R 3

What About Religions?

What are the origins of religion?

Where did they come from?

Now I want to explore another “sacred cow,” so to speak. I am not referring to the Hindu sacred cows or the golden calf from Moses’ time, but rather discussing religion and religious beliefs more generally.

Throughout human history, from the moment individuals developed the intellectual capacity to ponder their existence and origins, there have been thousands of “religious” beliefs. These beliefs naturally progressed from worshiping natural forces—those “acts of God”—to venerating fire, storms, trees, animals, rocks, and other inanimate objects believed to possess a spirit. Much of this early belief system arose from fear—significant fear. It was thought that worshiping these unknown forces would appease the anger of the spirits responsible for many harmful events in the lives of early peoples.

Magic and superstition reigned for tens of thousands of years before humanity began transitioning from the “natural” material world of worship to more ethereal concepts of spirit beings—the gods. Many gods, at times; seldom one, as we mostly think of deity today.



What factors are inherent in mankind that led to the emergence of religions? How did they evolve?

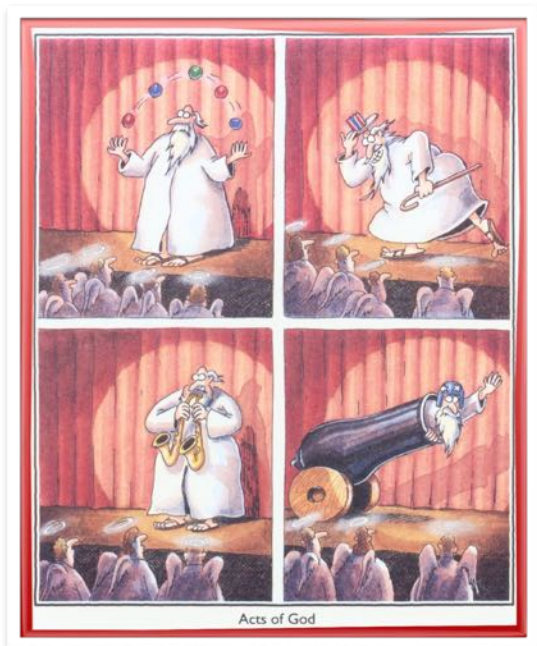
What is the urge for mankind to need to worship at all? Animals don't do it. Why does almost every one of us find it necessary? One way to think of it is this: Man is different from other animals. True, he evolved from the lower animal life form, but something happened along the way. He was changed. Whether he was changed as a result of the "next" step in evolution or whether some other forces were at work is up for discussion. And a lot of it. But why can't it be both?

I believe in a 'both-and' cosmos. I don't believe much, because I don't see much of the 'either-or' world. Some would argue that this shift in humanity was sparked by a recognition of the self in man, specifically self-consciousness. That doesn't say much about its origins. Animals do not have self-consciousness. They are aware of self, and they can think, but they cannot think of themselves as having a life, a before, or an after. They have now.

Mankind is not satisfied with 'now.' It must explore all it can with its current intellectual endowments, where it came from and where it is, as well as where it is going. It does this on several levels: one at the species level as a whole, and

another at the individual level. One could construct every level in between, but there are really only the two extremes.

So what is it about mankind that insists on behaving this



way? If we examine the history of civilization, we understand that it is this uniqueness that has shaped and defined it. It also creates conflicts, wars, greed, and a lust for power. Yet it is all of these, not-so-good events and urges, that drive civilization forward, always forward. No matter what we perceive in the world that appears backward or regressive, such as the current Islamic State of the Islamic faith or the rising crime statistics in our suburbs, civilization will always be moving toward higher intellectual, cultural, scientific, and technological ideals. As does the spiritual....

Or does it?

Of all our areas of significant social progress, our spiritual aspects are the ones that are left behind. We continue to live with our most prominent religious ideas, which have remained largely unchanged for hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of years. At the same time, it is true that the teachings of the early Hebrews in the Old Testament paved the way for Christianity's New Testament, transitioning from the God of anger and jealousy to the God of love and peace. However, most traditional Christians still believe that the God of anger is stronger.

If the notion exists within us that some sort of supernatural force or deity may be out there, then such a being likely exists. And if you are one to find, you must resist such a notion; the fact that you feel such is also to prove its existence; otherwise, you wouldn't feel compelled to resist it. To those who do not know what to believe, God or no God, is still proof that God is there, or the thought would not cause such a conflict in the mind.



Our Olde Time Religions: Where did they go wrong? Where are they going now?

Since my primary experience has been with the religion we call "Christianity," I will speak about it. Others' religious

and faith-based issues are similar to those of Christianity, and they are aware of this.

So, where did they go wrong? From the very beginning, Jesus had a difficult time explaining to his Apostles and disciples what he was telling them. Remember, these men and women were Jewish by religion and came to Jesus with preconceived ideas about what religions were, what their scriptures said, what the coming of the Messiah promised, and what Moses' commandments along with the other 619 Jewish rules meant for their lives. All these factors made it challenging for these twelve men and twelve women to understand the sayings and teachings of Jesus day by day for the three years of following him around Israel. Perhaps the best way for them to learn what Jesus meant was through observing him daily; how Jesus lived his life became the example for all men.

However, Jesus' teachings and actions did much to confuse these men and women. And this confusion is with us today. For example, In Luke Jesus tells us the Kingdom of God is within. The Kingdom of God is often thought of as "heaven," which most people believe is located somewhere above. But *"the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"* meaning already here: *"Nor will people say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' Don't you see? God's kingdom is already among you."* (Common English Bible, Luke 17:21)

So, where is the kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven? "What is "heaven"? Is it where one goes after one has passed on? Then what is "paradise," as in when Jesus told the one thief on the cross, *"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say*

unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (King James Version, Luke 23:43) Or from the Orthodox Jewish Bible, *“And Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach said to him, Omein, I say to you, hayom with me you will be in Gan Eden.”* (Lukas 23:43) See? Same thing!

One of the biggest problems with the Bible, as well as other “sacred” books, is that they are still taken very literally, and the stories are believed by many fundamental Catholic and Protestant Christian sects. Another problem, as mentioned above, is that there can be many translations of the same verses.

Another area of confusion is the concept of the Trinity. Some Christian religions reflect the idea of three Gods in One: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Others do not; Judaism does not, nor does Islam.

Something odd happened toward the end of the nineteenth century. Another sort of Protestant movement arose, which we now call “New Thought.” Today, it encompasses various traditions, including Religious Science, Science of Mind, Christian Science, Unity, Unitarian, and others. While there can be significant differences among these, they all agree on two main themes: God is Unity or oneness, and the life and teachings of Jesus are examples for living one’s life.

This may not seem as radical compared to more standard, traditional Christian sects, but the distinction lies in where the emphasis is placed. In Unity, for example, there is a very strong belief that the Kingdom of God is within, and that the

Spirit of God, often referred to as the Christ Consciousness, dwells within mankind as well.



How can we expand our knowledge of God and the Universe?

This is where this entire series of topics is headed.

But first, let's consider the nature of the writings we have as an understanding of God and the universe. So, do we believe the knowledge we possess about all this is the truth? Many religious believers think it is. Do we assume it was written—assuming for a moment it was not written by God himself—with the best intentions of the writers to convey the truth they knew at the time? Or could much of it

be the result of other motivations, whether benign or nefarious? I suspect this is closer to the truth. Many works are the documented words of generations-old oral traditions, recorded by scribes and later copied by additional scribes—remember, there was no printing press yet. When the printing press finally arrived, errors also arose in typesetting.

If there are reasons for having around 2000 versions of the Bible, they likely arise from some groups deciding they didn't quite like the version they had and wanting to make edits or "corrections" to it. Additionally, some groups are attempting to "modernize" the archaic languages from 1900 to 3000 years ago. Furthermore, the translations from the common

tongue, such as Aramaic, to Greek or Latin 1900 years ago also introduced some issues.

Next, let's keep an open mind regarding the more esoteric sources of scripture, those prophetic words of the so-called prophets. Some of the most valuable and memorable lines in the Bible, from both the New and Old Testaments, are those allegedly spoken by the prophets of that time, many of which fell prey to the general populace due to their revelatory messages. Other beautiful works can be found, for example, in the Psalms, which have been attributed to King David himself. Whether he wrote them or not is beside the point; some are quite inspirational. Think of the 23rd Psalm.

With the above under our belt, it is time to suggest that we can alleviate much of this confusion if we acknowledge several key points. One, the sacred books and scriptures are acceptable as they are, but they do not contain the truth; rather, they offer a partial understanding of a specific people from a particular time and age. Makes sense, doesn't it?

Two, that there is compelling evidence, if not altogether scientific but based upon an accumulation of human experience, as represented by those works AND by our own sense of knowing within our own hearts, that there is much more to be learned about our world, our universe, even God.

It may be time to suspend our potential disbelief and examine what is available for our understanding.

If you had a choice of learning about the universe, why you are here, where you are going, and whether there is such a thing as God, which would you rather learn from? A book from ancient times written by men with, perhaps, various motives, involving inconsistencies, errors, or purposeful deceit; or movies and TV shows starring the latest Hollywood heroes, along with special editions of National Geographic or the Discovery Channel; or would you prefer to listen to one of the many hundreds of gurus available in person and online; or sit down with actual personalities who rise above the fray and genuinely have our interests at heart? If I want to learn what would come closest to the truth for me, I would choose door number 4.



Institutional Religion

The religious problems of today are not spiritual. While the embrace of spirit, spiritual feelings, or true worship activities may be weak in the church or the individual, they are not the reason so few people regard religion as important enough in their lives to spend more time in reflective contemplation of its purpose and significance. People with similar beliefs tend to gravitate toward one another, resulting in a social organization—however loose—that eventually evolves into a much more structured endeavor.

Religions can easily evolve in this way. After all, as we have seen, there is a tremendous pull from family, tradition, culture, history, and other factors—many of which are

unknown to a person—that draw together like-minded individuals to a common space of social engagement, such as the church, synagogue, temple, or others.

“But as religion becomes institutionalized, its power for good is curtailed, while the possibilities for evil are greatly multiplied. The dangers of formalized religion are: fixation of beliefs and crystallization of sentiments; accumulation of vested interests with increase of secularization; tendency to standardize and fossilize truth; diversion of religion from the secularization; tendency to standardize and fossilize truth; diversion of religion from the service of God to the service of the church; inclination of leaders to become administrators instead of ministers; tendency to form sects and competitive divisions; establishment of oppressive ecclesiastical authority; creation of the aristocratic “chosen-people” attitude; fostering of false and exaggerated ideas of sacredness; the routinizing of religion and the petrification of worship; tendency to venerate the past while ignoring present demands; failure to make up-to-date interpretations of religion; entanglement with functions of secular institutions; it creates the evil discrimination of religious castes; it becomes an intolerant judge of orthodoxy; it fails to hold the interest of adventurous youth and gradually loses the saving message of the gospel of eternal salvation.” (UB99:6.3)

Once these institutions begin marching down various paths, often simultaneously, they can lose sight of their true mission: bringing people together to worship. Consequently, some are compelled to assume various roles, from engaging

in social reform to seeking a position in the political establishment.

And while religion “...must not become organically involved in the secular work of social reconstruction and economic reorganization...it must actively keep pace with all these advances in civilization by making clear-cut and vigorous restatements of its moral mandates and spiritual precepts, its progressive philosophy of human living and transcendent survival.” (UB99:1.6)

To think that religion, as an institution, could have much impact is not to recognize that it, too, has bogged itself down and its tentacles have reached into the very institutions it thinks it can impact in a spiritual way.

“Institutional religion cannot afford inspiration and provide leadership in this impending world-wide social reconstruction and economic reorganization because it has unfortunately become more or less of an organic part of the social order and the economic system which is destined to undergo reconstruction. Only the real religion of personal spiritual experience can function helpfully and creatively in the present crisis of civilization.” (UB99:2.1)

Religion “... cannot reconstruct society without first reconstructing itself; and being so much an integral part of the established order, it cannot reconstruct itself until society has been radically reconstructed.” (UB99:2.2)

People operate in various civilizations as individuals, not as institutions, groups, or parties. Any religious group that tries to function in this manner, aside from its purely religious role, is acting as a political entity or another secular organization. The religionist holds no more value than any other person who tends to bring their own preconceived notions about non-religious matters and biases into the conversation.

“The institutionalized church may have appeared to serve society in the past by glorifying the established political and economic orders, but it must speedily cease such action if it “is to survive. Its only proper attitude consists in the teaching of nonviolence, the doctrine of peaceful evolution in the place of violent revolution — peace on earth and good will among all men.” (UB99:2.5)

Today’s organized religions “...finds it difficult to adjust its attitude toward the rapidly shifting social changes only because it has permitted itself to become so thoroughly traditionalized, dogmatized, and institutionalized.” (UB99:2.6)



Memories and Keeping Records

As we will learn about Moses, while he was not venerated as a god, he was elevated to VIP status. However, it seems to have taken over a thousand years before his mighty works, both imagined and otherwise, were documented, and

he was credited with having written the first five books of the Old Testament. The question arises: why did we not do the same to Jesus? Yes, the writers of the Gospels and others created many stories about Jesus, many of which are untrue, yet believed by many today. But whereas God appears as man in our world, how was he treated?

People do not keep very good records, do they? And memories are haphazard at best. Today, law enforcement is telling us that if two people witness the exact same event, they will likely tell two different tales. Now, to me, these simple things are enough to give cause to the many conflicting and missing—and tons of added stuff—accounts of the scriptural stories in the Bible and elsewhere. But, of course, it gets a lot worse. With the exception of Andrew's notes, nothing was written down by the Apostles or other mortals of Jesus' teachings and life until 30 to 60 years after he left us. And much of Andrew's notes were lost before others could read them or use them. Ultimately, they were all lost to us.

Of the four gospels of Jesus' teachings, we have three writers who were present for most of this three-year ministry: Matthew and John, both Apostles, and Mark, the errand boy. And we have nothing from a mortal writer regarding the first 30-plus years of Jesus' life. Luke never knew Jesus and got his material from Peter, I believe. Plus, the teachings of Jesus were never quite comprehended by the Apostles or others. It was easy to fall back into their more accustomed religious experience of Judaism to try to think through what Jesus had been trying to tell them—"and what about that

Messiah guy?” Thus, we have much of Christianity based upon Judaism’s Old Testament thinking, much of it made up by scribes and priests while the Hebrews were in captivity in Babylon.

If you are going to tell a story to capture the ears, much less the hearts, of your listeners, you need to tell a good one. This likely means making up details to make the story more engaging. While a good part of the gospels of the four writers are intact as stories go, they also contain a lot of material that was added over time. History, they say, is written by the conquerors, and the numbers and variety of those in charge change over time.

Now cometh the first Council of Nicea, resulting in the first “uniform Christian doctrine.” Here are combined the many stories that make up our current Christian Bible, but not the many writings that were tossed out. The rest is as we see it today, except that there are over 2000 different versions of the Bible in print.

The incredible missing piece, to me, has always been the fact of the indwelling fragment of God, our Thought Adjuster, that gets virtually forgotten in our Christian heritage. That is the biggest boo-boo. And if it weren’t for the Midwayers’ access to celestial notes of Andrew, and the works of over 2000 other mortals—don’t forget the celestials’ revelatory mandate!—where would we be in our studies today?



The Power of the Individual Believer

The believer in true religion has become open to the idea that religious and spiritual awakening arises through both evolutionary means and revelation. Furthermore, it is revelation that transforms religion from its doubt-filled, God-fearing, and dogma-bound constraints into the openness and understanding of true religious freedom and faith-filled experience.

A true religious experience is a profoundly personal one. And that is the only one that really counts. It is your very own truth within you that insists you know you are one with the world, one with the universe. When you understand this viewpoint and start to live out of it, you truly can be “in the world but not of it.”

This means you are not impacted in a negative way by the horrible and sad news that perpetually bombards us daily, if not moment-by-moment, from all kinds of sources, which do not need to be named. Instead, you live a life as though you are floating above all the turmoil. And this can be true for most people in the Western world, where advances in civilization have brought us to a point of mostly conflict-free life, at least in the sense of the large issues that much of the world seems to be faced with.

I often repeat the wonderful message of Jesus: *“To a God-knowing kingdom believer, what does it matter if all things*

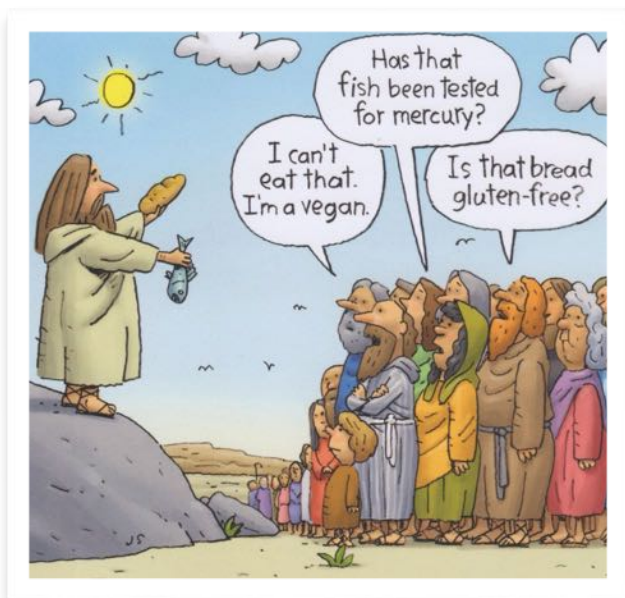
earthly crash?” To know, truly know, that life is eternal and we all have a chance to choose it, is to fear nothing of the world, not even so-called death. (See UB100:2.7 for the entire quote.)

“When the flood tides of human adversity, selfishness, cruelty, hate, malice, and jealousy beat about the mortal soul, you may rest in the assurance that there is one inner bastion, the citadel of the spirit, which is absolutely unassailable....,” if you but believe and bear that believe in your understanding faith. (UB100:2.7)

Here is the key to living this way: *“Religion is not a specific function of life; rather is it a mode of living. True religion is a wholehearted devotion to some reality which the religionist deems to be of supreme value to himself and for all mankind. And the outstanding characteristics of all religions are: unquestioning loyalty and wholehearted devotion to supreme values.”* (UB100:6.1)

C H A P T E R 4

How Did We Get So Far Behind?



How did we get so far behind in our religious beliefs, and what can we do about it?

We can see from above that, while our civilization has largely advanced technologically and scientifically, we have not progressed at all in our spiritual or religious lives.

Yet, this aspect of our existence is the most important. It is why we are here. We are not here to accumulate wealth or find a perfect job or spouse. Similarly, those things do matter, as they contribute, along with countless other considerations, to what life is all about. When you think about It, the best we can derive from life, occurs when we are in tune with the spiritual qualities of intellectual understanding and appreciation. The book refers to these as truth, beauty, and goodness.

So what can we do to make our lives, every minute of each one of them, more in line with what we were meant to be?. That is, as some say, who we really are.

How can we get back on track to where we need to be?

I, for one, came upon a compulsion. I found just enough truth in Abraham's words, as conveyed by Ester Hicks (Abraham-Hicks.com) that I had to get to the bottom—or top?—of the truth, at least as far as I could go in my searching for it. I knew it was not in the Bible. Nor was it in any current religious organization, not even the so-called “new thought.” But could it be in some past religious doctrine or a relic of a manuscript that was recently unearthed and made available? After much searching, reading, and thinking, I discovered *The Urantia Book*.

And if you want to start catching up to where you think you need to be, that's a good place to start as well.

Is it time for a restated definition of what constitutes a “true” religion?

Given the way of the world, I was thinking it might be a good time to come up with a restatement of that which constitutes a “true” religion. In reality, it is returning to the understanding of what constitutes a true religion that makes the most sense, and that is the one based on the definition given to us in T. And I emphasize the word “true” because we all know there are many “religions” out there, come very well organized, and some practiced by single people, some “authoritative” and some seem to be so by IRS fiat.

That this may be worthwhile, it is only so IF any other definitions, as set by those in authority, fail to live up to the standards that, based upon the reading of *The Urantia Book*, are not met.

So it seems only fair to start off with what *The Urantia Book* has to say about what it has defined or referenced as that which constitutes “true religion.” Let’s start there.

The Urantia Book tells us the true religion is one that does two things: one, recognizes that God is our Father; and two, that we are all children of that Father. Thus, we are all brothers and sisters. It is as simple as that.

And from this simple two-test approach, we can take a look at all the other religions around us and determine whether or not they are, indeed, true enough to be called true religions.

And test these ideologies against the behavior of those who profess to follow them.

But once we find that our religion of choice is true from that definition, from here one can extrapolate how one should live to reflect the truth of that true religion. Or whether one should salute it or not, and merely move on with life as one lives it without another thought. That is very hard to do if you are a *Urantia Book* reader, as you now realize. Imagine this: You have read *The Urantia Book* and have found it wanting. No matter how hard you try, you cannot understand or accept its premises, its concept, not even that guy Jesus' story. It means nothing to you. Can you imagine that? I can't, and I bet you can't either.

Here is an alternative viewpoint: having read *The Urantia Book*, you now choose to ignore and denigrate all of the noblest of spiritual and religious teachings that have come to us over the many millennia that fill so many books of all kinds. That one is easier to imagine. And I suspect many UB readers might feel this way.

But should you?

In the first place, all of these other books, doctrines, dogmas, rituals, and so forth, did bring us to where we are now. In that context, they also brought us the opportunity for *The Urantia Book* to appear when it did.

Secondly, *The Urantia Book* continuously uses quotes from many, many scriptural sources to help make its case, and not

just from the Bible, from all kinds of sacred writings as well. The links to the Bible and other books can be seen as the mortar that holds all the UB bricks of truth together for us, as Urantians with a rich history of religious thought and belief.

However, I want to address the reason I thought this discourse was a good idea. It seems worthwhile to apply the concepts within the book and outline what kind of life a “true” religion suggests. So here goes.

First, I believe the definition of true religion should encompass all aspects of a person’s life. The book discusses this as a result of being more in tune with God, or, as it were, more “God-conscious.” It now seems foolish to me to think that a serious discussion—much less a non-serious one—of religion is one that should last only an hour or so on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. If that is all it takes to be religious, then what do we call the rest of the time, the other 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, minus one or two hours? Nonreligious?

Is a religious person merely someone who attends church, synagogue, or mosque while considering themselves non-religious for the rest of the time? It appears that such a person might be better identified as simply non-religious. It’s sort of like saying you’re a football player and play only one game a week during the season, and that’s it. Can’t be done. Or calling yourself a physician and going to the clinic one hour a week, the rest of the time being spent on the links. What would you call that?

Is believing in God, or paying lip service to such a belief, all that it takes? What does that mean, to believe in God? Is it merely that God exists? So, we're done with the conversation? So what?

Is it believing in Jesus? What does believing “in” mean anyway? Or believing “as Jesus,” as the UB puts it?

Let's put it another way. Suppose we said to be a religious person means to live a life that reflects true religious values, and to do so every waking hour of every day. Is that hard to understand? But is it practical? Can it be done? Yes, I think it can. This does not mean that everything you think about God or spirit at this moment. To me, it means you have now acquired a sense of who and what God is, and all of Deity as well as all of the forces at work in and around our world, be perfectly comfortable to let those powers do what they do. Or as Joel Goldsmith said, “God is doing what God does.” That does not require my effort beyond what my immediate job is at the moment. However, I need to be aware of what my job entails and do it to the best of my ability. That is my job. I have a job, and God has a job. We both work. When I am not at my occupation, I still have a job, and that is to be the best I can be at that moment. Sometimes it is the best “rapper, the best reader of mystery novels, the best driver or voter, the best father or sweetheart, the best friend or the best stranger someone can come across. Somewhere, the second mile comes into play as well.

Unity teaches us that affirmations and denials are effective tools in increasing our consciousness of God. I don't do many

denials, but I like the affirmations, especially the simple ones that came from my Grandmother's Christian Science days. Such as "I am healthy and whole." Or "I am love and joy." Or "I am intelligent and wise; I am in contact with Cosmic Mind at all times." That last one I particularly like. I like the notion that my Thought Adjuster, my indwelling fragment of God, is always in contact with my mind and the Cosmic Mind, as well as the Universal Mind. How can we ever really go wrong if we understand this?

Second, I think this approach to religion does away with the necessity of intermediaries between me and spirit. It eliminates the need for elaborate rituals, ceremonies, or specific ways of speaking or dressing. This does not mean that there are not times when having a ceremony within a religious context is not appropriate if that is desired; it does mean that it is not necessary to do so to be in Spirit's grace. I love the notion of doing away with all archaic language, such as "thy," "thou," "thine," and so forth. What does that way of speaking bring to religious feeling? Nada.

If there is one "ritual," if you will, or perhaps requirement, anyway, that is important for us to keep in mind is that we must "ask." This is because our free will is paramount when it comes to our choices. And while our Father knows what we need before we ask or even before we need it, we must be receptive to his good in order to receive it. "Asking, knocking, and seeking" is our conscious acknowledgment of our receptivity.

Third, Jesus gave us two commandments (or just one if they are combined, but they are actually two distinct commandments) and they are for us to know and worship God as our Father and to love each other as He loved us. I like it put that way rather than the old “golden rule” way. Again, that is what makes a religion a “true” one, having both of those qualities.

Starting from there, *The Urantia Papers* contains about 700 pages of the life and teachings of Jesus, with most of those page containing other sage advice from Jesus regarding not only who he was, where he came from, but also the simple day-to-day actions between ourselves and our Father and especially between ourselves and our fellows and the material world. To name them would be way beyond this effort. Just read Part IV and you'll see them all.

Two of them are very pertinent today: one, which is to not force any religious belief on anyone, and two, keep religion out of politics. Religious beliefs are spiritual, not material, and should remain separate. Sort of like the separation of church and state, I guess. No, exactly like that!

So this is a start on something more to think about. Perhaps it is time to go into stillness and get to work. Who knows what revelation will come through?



A summary of new information about God and our religious beliefs

Here is a summary of new information about God and our religious beliefs:

- * A fragment of God indwells us.
- * God doesn't stop speaking to us (it may be that still, small voice....).
- * Revelations can come from any source (but we must be discerning and our Spirit of Truth will guide us). Channeled truth is still truth.
- * The Spirit of Truth is NOT the Holy Spirit, as most Christian religions teach.
- * Humankind's sacred books (except for one exception) are artifacts of man's thinking and reflect the authors' prejudices, biases, knowledge, and wishful thinking to a degree. Sometimes a prophet got it right, but mostly they are just books with lots of mistakes. Sacredness in that sense means fetishes.
- * Being "born of the Spirit" reflects Jesus' concept of the Spirit's baptism, rather than John the Baptist's water baptism, which is still practiced by most traditional Christian churches; Unity, however, performs a spiritual baptism for new members.
- * We are told to follow our truth where spirit leads us and "... *cease looking in only old books.*"
- * Be not forced to subscribe to beliefs, practices, or rituals that we find repugnant or untruthful.

- * And shame on false teachers that drag us back to the dim past and leave us there.
- * Never can a religion of authority achieve unity. (And I don't think they ever intend to, regardless of what they preach; world peace is a game to them to be played for how many converts they can win versus some other "faith" and to keep our bodies, minds, and souls focused elsewhere.)
- * These but scratch the surface of what is new.

C H A P T E R 5

Science, Religion, and Philosophy

“Urantia society can never hope to settle down as in past ages. The social ship has steamed out of the sheltered bays of established tradition and has begun its cruise upon the high seas of evolutionary destiny; and the soul of man, as never before in the world’s history, needs carefully to scrutinize its charts of morality and painstakingly to observe the compass of religious guidance.”

What is the meaning of the above passage as it applies to the current times of transition from *"one phase of civilization to another, from one level of culture to another."* (UB 99:1.3)

What role does religion play in society and social reconstruction?

Does there need to be any separation of religion from politics, economics, and social policies?"



Where did the world's sacred books and scriptures come from? Man or God?

Did you know that there are approximately 2,000 versions of the Bible? Some folks believe the Bible is the very word of God. If so, which version of the Bible should we use? On the other hand, some think it's appropriate to translate into a new version—actually, these are translations of translations of probably many other translations—to keep up with modern times. I can understand that. The problem is, and always has been, that most of the early biblical texts and canons are in languages that hardly anyone speaks or reads anymore. And many of the stories contained in these sacred books were not even written at the time these stories were created. This is also true of the Quran, which scholars say evolved over 150 years to reach its current final form.

Even the New Testament, which is thousands of years more recent than the oral tradition of the Old Testament, was translated from various languages. Jesus, his Apostles, and others in the region spoke Aramaic, while the Bible was originally written in Greek and Hebrew.

And while there are many wonderful and inspired words within the sacred texts, many of which were likely given to those prophets of those times by unknown means, most of the books were written by men, not God. The proof is that the countless inconsistencies and outright terrible events

ordained by “God” found within them suggest something other than deity-derived works.

But the truthiness of our religious texts is that they were not even conceived as such. They represented a blend of history from various perspectives, philosophy, and fantasy intertwined, or a recollection of events that may or may not have unfolded exactly as the books describe them.

“I did my very best to hold on to my faith that the Bible was the inspired word of God with no mistakes and that lasted for about two years ... I realized that at the time we had over 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament, and no two of them are exactly alike. The scribes were changing them, sometimes in big ways, but lots of times in little ways. And it finally occurred to me that if I really thought that God had inspired this text ... If he went to the trouble of inspiring the text, why didn't he go to the trouble of preserving the text? Why did he allow scribes to change it?”

For example, the Old Testament texts of the books of Moses, which were not written by Moses, were created by the Hebrew priests to lift the morale of the Hebrew people while they were in bondage in Babylon.

Another example: The Gospel of Matthew was likely written by a scribe named Isidor, a disciple of Matthew, one of Jesus' twelve apostles. It was written in 71 BCE. However, some scholars doubt that Matthew authored it because it seems

the author was not an eyewitness and dates the writing several years after Matthew's passing.

The Gospel according to Mark was one of the earliest documents written, just before Peter's death, and it served as the source for much of the material in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. What the Bible never includes is the



written record of Andrew, which was created before Mark's work and whose words, scholars feel, appear commonly in some of the other Gospels, and they have dubbed this author as "Q." However, Andrew's notes were all destroyed in the great fire at the Library of Alexandria.

Another: The Gospel according to John was written by a Greek Jew in 101 BCE, but under John's direction. Here

again, this occurred 71 years after Jesus died on the cross. No wonder all four gospels often present conflicting stories rooted in faulty memories and possibly flawed motives.

Many of the gospels of the followers of Jesus contain much fabrication for several reasons:

One, faulty memories that fade with time. If you can't remember exactly what Jesus said, make something up. And since the four primary gospels of the New Testament were written many decades after the events, it is not a wonder the "authors" and "witnesses" had different memories of what was said and what happened. Matthew, while an Apostle of Jesus, did not write his "gospel according to Matthew." It was written by Isidor from notes Matthew had made earlier. John dictated his notes decades later to Nathan, his scribe. The last fifth of Mark's notes was lost before anyone copied them, so some gaps had to be filled in somehow, I suspect. And Luke never knew Jesus but was asked by Paul to write a story of Jesus' life. And Andrew's notes—as some think he was the mysterious author "Q"—were used, as were Mark's, in putting together the other gospels.

Two faulty translations from one language to another can create significant misunderstandings. A key aspect of flawed translations is the issue of idioms. Each language develops its own idioms as shortcuts for explanation and understanding. Without knowledge of the idioms, such as those in Aramaic, one of the three languages spoken by Jesus and the most common language of everyday Hebrews at that time, it becomes impossible to accurately convey the

meaning of the words spoken in another language. For instance, the word “gamla” in Aramaic has three distinct meanings, and the only way to discern which meaning is intended is through the context in which the word is used and its idiomatic application. The three meanings are “rope,” “board,” and “camel.” Saying “a camel passing through the eye of a needle” is less sensible than “a rope passing through the eye of a needle.” A camel is considerably larger than a board, and a rope is more logical in this context, so why use the word camel? Is it because the translator was unfamiliar with the Aramaic idioms of the time? Likely. And perhaps they did not consider it important, as a camel traversing this journey seems more poetic, even if it is nonsensical.

The Aramaic language had around 500 commonly used words during that time. Consequently, idioms played a significant role in communication. To “turn the other cheek” meant “do not start an argument,” and to “cut off your right hand” meant “stop it!” Poor translations are more a matter of misfeasance than malfeasance.

Three, purposefully adjusting the stories to better align with the authors' wishful thinking. After all, the Apostles were Jews, and Jewish prophecy envisioned a vastly different interpretation of a “messianic” figure than the one Jesus ultimately became. Were they disappointed? I would think so. One way to address this disappointment was to begin promoting the idea that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Four, purposefully adjusting the stories to better align with the prevailing religion of the time. Additionally, the Apostles began to tell a story about Jesus that conformed more closely

to contemporary Jewish ideas, making him more attractive to others. As Paul introduced it, let this Jesus become the redeemer of all mankind's sins by sacrificing himself.

Five, outright fabricating stories to fill unknown or unclear parts of the narratives, or embellishing elements of stories to make them more interesting, significant, or dramatic than they were. Examples include the star in the east; the shepherds tending their sheep who were told by an angel about Jesus' birth; Jesus' genealogical record (to prove he was a direct descendant of David, though he was not); and numerous instances where tales are recounted that had no witnesses to experience them at all.

Six, to purposefully elevate Jesus as a miracle worker above all else, much of his true message is overlooked. Jesus did not want the concept of miracles to overshadow God's teachings that He is our Father and we are all His sons and daughters, thus brothers and sisters. Even in the Bible, He repeatedly instructs those who benefited from miracles to tell no one about them. But what do people predominantly remember today? Miracles of all kinds, often at the expense of His true message. One of the most celebrated miracles was Jesus walking on water, which was, in reality, a dream Simon Peter had, yet it remains one of the most renowned miracles. Some miracles are undeniably real: turning water into wine, feeding the five thousand, healing countless individuals, raising Lazarus from the dead, and many more. However, most of His miracles involved healing the sick and uplifting the downtrodden. Even the most remarkable miracle, as the book tells us, was not what we think—Jesus' resurrection. It

is what we all will experience, just as those who came before us have done.

Footnote: Metaphysics and *The Urantia Book*

“When man approaches the study and examination of his universe from the outside, he brings into being the various physical sciences; when he approaches the research of himself and the universe from the inside, he gives origin to theology and metaphysics. The later art of philosophy develops in an effort to harmonize the many discrepancies which are destined at first to appear between the findings and teachings of these two diametrically opposite avenues of approaching the universe of things and beings.” (UB103:6.2)

“...Metaphysics is the result of man’s unavailing attempt to span this well-recognized chasm. But human metaphysics has proved more confusing than illuminating.”

“Metaphysics stands for man’s well-meant but futile effort to compensate for the absence of the mota of morontia.

“Metaphysics has proved a failure; mota, man cannot perceive. Revelation is the only technique which can compensate for the absence of the truth sensitivity of mota in a material world. Revelation authoritatively clarifies the muddle of reason-developed metaphysics on an evolutionary sphere.” (UB103:6.7-8)

“Out of his incomplete grasp of science, his faint hold upon religion, and his abortive attempts at metaphysics, man has attempted to construct his formulations of philosophy. And modern man would indeed build a worthy and engaging philosophy of himself and his universe were it not for the breakdown of his all-important and indispensable metaphysical connection between the worlds of matter and spirit, the failure of metaphysics to bridge the morontia gulf between the physical and the spiritual. Mortal man lacks the concept of morontia mind and material; and revelation is the only technique for atoning for this deficiency in the conceptual data which man so urgently needs in order to construct a logical philosophy of the universe and to arrive at a satisfying understanding of his sure and settled place in that universe.” (UB103:6.12)

Seven, faulty copying of the documents by others over time. The Gospels and the New and Old Testaments have been copied and retranslated over and over again throughout the last nineteen centuries. Is it any wonder some things get lost in translation?

Eight, deliberately creating stories to fill in the unknown or unclear aspects of narratives, or inventing elements that make a story seem more interesting, important, or dramatic than it truly was. Examples include the star in the east; the shepherds tending their sheep and being told by an angel about Jesus' birth; Jesus' genealogical record (to prove he was a direct descendant of David, although he was not); and many instances where stories are recounted that had no witnesses at all to experience them.

Nine, new translations to bring the works into contemporary language. In the past, there have always been attempts to update the language of the Bible. The King James Version was one such attempt, perhaps the most successful and popular. In the past century, there have been others. With each attempt to modernize the language, to bring the words into a more common vernacular, how much of the original meaning is lost?

In reality, Jesus did not want most of the so-called 'miracles' to be brought to the attention of the populace. Why do you suppose he kept telling those he healed to "tell no man"?

And indeed, his primary message was and still is that God is our Father and we are all His children, leading to His greatest commandment. However, when discussing his teachings, the best most people can come up with is the old “golden rule,” instead of Jesus admonition, “Love your fellow man as I [Jesus] have loved you.”

What makes a document sacred? Four requirements and 13 attributes.

We have all heard or read the stories of the origin of the Christian Bible in the 4th century. But what makes a written work worthy of being considered sacred? What makes “scripture”?

The criteria Mr. Merritt Horn sets out as a test for a scriptural book or document are worth consideration. Here is his “four great questions” of what makes scripture or something sacred:

1. What exists? The great question about the nature of God and the Universe.
2. Who am I, and where am I going? Our fundamental question about ourselves.
3. Why does evil exist? Our moral question to God.
4. How should I live my life? Our moral question to ourselves.

Next, Mr. Horn defines what he thinks are the “attributes and functions of scriptures.” He says scripture:

1. They were written via some special relationship with God or other spiritual beings or forces.
2. They have a unique status and unique authority by virtue of their origin.
3. They carry within their traditions stories of the peculiar circumstances of the scripture's transmission from the first beginning to the present, which has assured genuine accuracy.
4. They reveal the nature and attributes of God and other spiritual beings and forces.
5. They describe the nature of the world and God's relationship to it.
6. They describe the nature of human beings and their relationship to God and to the world.
7. They define the true nature of Good and Evil, of Righteousness and Sin.
8. They reveal the responsibilities we have to God.
9. They disclose the responsibilities we have to each other.
10. They define salvation and reveal the way to salvation.
11. They are used as moral, ethical, and religious guides for living a righteous life.
12. They provide inspirations, they are a source of power to do the right thing.
13. They can be successfully applied to the problem of failing to live.

I had never considered what would define a book as scripture or what would truly make a book sacred. I appreciate the criteria Merritt Horn outlines as a test for a scriptural book or document. But is the notion of something being scripture

equivalent to being sacred? What are the defining elements of sacredness?

Dictionary.com tells us the word “sacred” means:

- * Devoted or dedicated to a deity or to some religious purpose; consecrated; or holy.
- * Entitled to veneration or religious respect by association with divinity or divine things; holy.
- * Pertaining to or connected with religion (opposed to secular or profane): sacred music; sacred books.
- * Reverently dedicated to some person, purpose, or object: a morning hour sacred to study.
- * Regarded with reverence: the sacred memory of a dead hero.
- * Secured against violation, infringement, etc., as by reverence or sense of right:
- * Sacred oaths; sacred rights.
- * Properly immune from violence, interference, etc., as a person or office.

According to Wikipedia, the term "sacred" means revered due to its association with holiness. Holiness, or sanctity, is, in general, the state of being holy (perceived by religious individuals as associated with divinity) or sacred (considered worthy of spiritual respect or devotion, or inspiring awe or reverence among believers).

There is a connection, but is it true that all scripture is sacred, while not all that is sacred is scripture? Or is sacredness simply a subjective notion that an individual or group assigns to an idea or object, such as a book, music, or a

deity? I don't think anyone claims that God is sacred. But is the Bible or the Koran considered sacred? If so, who determines that? Aside from Mr. Horn's criteria, what authority exists to declare something as sacred?

Returning to scripture, is it considered sacred? Or can scripture be sacred without being subject to sacredness? Dictionary.com on scripture:

- * Often, Scriptures. Also called Holy Scripture, Holy Scriptures. the sacred writings of the Old or New Testaments or both together.
- * (Often lowercase) any writing or book, especially when of a sacred or religious nature.
- * (Sometimes lowercase) a particular passage from the Bible; text.

Again, according to Wikipedia, religious texts, also known as scripture, scriptures, holy writ, or holy books, are the writings that various religious traditions regard as sacred or central to their beliefs. Many religions and spiritual movements hold that their sacred texts are divinely or supernaturally revealed or inspired.

I suggest that the distinction between what is scripture and what is sacred is a very subjective notion. One thing is clear: scripture is a noun, while sacred is an adjective. Another point is clear: scripture refers to documents, texts, or books, whereas sacredness can be applied to almost anything that someone wishes to call sacred, such as a sacred altar, cow, cross, book, person, statue, mountain, and so on. I think I

will take a pause before using the word "sacred" in the future. It is beginning to lose the meaning it once had, somewhat like cheapening it.

If one were to test the Bible against Mr. Horn's list of "attributes and functions of scripture," I suspect that someone with a viewpoint similar to mine would find that the Bible lacks many of the attributes and functions listed. Perhaps it is not so much that it is missing, but rather that it contains numerous errors. For instance, number 7 states that it should "define the nature of human beings and their relationship to God and to the world," yet it is filled with contradictions and inaccuracies. The Bible portrays God as exhibiting a wide range of characteristics and moods, from jealousy and anger to love and everything in between. By reading *The Urantia Book*, we begin to understand why the Bible was written as it was at the time, but this has led to the mistaken perception of God ever since.



Bart D. Erhman

Several years ago, I came across the works of Bart D. Ehrman. His background was that of a religious and biblical scholar, but after many years of struggling to believe in his work, he became discouraged and took on a new challenge: to tell the story of how biblical and scriptural works have been misquoted, altered (often intentionally), and in many cases fabricated. His books include "Forged: Writing in the Name of God—Why the Bible's Authors Are

Not Who We Think They Are"; "Jesus, Interrupted—Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them)"; "Misquoting Jesus—The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why"; and others that can be found on Amazon.

"I did my very best to hold on to my faith that the Bible was the inspired word of God with no mistakes and that lasted for about two years ... I realized that at the time we had over 5,000 manuscripts of the New Testament, and no two of them are exactly alike. The scribes were changing them, sometimes in big ways, but lots of times in little ways. And it finally occurred to me that if I really thought that God had inspired this text ... If he went to the trouble of inspiring the text, why didn't he go to the trouble of preserving the text? Why did he allow scribes to change it?"

He also tells us that while most seminaries teach the story of the writings of the sacred works, ministers and others are reluctant to share the same stories with their congregants—fearing they might lose their flocks.

Much of what Erhman tells us lines up with *The Urantia Book* text. Here is a quote by Mr. Erhman from Wikipedia:

For those interested in more of this material, I highly recommend his books. They were very well-researched and thoughtfully and convincingly articulated.



Religion, Society, and the World Today

The world today seems to be a technological, economic, and social high-speed runaway train. I'm sure it feels like that to many. Our earthly cultures are, for the most part, connected in these three areas, and it is impossible for the culture to pause, take stock, and reconsider the situations in which it finds itself. After all, it is a culture and not a person. Through the internet, we have, indeed, a worldwide web of arachnid-like connections that wraps around the globe, connecting every country—every person—economically (monetary policy and trade), socially (witness some of the members of this class), and the technology of one discipline now transmutes into the technologies of other disciplines around the world in a disciplines around the world in a matter of days, if not minutes.

Established traditions of a distant cultural or ethnic group once maintained its own tight-knit, close, and closed social institutions, relative to today's world. (I like the steamship analogy of the book as it is also reminiscent of those olden times, long before high-speed rail and jet aircraft made the connections from “bay to bay.”) Today, it feels as though we are flying at supersonic speeds over those high seas in the Starship Enterprise.

The warning we had received, “...*the soul of man, as never before in the world's history, needs carefully to scrutinize its charts of morality and painstakingly to observe the compass of religious guidance....*” is one directed at each of us individually, as well as to society as a whole. (UB99:1.3)

The burden of religious thought, while its load is light, is not always tied to the yoke of guidance. Today, as in much of our past, we are overly indulged in self-aggrandizement and materialism, giving little thought to what might really – and likely – lie ahead.

Yes, we are moving from “one phase of civilization into another, from one level of culture to another.” But what kind of culture will it be? There is considerable evidence suggesting that a disruption will occur first, forcing us into a completely new culture that we had not anticipated. Jesus spoke of it. Will we be ready?

As an individual of this society, I plan to be as ready as I can be, for I understand the truth does not lie out there in the worldly affairs of men, but within. To the extent I can lead others to this way, good, knowing we will be okay regardless. This is where religion will play its role, for it is made up of the personal religious experiences we each have and can share. *“Religion must act as the cosmic salt which prevents the ferments of progression from destroying the cultural savor of civilization. These new social relations and economic upheavals can result in lasting brotherhood only by the ministry of religion.”* (UB99:1.4)”

And on the issue of separation of church and state, our founding fathers of this nation stated its importance. It was also one of the warnings Jesus spoke of, and the UB addresses this as well. In today’s world, we see attempts to establish one religion as the foundation of the state, which

has resulted in disaster. Disaster manifests in many forms: religious intolerance and bigotry, economic stagnation, cultural and technological decline, and particularly the violation of women's rights, to name just a few. Consider many countries in the Middle East and parts of Asia.

I agree with the UB on this point: *“But religion should not be directly concerned either with the creation of new social orders or with the preservation of old ones. True religion does oppose violence as a technique of social evolution, but it does not oppose the intelligent efforts of society to adapt its usages and adjust its institutions to new economic conditions and cultural requirements.”* (UB99:0.2)



Is it me? Or is the world going crazy?

In 2016, I felt called upon to initiate a process of understanding the factual conditions that underlie our world's seemingly complex web of hidden or secret agendas, which many people carry with them, and to try to get to the bottom of some of them, to the extent possible.

I started on three books about Islam, two of which focused on the radicalization of the religion itself, the beliefs of Islamists, the ones we hear about causing so much havoc in the world, and how, why, and when it happened. That is, on what basis did this seemingly recent uprising depend, and what may be done about it? Two of the three books were written by Muslims themselves, each from a different

country, and both had experienced a gradual change from being everyday Muslims to radical Jihadists and then to very outspoken Islam reformists, whose lives are now under constant threat. The third author, the Peace Prize-winning Malala Yousafzai, is a young Muslim woman from Pakistan who suffered a brutal attack by a member of the Pakistani Taliban while traveling on her school bus; she was thirteen and a very outspoken person regarding the rights of for children and all people to have access to education, just as her father did. Her view and belief of Islam is so very benign, and she cannot begin to understand what is in the heads of those who want to keep children, especially girls, from getting an education.

Next, amid the furor of this election year (2016), I picked up two books by Dinesh D'Souza that attacked Obama, Clinton, and the Democrats on the left, or the progressive side of the political spectrum. I also acquired a new book, *Dark Money*, by Jane Mayer, a highly respected Pulitzer-winning journalist, which provides an exhaustive look at how the wealthiest individuals in this country are funneling vast sums of money to take over the United States Congress at the behest of libertarian and Tea Party Republicans.

Additionally, I picked up a book titled *The Intimidation Game*, which examines how progressives utilize disclosure laws and executive branch agencies to intimidate conservative fundraising organizations into halting their activities. (And we have “civil asset forfeiture” as well.) Now, we have a balance of conservative viewpoints and progressive (liberal) perspectives to explore.

I have also returned to one of my favorite writers, Jane Jacobs, whose books have profoundly impacted my thinking over the years, starting in college with her seminal work, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). As an architecture student, I found her work to be a breath of fresh air in contrast to the outdated ideas we, as young professionals, are fed about planning and design. I used her book as one of the textbooks when I taught at the College of Environmental Design at the University of Colorado at Boulder in the late 1970s.

(As an aside, I am also rereading (2025) Ms. Jacobs' two books on the economy of cities and the wealth of nations. We are still doing so many things poorly that she identified many decades ago.)

One of her two last books is *Systems of Survival* (1992), wherein she “...identifies two distinct moral syndromes, the very moral foundations of our civilization, one governing commerce, the other governing politics...” and other non-commercial enterprises, “... and examines what happens when these two systems collide”—not So much collides, mixing up each other's syndromes and damaging both groups. She examines how good companies go bad and how government and other “guardian” entities, including religious institutions, find themselves in places they should never enter. This is a deep exploration of morality and ethics in our society—moral and ethical issues that have existed as long as civilizations have, but the roles they have played over the centuries have not been regarded as impactful enough to

warrant consideration. Yet, these issues are at the heart of many of our conflicts between the right and the left, business and government, market forces and regulation.

Her other book, *Dark Age Ahead* (2004), examines a culture's dead end: what it looks like, how it gets there, and the signs and signals indicating that it is affecting a civilization. In her insightful manner, she analyzes the five areas she considers the most vulnerable aspects of our culture, which she refers to as the "five pillars of culture." These include the deterioration of the family unit, both biological and economic; "credentialing" instead of education; the abandonment of science; dumbing down of taxes; and the subversion of self-policing within our institutions.

She notes that writing, printing, and the Internet all "...give us a false sense of security about the permanence of culture." But "most of the million details of a complex, living culture are transmitted neither in writing nor pictorially. Instead, cultures live through word of mouth and example. That is why we have cooking classes and cooking demonstrations, as well as cookbooks. That is why we have apprenticeships, internships, student tours, and on-the-job training, along with manuals and textbooks. Every culture takes pains to educate its young so that they, in turn, can practice and transmit it completely." That is why we have *The Urantia Book* study groups and hands-on classes such as this one, and why we must be examples of what we learn from our text.

But where does scientific living fit into these explorations? Everywhere. In each case I am exploring the underbelly of civilization; its beliefs (false and true) and moral imperatives and foundations; its corruptions, of which there are many; its disintegrating “pillars” of culture; and its hidden and secret manipulations of mostly unseen and unjust material forces and fraudulent intellectual ideas at work that are the causes of our most profound problems and human beings in a human world.

No small task, but I have all the time in the world to undertake it.

The exciting thing about this exploration is that I was led to undertake it. I believe it was through my understanding of *The Urantia Book* concepts and applications, and my appreciation of Jesus' life and his works as given to us, that I feel as though I am standing on a high mountain or cloud where nothing can touch me, but I can oversee all the tangled, interwoven bits and pieces that make up our civilization. I am in the world but not of it.

To me, scientific living involves exercising what I know from the two extremes of our fact-meaning-value spectrum and finding common ground between my spiritual understanding and my efforts to comprehend the factual side of life in this world, always seeking the truth.

Or I am just plain nuts.



Have I been affected by any of the erroneous ideas of God?

Was I affected by “erroneous” ideas of God? Not really, since I learned a long time ago that God is not one of the Old Testament. I have been in New Thought mode for many years, even before I discovered *The Urantia Book*. But there are other erroneous ideas about Jesus that caught me by surprise. Here is one, for example. In Unity, the idea of Jesus’ “second coming” is one of pure metaphysics. Unity teaches that he has already come, as he dwells as “the Christ within.” I think this is partly because he told his apostles that, after he was to rise again and go to his father, he would always be with them in spirit. This concept seemed feasible. When I first encountered the statements regarding the second coming in *The Urantia Book*, I initially balked. Really? Jesus will come back? My hesitation lasted about 30 seconds. I had already realized the book was quite different from the Bible in many respects, so why should I think Unity had a monopoly on truth? That’s one of the few I can recall. Others pertained to Lucifer et al. However, once the idea of the Second Coming was clarified, everything else became easier.

The Unity dogma is very wrapped up in the scriptures. The Spirit of Truth is not conceived as something other than the Holy Spirit. While we—and Unity—understand the Holy Spirit is all around us, this coming of the “Comforter” or Spirit of

When the philosophy of man leans heavily toward the world of matter, it becomes rationalistic or naturalistic. When philosophy inclines particularly toward the spiritual level, it becomes idealistic or even mystical. When philosophy is so unfortunate as to lean upon metaphysics, it unfailingly becomes skeptical, confused. In past ages, most of man's knowledge and intellectual evaluations have fallen into one of these three distortions of perception. Philosophy dare not project its interpretations of reality in the linear fashion of logic; it must never fail to reckon with the elliptic symmetry of reality and with the essential curvature of all relations concepts.

"The highest attainable philosophy of mortal man must be logically based on the reason of science, the faith of religion, and the truth insight afforded by revelation.

By this union, man can compensate somewhat for his failure to develop an adequate metaphysics and for his inability to comprehend the mota of the morontia." (UB103:6.14-15)

"The truth — an understanding of cosmic relationships, universe facts, and spiritual values — can best be had through the ministry of the Spirit of Truth and can best be criticized by revelation. But revelation originates neither a science nor a religion; its function is to coordinate both science and religion with the truth of reality. Always, in the absence of revelation or in the failure to accept or grasp it, has mortal man resorted to his futile gesture of metaphysics, that being the only human substitute for the revelation of truth or for the mota of morontia personality." (UB103:7.8)

Truth, in Unity, was "merely the recognition of the presence of the Holy Spirit," and not a separate entity, so to speak.

Unity is deeply immersed in metaphysics, which, when viewed from the perspective of *The Urantia Book*, can cause considerable confusion within the minds of Unitics. Co-founder of Unity, Charles Fillmore, wrote a book of his own

metaphysical interpretations of the scriptures. It is a large, 700-page book that defines, metaphysically, virtually every word, place, name, event, and so on in the Bible. And he tells us that these are his own interpretations, suggesting we should use our own. (See footnote below.)



Wisdom that sees both ends

Bringing science, religion, philosophy, and society together is ultimately the goal for continued evolution. What are the constituent components that will allow that to happen?

Science: The domain of what is recognized as fact or reality. As worlds evolve, what is known continually becomes new through discoveries, transforming previous facts, while simultaneously advancing its hypothetical postulates and ideas toward future discoveries that will eventually be recognized. It is ostensibly grounded in reason, logic, proof, and evidence, yet remains confined to the physical material realms.

Religion: The realm of spirit, values, relationships, and faith. It represents our connection to God, infinity, and eternity. It is the alpha and omega of the universe. It encompasses our understanding of faith and our wholehearted insight into our path toward God's perfection.

Philosophy: The bridge between science and religion. It provides meaning between fact and things on one side, and spirit and faith on the other. It is the connecting idea, the wisdom that encompasses both ends.

Revelation: The emergence of new facts, meanings, and values that cannot be achieved without cosmic intervention or spiritual guidance.

Mota: A level of philosophy that connects all physical and mental facts and things with a comprehensive understanding from a cosmic perspective: True Reality.



A comment about either/or

This is not, and never has been, an “either/or” world. It is a “both/and” world. By that, I mean things are never just one or the other; they often include both, and both exist in evolutionary and relative harmony. The worship of our Father can be a 5-minute moment in stillness, or a 20-minute moment, or even an hour each day, but it is unlikely to be a full day’s effort. Even Jesus suggested that could be dangerous. Alternatively, one can go about the normal day, being kind and of service while doing a job, all the while knowing God is behind what you are doing every moment. You just maintain that attitude and awareness and are grateful that you do. How many folks completely lack this understanding?

Next, Jesus had two final “commandments,” if you will: The first is to love God as your Father, without which there can be no sonship, and thus no brotherhood. Second, to love each other as Jesus loves you. To me, those are very distinct ideas. The love for the Father is the ultimate; nothing can surpass that. And it is easier than the second one, which reflects a different sort of love, that of a sibling at best.

One additional point: We worship our Father. (Actually, worship is appropriate for the three primary Paradise Deities: God the Universal Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit.) That is it. Your link to our Father is through our Thought Adjuster. We do not worship our brothers and sisters, nor anyone or anything else. So, to me, that represents a different level of a loving relationship. Remember, the Father loves you as a parent; you cannot say that about your siblings.

C H A P T E R 6

The Universe Frame



Box! What Box? - a poem

The frame of reference that we use
To see and understand the world and beyond
Is but a box in which we find ourselves.
And like three men in Plato's cave
Our world is limited to shadows of reality.

To go outside the cave is to leave that box.
It takes time, but more...;
It takes experience too.
And courage and imagination.
And faith.

For what we will find outside the box
Will be another box from which to escape.
(But an expansion of truth regardless)
Followed by many more boxes,
Until we discover
We are in the infinite frame of reference,
The "frameless" frame of eternity,
The one in which God dwells.



What is the Universe Frame?

The Universe Frame is the reference point from which each of us perceives and understands the world. Each of us can have a different one, and every frame can be influenced by various factors in our daily lives due to our experiences. Furthermore, it seems to me that most “universe frames” of reference—that is, our understanding of the largest picture we can imagine of our universe and our place in it—come from our reading and watching science fiction movies or television.

Most of these works illustrate a rather hostile environment outside the bounds of Mother Earth. Remember the movie *Aliens*? If we were inclined to believe that humanity, in all its science-fiction alien glory, was benign—and please note that this is NOT how they are usually portrayed, as lovable but odd-looking creatures—the creature in *Aliens* was particularly frightening because it was not humanoid at all, but rather a giant, deadly insect-like being, lacking regard, as most insects do, for other life except as potential food. That seems conceivable, doesn't it?

Why is a universe frame of reference necessary in understanding our position and role in the universe? Here is what *The Urantia Book* tells us.

“Partial, incomplete, and evolving intellects would be helpless in the master universe, would be unable to form the

first rational thought pattern, were it not for the innate ability of all mind, high or low, to form a universe frame in which to think. If mind cannot fathom conclusions, if it cannot penetrate to true origins, then will such mind unfailingly postulate conclusions and invent origins that it may have a means of logical thought within the frame of these mind-created postulates. And while such universe frames for creature thought are indispensable to rational intellectual operations, they are, without exception, erroneous to a greater or lesser degree.” (UB115:1.1)

“Conceptual frames of the universe are only relatively true; they are serviceable scaffolding which must eventually give way before the expansions of enlarging cosmic comprehension. The understandings of truth, beauty, and goodness, morality, ethics, duty, love, divinity, origin, existence, purpose, destiny, time, space, even Deity, are only relatively true. God is much, much more than a Father, but the Father is man’s highest concept of God....” (UB115:1.2)

“The entire scheme of universal creation and evolution on all experiencing levels is apparently a matter of the conversion of potentialities into actualities....” (UB115:2.3)

“The final dynamics of the cosmos have to do with the continual transfer of reality from potentiality to actuality.” (UB115:3.16)

“All this must be according to the Father’s plan, which has predicated finite progress upon effort, creature

achievement upon perseverance, and personality development upon faith.” (UB115:7.2)

Years ago, I read a book titled *Stumbling on Happiness* by Daniel Gilbert. At first glance, the title suggests that this book is about finding happiness. However, it is not. It focuses on how our minds, in conjunction with our brain’s interpretations of our perceptions, continually lead us down primrose paths to help us create the best interpretation of an event or memory that allows us to feel better about the event or ourselves as a result. All of this can be quite independent of the actual facts of the event or what we felt at the time of the event.

I wanted to add this to the mix because it represents an additional matrix of influences on what we experience or think we experience.

Example: “...to imagine is to experience the world as it isn’t and has never been, but as it might be.”

Another: “...once we have an experience, we cannot simply set it aside and see the world as we would have seen it had the experience never happened. Our experiences instantly become part of the lens through which we view our entire past, present, and future.”

In other words, our personal frame of reference has been changed, permanently. Thus, each person’s point of view is unique, and it constantly changes as well. Looked at this way, it is a wonder we can get along with each other at all.

Unless.... wonder we can get along with each other at all.
Unless....

“Go to our bosom; knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know.” – Shakespeare, Measure for Measure

Great idea. But can our hearts tell us the truth? One of the things I enjoyed about the Abraham “transmissions” by Ester Hicks is that Abraham gave us a clue about what our hearts were telling us: if it feels good, it reflects who you really are. Something like that. I had never thought about it that way. As if your heart never lies. Today, after many readings and more insights from *The Urantia Book*, I’ve come to believe that the truth of my mind is guided by the Spirit of Truth. However, my discernment is necessary to ensure I am asking the right questions.



The cave, the frame, and the box

I think of the “frame of reference” as a box. We have heard the expression regarding thinking outside the box. This is the box to which they are referring. Most of us stay within “the box” when it comes to thinking, acting, and believing. Those who think outside the box are often seen as eccentric, odd, harebrained, or as having a pea brain (my mother’s favorite) or for not using my head (another one). To get me back in the box, I must “have another think coming!”

Except that I usually stuck with being outside the box. Later, my father told me that thinking outside the box was what communists did, then environmentalists. In 1973, I married a woman who was clearly way outside the box; it was a great experience. She challenged everything and was so smart that she won all takers. But mostly it was in an antagonistic sort of way, and after a while, it became sort of tedious, so I had to leave that non-box behind.

In religious areas, it was “new thought” that constituted the cult, and cults, much like early Christianity, are clearly outside the box. Today, a Urantia Book reader is considered so far outside the box as to be almost non-existent. Indeed, there are that few of us.

Have you noticed how difficult it is to stay inside the box while reading the UB? And not just any box, like a religious box, since the UB strays far from traditional religion. But for now, what is included in the box called religion? Let’s examine it. To be God-fearing; to know heaven is where one goes when one dies, and certainly not something “within;” that if you don’t make it to heaven, you could end up in hell; that Jesus died for our sins; that the Bible was the actual word of God, like, he wrote it out himself! The list goes on and on and on.

But those of us outside that particular box have a different relationship with the ideals, meanings, and values of life. And look at who else was outside that religious box: Jesus, Moses, Melchizedek, most of the prophets of the Old Testament, and many of the New Testament writers and

believers who were generally put to death. That's where being outside the box could lead you.

Of course, those in the box don't necessarily see you as outside the box; that would be too special for you. To them, you are just in another box. To Islam, Christians are in a box referred to as infidels. To many fundamentalist Christians, we UB folks are in a box they call blasphemers. There is even a box for fundamentalist Urantia Book readers and non-fundamentalist UB readers, who like to think of themselves as outside that fundamentalist box, but not in another box.

Here is what I think Plato's "allegory of the cave" means to me. Each expansion of the mind, from its simplest understanding to its most complex, is a new and larger box that constrains us, albeit in greater freedom from the previous box experience. The world that was once the entire life for the prisoners that was freed is now, gradually bit by bit an expanded reality of a new life, which will again be expanded upon over and over again, box by box, until he or she reaches the point of his or her maximum capacity of understanding. For some, that expansion may be great; for others, not so much. This world has certain built-in constraints on the evolution of self-evolvement. Then two things can happen. One is that a revelation of self brings greater expansion or, two, death can propel one into the morontia worlds, whereupon greater expansion is inevitable.

And each expansion from box to box and world to world entails a recognition of the shadowy nature of the one before, *"...that the material things of the world are shadowy*

reflections of invisible but more substantial spiritual realities.” (UB130:4.1)

It is not until we leave this realm that we really start to understand Jesus’ statement: *“Intellectual strivings may reveal the facts of life, but the gospel of the kingdom unfolds the truths of being. ...[A]bout the eternal and spiritual realities which cast these transient time shadows of the material facts of mortal existence?” (UB146:3.1)*

“Human personality is the time-space image-shadow cast by the divine Creator personality. And no actuality can ever be adequately comprehended by an examination of its



shadow. Shadows should be interpreted in terms of the true substance.” (UB1:6.1)

So here we are on an endless journey, an infinite adventure of eternal striving, from box to box until we stand before God and realize just how valuable all those boxes are, how much they contain that is now part of our experiences, our lives, our values. Then we too can call it Good. And true. And beautiful.



Scaffolding

My meditative wanderings have led me to think a lot about “scaffolding.” Having been an architect for over forty years, I have a lot of knowledge about the subject. The authors of The Urantia Book seem to know a lot about it also. So I decided to think more about its role in our everyday lives.

Over the years of studying *The Urantia Book*, I’m certain my personal frame of reference has shifted. After all, with another few years and several thousand pages of the UB reread and partially understood, along with countless other courses and readings, I have gained much more insight.

With this recent experience in mind, I turn to the topic of “scaffolding” and its nature. The word appears several times in the UB. For example, in addition to the ones cited in our assignment, here is another reference to war: *“War has served many valuable purposes in the past, it has been an indispensable scaffolding in the building of civilization, but it is rapidly becoming culturally bankrupt — incapable of producing dividends of social gain in any way commensurate with the terrible losses attendant upon its invocation.”* (UB70:2.9)

Or the events of time: *“The events of time and the struggles of material existence are but the transient scaffolding which*

bridges over to the other side, to the promised land of spiritual reality and supernal existence.” (UB32:5.2)

They even specify what scaffolding is not: “But personality and the relationships between personalities are never scaffolding; mortal memory of personality relationships has cosmic value and will persist.” (UB112:5.22)

When the word arises, it reflects the temporary nature of our growth and experiences as they relate to our beliefs and, I surmise, planetary “knowledge” at any given time.

With the UB as my current, yet evolving, personal frame of reference, I now understand the “scaffolding nature” of humankind’s life experiences, as each one is a lesson for us to undertake and, presumably, learn from.

What I now understand is that all the sacred books and religious beliefs up to this point are merely scaffolding, eventually outgrown and discarded as having been temporarily necessary, but then no longer needed as we move on. And, as we are told, this is also true of *The Urantia Book*.

That's unfortunate. If there is anything in the entire world that seems worth “taking” with me to the hereafter, it would be that book.

That is my viewpoint now. However, I try to imagine how so many others, both today and in the past, lived their lives without any awareness of the scaffolding nature of these sacred books, rites and rituals, sacraments and beliefs. For many, the Bible serves as the foundation and structure, the

shelter of their beliefs. To suggest it is merely scaffolding would cause significant harm to many hearts.

It's interesting to imagine what happens to those folks in mansion world number one when they discover that it was all a temporary fabrication, a false structure upon which they built their lives. Or perhaps it won't matter by then anyway.

This is not to say that the content of the Bible is a false foundation, or that it lacks sheltering qualities; rather, it is the “sacred books” themselves, as books, that are in question. The same is true of The Urantia Book. Yes, we will likely carry with us our own beliefs based on the artifacts of life we grew up with on this world, but even those beliefs will change. We will come to realize that even our beliefs, our rituals, and our sacraments, are not true. We come to know the truth that reality exists independently of the scaffolding of our mortal lives.

“But much of your past life and its memories, having neither spiritual meaning nor morontia value, will perish with the material brain; much of material experience will pass away as onetime scaffolding which, having bridged you over to the morontia level, no longer serves a purpose in the universe.” (UB112:5.22)

“The events of time and the struggles of material existence are but the transient scaffolding which bridges over to the other side, to the promised land of spiritual reality and supernal existence.” (UB32:5.2)

Okay, if all that was just scaffolding, what was its purpose? Specifically, what lasting structure of our lives is revealed when we remove the scaffolding? What remains?

Well, how about love? Faith? What about our relationships with loved ones, family, friends, and our deepest hopes and faith for mankind? Or our relationship with God? These are what we must hold onto to carry us inward toward Paradise, toward the center of the cosmos of infinity and the creation of eternity, these fruits of the spirit.

Then.... Guess what? I suspect a whole new series of elegant scaffolding will be waiting for us on each step of our journey. But, oh, what a magnificent edifice that will evolve out of all those transient and temporary up-holdings.

“Conceptual frames of the universe are only relatively true; they are serviceable scaffolding which must eventually give way before the expansions of enlarging cosmic comprehension. The understandings of truth, beauty, and goodness, morality, ethics, duty, love, divinity, origin, existence, purpose, destiny, time, space, even Deity, are only relatively true. ... Man must think in a mortal universe frame, but that does not mean that he cannot envision other and higher frames within which thought can take place.”
(UB115:1.2)

No small feat!



Dangers of oversimplification

I like oversimplification if it sheds more light than darkness. Sometimes, over-simplifying things can be used to hide more important information. We often see this in politics.

What I appreciate about your explanation relates to the further “proof” that we are naturally good and not “born in sin,” as so many religious beliefs want us to accept. We are inherently drawn by the personality circuit toward the true, the good, and the beautiful.

I have often made the point in my study group that, in addition to our Thought Adjuster and due to the first five—and later seven—Adjutant Mind Spirits that come from our Universe Mother Spirit, we always have the strong urge to do right, to be morally conscious to be motivated to do good. But by the addition of the personality circuit and its connection to our God-given gift of personality, the case can be made far stronger.

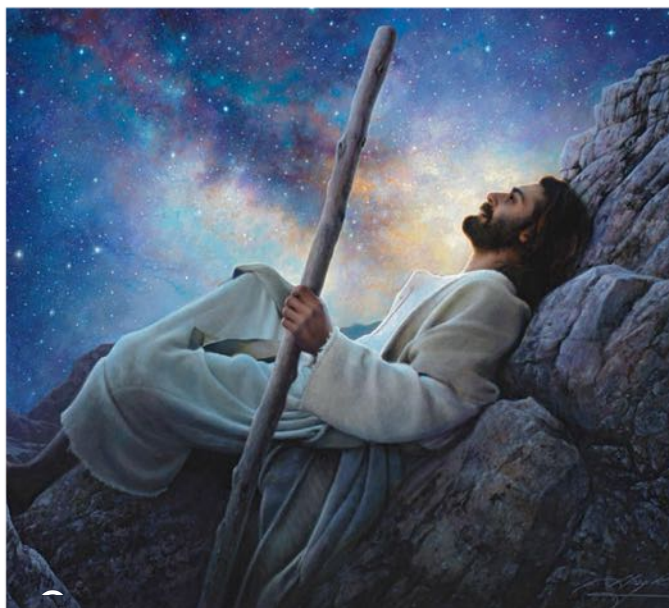
Sure, there will always be those who choose to act differently from what they are being led to do. Or they may feel that the power of antecedent causation acting upon their lives is just too great to countermand. That is why I believe that putting the simplest ideas in front of people—ideas that are the founding principles upon which the universe was created—would be a great thing and surely would have strong appeal.

Or am I too naive? Yet, the “primer” for a life lived according to UB principles—i.e., God’s principles—would be a powerful thing to have access to.

I have a notion that it has been this "fear of the Lord," the jealous and angry god leftover from the days of Yahweh worship, that is one of the reasons people in our modern world find anything to do with a supernatural being to be unworthy of belief in their scientifically-stunted and unspiritual discordant religious institutional belief systems. If we could all get beyond this approach to understanding the reality of our and God’s nature, perhaps the child in us could have a chance to grow into the faith that we are all God’s children.

C H A P T E R 7

The Nature of True Reality



The leap into faith: How is belief different from faith?

I believe that “having” faith is more of an intellectual concept than a holistic way of being that encompasses the mind, body, and spirit. (And perhaps I am being overly

generous when I say “intellectual;” it seems most people go through life without much thought to faith at all. I’m not sure that *que sera, sera* reflects any faith.)

In “living” faith, we are living with the consciousness—that is, a constant knowing—of our in-dwelling Father, as well as the spiritual powers that accompany us wherever we go and whatever we do, even when we are thinking and feeling: the Spirit of Truth to discern truth, the Holy Spirit, our own Mother Spirit leading us through her seven adjutant spirits. Additionally, we are aware that the Christ Spirit of Healing is available to us, as is the Cosmic Mind that we can tap into.

I see “having” faith as being much less than “living” faith. It is shallower and rests upon the outer layers of intellectual thought that only arise when someone mentions the word “faith.” It is the faith that thinks “acts of God” are actually acts of God. It is the faith that to be God-fearing also assumes that He loves you, too. It is faith that believes the Bible is authored by God alone and that each and every word is never subject to question, despite its many glaring inconsistencies. It is a faith that believes God is an angry God, but loves us all the time. It is the faith that, while God created the world in seven days, many can’t seem to create a real, wholesome relationship in a lifetime.

One of the earliest Unity teachers was Emily Cady, whose book, *Lessons in Truth*, was published very early in the last century. She called “having faith” mere “blind faith,” while she referred to the “living faith” as “understanding faith.” Blind faith is feeling confident the sun will come up tomorrow without any understanding of what makes it so.

That may be okay for experiencing the sunrise, but it is hardly worth doing when it comes to the future of eternal survival. There is too much at stake to not be interested in the big issues of life, death, peace, eternity, God, and man.



I think there are many levels of faith, from zero at one end to Jesus' "living faith" at the other. Blind faith is discussed above. However, merely having faith in God is a higher level, and I suspect there are many layers to that category. But "living faith" is what Jesus was trying, is trying, to push us toward. And we can only get there by increasingly growing in our knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and insight of spiritual realities.



Listen to your heart

“Within the heart of every person, there is a compass pointing to the best path to follow. There are no ‘good’ or ‘bad’ paths. They are just paths. And every path leads to a different destination. People have acquired misconceptions about what ‘should be.’ No one ‘should’ choose anything that he or she doesn’t want. There are only paths and destinations.” (11:11 communication, May 17, 2016)

The problem is this: who is listening to their hearts? In spite of all the good advice offered in this regard, we seem to find it almost impossible to truly grasp our genuine desires, to “follow our bliss,” as Joseph Campbell tells us. “If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are -- if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time.”

“Yet it is important to note that following one's bliss", as Campbell saw it, "isn't merely a matter of doing whatever you like, and certainly not doing simply as you are told. It is a matter of identifying that pursuit which you are truly passionate about and attempting to give yourself absolutely to it. In so doing, you will find your fullest potential and serve your community to the greatest possible extent.”
(Joseph Campbell Foundation website homepage)

This is being true to yourself. When you are true to yourself, you will know it because your heart will be filled with joy. Your heart will guide you as it continues to show you the way forward to greater bliss and happiness.



Hope is not an action verb

It is said, “hope’ is not an action verb.” But the word “dream” is!

The world has entered a state of vast and complex economic interdependence. This is true not only for the trade of goods and ideas but also for communications, currencies and financing, health and disease control, intelligence gathering, intellectual property, and state secrets, which are no longer very secret. The greater this interdependence, the closer-knit the social fabric will be, and on a global scale. We are experiencing a significant global upheaval, and the fallout will result in either an escalation or a reduction of global conflicts—perhaps both in the various arenas mentioned.

Man is a dreamer and has historically been drawn to the realities of science and the logic of analysis. Yet, at the same time, recognition of the meanings and values in the non-scientific realms of human endeavors—such as arts, design, philosophy, and music—is once again on the rise. As time progresses and as people become more receptive to the spiritual influences within and around them, they will abandon more mythological constructs of religion and

concentrate on the values of life, where personal religious experience can be viewed as a value-added benefit rather than a distraction, as much of society believes. The advantage is a broader perspective on life, seen through the lens of eternity. Quality regains its value over quantity.

Dreaming is a facet of co-creative action. All physical things that have been made have come about through thought, much of which originates in the daydreams and visions of everyday people. In a sense, we navigate our way through life, creating and recreating it as we move along, influenced by forces both within and beyond our control. If each of us has (in addition to a Thought Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth) seven adjutant spirits, each of which performs a specific role, we would be no more mobile (or effective) than a speck of bacteria without them (even bacteria must possess several of these spirits; consider that!).

Now, imagine the dreams that Michael must have for his local universe! But wait,...there's more....



This I Know, or Believe, or Understand, or
What? A recipe for something good.

What is more powerful? Belief? Knowing? Faith?
Wisdom?

I can see in some of the writings a difference of opinion about what is more beneficial among the words (or we can

call them action verbs: To believe, to know, to have faith, to have wisdom or be wise).

The UB talks about “knowing” as if it were knowledge of something, suggesting an objective, scientific connotation. However, belief is something deeper and more ingrained in the mind-soul-spirit (or maybe just mind) of a person. The trouble is, first, belief does not require any proof of its right to exist, and second, it could be a complete falsehood. Every now and then, someone says to me, “Everyone is entitled to their beliefs.”

That may be true as a statement, but it might be a very long way from the truth.

To me, faith seems heavier than belief. However, it depends on a frame of reference that is not provable (at least in this world) and could also be grounded on false ideas. Wisdom, though, is the extension of belief into faith, and as the UB suggests, it can carry the day because it is based on the truth. UB definition of mind: *“The total conscious and unconscious experience. The intelligence associated with the emotional life reaching upward through worship and wisdom to the spirit level....”* (UB 0:5.8) The word knowing, as we understand it, is usually restricted to what we can know, rather than to what we can feel; that is, conscious knowing versus unconscious knowing, or even superconscious knowing.

“The evolutionary type of knowledge is but the accumulation of protoplasmic memory material; this is the

most primitive form of creature consciousness. Wisdom embraces the ideas formulated from protoplasmic memory in process of association and recombination, and such phenomena differentiate human mind from mere animal mind. Animals have knowledge, but only man possesses wisdom capacity. Truth is made accessible to the wisdom-endowed individual by the bestowal on such a mind of the spirits of the Father and the Sons, the Thought Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth.” (UB 101:6.4)

Genuine revelation provides us with true knowledge upon which to base solid beliefs—beliefs that align with Cosmic Reality. From this foundation, we gather all the faith we can muster to progress forward without any visible evidence (which defines faith) and embrace wisdom. However, doing so requires a committed trust in our Creator, His sons, and the ministering spirits of time and space, eternity and infinity.

“The reason of science is based on the observable facts of time; the faith of religion argues from the spirit program of eternity. What knowledge and reason cannot do for us, true wisdom admonishes us to allow faith to accomplish through religious insight and spiritual transformation.” (UB 102:1.2)

I conclude that we should understand the limitations of each of the words and what lies behind them. Each has its limits but relies on the others. Actual knowing is limited by observable facts, while personal knowing can be deepened by experience, which involves understanding and the accumulation of wisdom. Belief goes beyond knowing, but carries the risk of being false. Faith expands our belief and

personal knowing to reach into the realms of spiritual insight and cosmic truth. Wisdom, then, is the culmination of all these qualities as it seeks Truth and Reality.

To live in the Cosmic Mind of God is to possess all these qualities intertwined so that no single one prevails. It's like making pancakes: some flour (KNOWLEDGE), a bit of baking soda and a pinch of salt (a sprinkle of FAITH), some shortening, and one egg (BELIEFS), stir in buttermilk (INSIGHT), mix everything together (REVELATION), and pour it on the griddle (EXPERIENCE). What do you have? WISDOM? No, just a pancake, silly!



Thinking out loud

Regarding atheists and non-believers, as well as agnostics, I wonder what might spark their interest in the ideas presented in the UB. If they were to move from complete disinterest to engagement, that would certainly be a significant win, wouldn't it? Initially, I find myself questioning what aspects of their original belief systems led them to their current positions. When did the notion that God does not exist, even as a possibility, emerge? This lack of possibility seems strange to us, given our understanding of the vast array of mental and spiritual influences that act upon each of us—both inwardly and outwardly—and similarly, on them as well.

Where did they go off track? Was it peer pressure? Or perhaps they grew tired of listening to some priest, minister, rabbi, or imam droning on and on about sin and suffering, the angry and jealous God, and so on? Or are they of such a scientific yet naive mindset that God is inconceivable as real if you can't prove it? There are probably as many ideas about why God doesn't exist as there are atheists, and so on. Not really. I just wanted to say it.

It seems to me that we should start with their initial objections to the existence of God or the survival of life in an ascension career, and then go from there. At least with *The Urantia Book*, we have the tools to engage in meaningful discussions with non-believers. They would likely leave wondering, what if... Yes, what if? That may be all it takes.

“When we’re in that cold, dark place, it feels futile to reach out to those we trust for help and comfort. How will they respond? How can they understand? What if they reject us or are indifferent to our need? ... But that is where faith comes in, faith that in the moment feels crushed by fear and abandonment. We can fan the flame of our flicker faith with simple prayer, opening our soul to the Spirit of renewal, opening our heart to the one who loves us and who understand us totally—Jesus.”¹

Footnote:

1. This last quote is from *Living Loved: Knowing Jesus as the Lover of Your Soul*, page 107, by Peter M. Wallace

C H A P T E R 8

Intelligence



The intelligence of evolution

When one examines the evolution of the seven **Adjutant Mind Spirits**, it becomes clear that these initiators of mind intelligence, not only for us but for all animal intelligences (except for the spirits of Worship and Wisdom), possess an initial spirit referred to as “**intuition.**” We call this “instinct” in other animals, while we prefer to

think of our own as intuition. Either way, this is what we call “feeling,” a “gut” intuition or instinct.

From this initial feeling arises the second spirit of “feeling,” known as “**understanding**.”

Next is “**courage**.”

The first three are based more on feelings than on any logical thought process.

The fourth, “**knowledge**,” might be seen as the first to involve a logical thought process; however, the knowledge gained from this process is initially rooted in the feelings from the earlier three.

Even the fifth, “**counsel**,” is mainly feeling-based, as are the last two, “**worship**” and “**wisdom**.”

One might think “wisdom” would be based on logical thought processes, but often it is not. True wisdom must possess a seed of truthiness, a scaffolding of logic, and a capstone of intellectual insight that results in a structure of wisdom, frequently disregarding logical and outward appearances, or even the ability to explain it to anyone else.

This feeling in the chest I like to think of as the “mind” of the heart responding with a strong message saying to you, “this is right!” Mostly, *The Urantia Book* talks about the Thought Adjuster being located in the mind (not the brain).

Occasionally, the book mentions the mind and the heart. After all, the Thought Adjuster is not a thing; it is spirit. To

me, that suggests it may not be localized in the material body as we might otherwise think.



Evolution and The Adjutant Mind Spirits

Exploring the Sequence of Appearances of the Adjutant Spirits in Living Things: A Concept

An observation, perhaps. We know that the Adjutant Spirit of Worship, number six of seven, arrives just before the Adjutant Spirit of Wisdom, number seven, and they both appear when the creature is ready to receive them, meaning a human personality or being. But do the other adjutant spirits show up in lower animal life forms one at a time, or do all five of the others manifest themselves simultaneously?

We read in 36:5.1, *“Wherever and whenever such mind is manifest, these spirits are variously functioning.”* This does not imply that all five are present at all times after mind is manifested, but only that they are functioning in various ways.

What got me thinking about this was the careful linking, in time, of the Adjutant of Worship to the Adjutant of Wisdom when appearing in a human. Here is what I came up with:

Just as the Paradise Force Organizers create the physical universes and worlds, the Life Carriers (created by the Universe Mother Spirit) are responsible for life

implantations and some original life creations. We read that the Adjutant Spirits are always present—I assume at least one or more, up to five—at any time when life exists—or is it only animal life? Once things have run a certain course in evolution (which is sometimes assisted through environmental manipulations by the Life Carriers), plants appear. I think these are the “non-teachable” aspects of “mind.” But once animals make an appearance, then for certain, we enter the domain of “teachable mind.” At this point, adjutant spirits one through five really come into play. Keep in mind they are not “entities” but more like circuits of the Creative Mother Spirit.

But do they do it all at once, or is the process, similar to numbers six and seven (worship and wisdom), a sequential one? I think it might be, but while this could be true, it might happen quickly or somewhat slower. Here is my logic. Recall that the adjutant spirits are numbered one through five in the lower order of intelligent life (all or almost all animals), since the higher order of intelligent life is us humans. So, I think the first adjutant spirit to arrive is number one, INTUITION. This is the only one that makes extensive contact with the non-teachable levels of the mechanical mind, which traces back to the Paradise Force Organizers, as the mind itself is material. This INTUITION is essentially instinct, reflexive, directional, and self-preserving—traits that connect it to its very material self. When a sufficient number of “intuitive” experiences occur, a level of UNDERSTANDING comes into play.

This, then, is the adjutant spirit of UNDERSTANDING. It is the repetitive process resulting from the intuitive actions of the animal that lead it to begin to UNDERSTAND things—connections, cause and effect, spontaneous and automatic association of ideas, a conductor of acquired knowledge, quick reasoning, rapid judgments, and prompt decisions. Think of Pavlov’s dog. When a bell rings, food arrives, and the dog eats. If the dog understands that much, he can start to explore how to make the bell ring himself. This leads to the next level: COURAGE.

The adjutant spirit of COURAGE provides the impetus to step out and create the conditions, however unknown the results may be, to make things happen on the animal’s terms. (For us humans, whose spirit of courage seems more acute, it is also the root of moral stamina and spiritual bravery.) Why wait for the bell to ring? The dog can figure out a way to get that food himself by getting around the bell. If he can, and he can repeat this cause-and-effect relationship, he now has some useful KNOWLEDGE.

KNOWLEDGE grows from curiosity and is the mother of adventure and discovery toward useful paths. The dog knows his system works and can get his own food (or so he thinks). As the dog (and most animals, to some degree) are social creatures, it becomes essential to share this information with his pack and family. COUNSEL is born from this sharing experience, species cooperation, and social interaction.

With the arrival of each different adjutant spirit, there also come “differential urges.” But, “... *each (adjutant spirit)*”

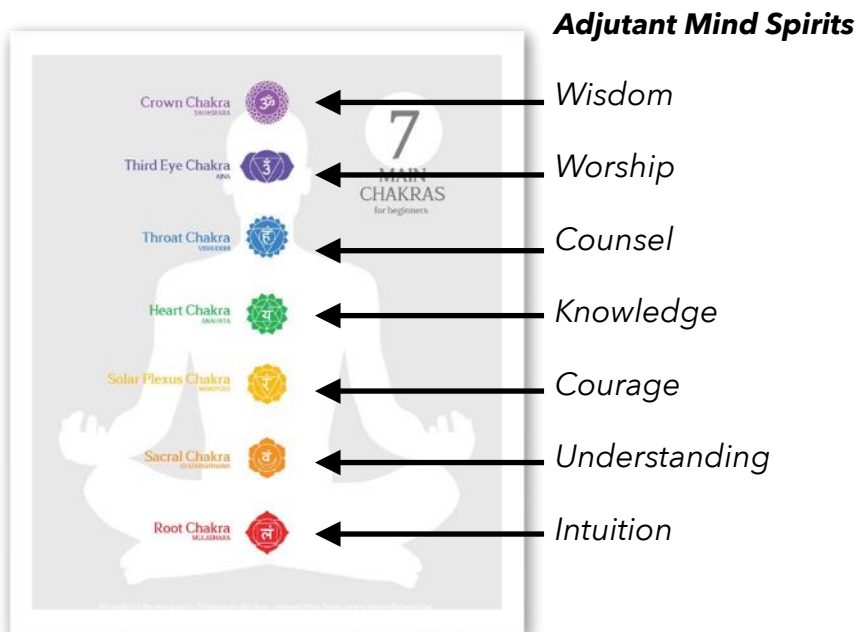
seeking receptivity capacity quite apart from the degree to which its fellows (the other spirits) may find reception and opportunity for function.” (UB 36:5.7) This suggests “... different extents and qualities of mind functions of the adjutant spirits in any living organism of intelligent status.” I assume this refers to animals, not plants or other inanimate objects. (But what about the recent results found by scientist Masaru Emoto in his experiments with water?)

With mankind, the adjutants operate similarly but likely at a faster pace. Since each of the cumulative spirits, along with the Mother Spirit (our Holy Spirit), is working with us, the quality of striving for something beyond our quantitative selves enhances our self-awareness, leading to a better understanding of the relationships among ourselves, others, and possibly something greater. Even if it is not something greater, the adjutant spirits all indicate a cooperative strategy that brings forth a kind of “golden rule” in the animal world. In our case, perhaps we can refer to this as the first moral decision.

One thing seems certain, the book tells us, and that is that the functions of the first five spirits are essential for the other two to appear.

And we know what happens next: Morontia Mind comes into being.

Another interesting aspect of the seven Adjutant Mind Spirits is that they also connect to our seven major chakras.



Our universe, specifically our local universe, named Nebadon, as are all local universes in the Master Universe, has several circuits of connections that influence mind and spirit. In UB15:9.10-13, we find the three dominate ones:

“1. The bestowal spirit of the Paradise Sons, the Comforter of the bestowal worlds. **The Spirit of Truth**, the spirit of Michael on Urantia.

“2. The circuit of the Divine Ministers, the local universe Mother Spirits, the **Holy Spirit** of your world.

“3. The intelligence-ministry circuit of a local universe, including the diversely functioning presence of the **adjutant mind-spirits.**”

But the intelligence of our species—and all intelligent life on this and other worlds

—comes from our universe's Mother Spirit. This includes all animal life, possibly all plant life, and perhaps much more. As we delve deeper into the makeup of matter, do we discover that there are other entities exhibiting

characteristics of life? Consider recent developments in plasma. Or that, according to quantum physics, a photon can make decisions about which slit to pass through before it gets there; or consider the Ultimaton.

We will explore these topics and others in more detail later. There is a direct connection between the creation of life, its implantation by the so-called “Life Carriers,” and the arrival of intelligence.

“Life Carriers can organize the material forms, or physical patterns, of living beings, but the Spirit provides the initial spark of life and bestows the endowment of mind. ... When



the life formulas and the vital patterns are correctly assembled and properly organized, the presence of a Life Carrier is sufficient to initiate life, but all such living organisms are lacking in two essential attributes—mind endowment and reproductive powers. Animal mind and human mind are gifts of the local universe Mother Spirit, functioning through the **seven adjutant mind-spirits**, while creature ability to reproduce is the specific and personal impartation of the Universe Spirit to the ancestral life plasm inaugurated by the Life Carriers.” (UB36:6.3)



The Absolute Mind of the Third Source and Center

But what is the source behind the creative mind of the universe Mother Spirit?

New Thought religions tell us the Mind is one: one Mind. However, upon reflecting on section 4, The Absolute Mind, of Paper Nine, Relation of the Infinite Spirit to the Universe, there is an implication that this is not the case.

As it states: “The absolute mind is the mind of the Third Person [the Infinite Spirit]; it is inseparable from the personality of God the Spirit [also the Infinite Spirit]. Mind, in functioning beings, is not separated from energy or spirit, or both. Mind is not inherent in energy; energy is receptive and responsive to mind; mind can be superimposed upon energy, but consciousness is not

inherent in the purely material level. Mind does not have to be added to pure spirit, for spirit is innately conscious and identifying. Spirit is always intelligent, minded in some way. It may be this mind or that mind, it may be premind or supermind, even spirit mind, but it does the equivalent of thinking and knowing. The insight of spirit transcends, supervenes, and theoretically antedates the consciousness of mind.” (UB9:4.2)

And “The Conjoint Creator is absolute only in the domain of mind, in the realms of universal intelligence. The mind of the Third Source and Center is infinite; it utterly transcends the active and functioning mind circuits of the universe of universes. The mind endowment of the seven superuniverses is derived from the Seven Master Spirits, the primary personalities of the Conjoint Creator. These Master Spirits distribute mind to the grand universe as the cosmic mind, and your local universe is pervaded by the Nebadon variant of the Orvonton type of cosmic mind.” (UB9:4.3)

Doesn't this sound like a lot of minds out there? Yes, but, you say, they are all tied back into the Cosmic Mind of the grand universe, linked to the Seven Master Spirits. Okay, but that suggests at least seven Cosmic Minds, doesn't it?

How about this?: If the First Source and Center, God the Father, bestows fragments of himself upon his normal-minded will creatures, the mind inherent in the Thought Adjuster cannot be the same as the Cosmic Mind nor the mind of the Infinite Spirit. And what about the mind of the Eternal Son? Surely his is also unique to him.

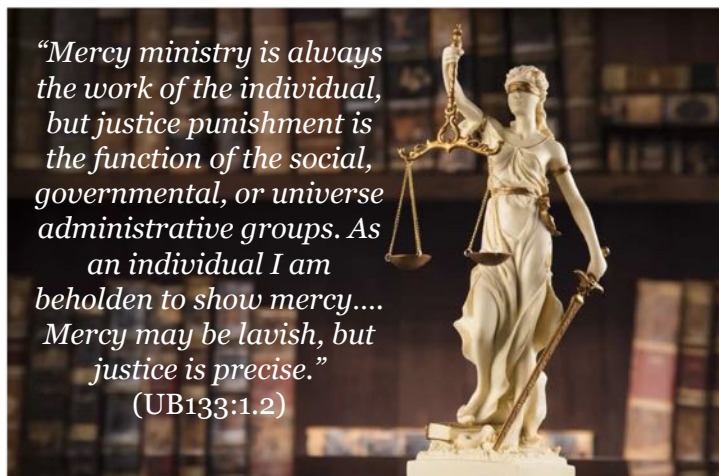
It seems to me that the concept of “one mind” discussed in church is simply a misunderstanding of our religious traditions regarding what constitutes the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. There is not one God, but actually three: God the Father, God the Eternal Son, and God the Infinite Spirit.

Three Gods? Remember the word “Elohim” from the Bible’s Old Testament? Elohim is plural for God, and that is what the Bible meant. Only one God? No, and thank God for that. Perhaps it was a typo that the scribes overlooked in their efforts to single out a monotheistic religion. Or perhaps not.

It makes me wonder if there are more....

C H A P T E R 9

Truth, Justice, and Mercy



How is knowledge different from truth?
When is knowledge and truth the same?

“There may be a conflict between knowledge and human beliefs, beliefs colored with prejudice, distorted by fear, and dominated by the dread of facing new facts of material discovery or spiritual progress.” Knowledge, if genuinely real, is a product of legitimate temporal evidence of its existence. *“There is never a conflict between true knowledge and truth.”* (UB132:3.4) Human beliefs, as we have seen,

derive from a myriad of sources, some conscious and many not. True knowledge is the evidence of truth; its reality aligns with reality.

Knowledge is the sphere of the material or fact-discerning mind. Truth is the domain of the spiritually endowed intellect that is conscious of knowing God. Knowledge is demonstrable; truth is experienced. Knowledge is a possession of the mind; truth an experience of the soul, the progressing self. Knowledge is a function of the nonspiritual level; truth is a phase of the mind-spirit level of the universes. The eye of the material mind perceives a world of factual knowledge; the eye of the spiritualized intellect discerns a world of true values. These two views, synchronized and harmonized, reveal the world of reality, wherein wisdom interprets the phenomena of the universe in terms of progressive personal experience.” (UB130:4.10)



Justice and mercy

I often think that in this world of ours, the concept of mercy is forgotten. Much of the time, it seems, the idea of justice is equally foreign. However, the distinction that Jesus makes is worth considering.

"Mercy ministry is always the work of the individual, but justice punishment is the function of the social, governmental, or universe administrative groups." "... Mercy may be lavish, but justice is precise. Cannot you

discern that no two persons are likely to agree as to the punishment which would satisfy the demands of justice?” “... [O]n this world, such responsibilities had better rest upon the group or be administered by chosen representatives of the group? In the universe, judgment is vested in those who fully know the antecedents of all wrongdoing as well as its motivation. In civilized society and in an organized universe the administration of justice presupposes the passing of just sentence consequent upon fair judgment, and such prerogatives are vested in the juridical groups of the worlds and in the all-knowing administrators of the higher universes of all creation.” (UB133:1.2)

Here, Jesus is telling us that justice is truly the province of group action; however, it must be authorized. Whether the group is a tribe, clan, county, state, or world court, it will be the place where justice can be seen to be pursued. Justice is not for individuals to impose upon one another or upon a group. The concept of group action seems paramount, as it is within this consensus that fairness is most likely to prevail. Of course, it must be preceded by a thorough examination of relevant evidentiary facts or inferences.

When Jesus tells us to “Judge not.” Most folks are not aware of the rest: *“Judge not according to outward appearances but rather judge by the true spirit of these teachings; judge righteously.”* If that were the requirement in each courtroom, at each hearing, for each administrative decision, and in every congressional act, what a different world this would be.

But does mercy fit into the concept of justice? I think it must, for within the embrace of mercy lies the spirit of the law, not just the letter of it.

Though little mercy is shown in our world, we can take comfort in knowing that it is unending in our journey beyond.



“The truth will save you, Scully. I think it’ll save both of us.” — Agent Fox Mulder

Jesus described the “religions of authority” as intellectual, but they still contain aspects of primitive religious beliefs and practices, ceremonies, creeds, and dogmas. These religions require only intellectual and passive consent, or habitual consent, as I observe in their practice. In contrast, Jesus’ “new religion” was based on a revelation of supernal values, insight into external realities, and a glimpse of the goodness and beauty of the “Father in Heaven.” It is a religion of spirit, demonstrated through the active participation of mind and soul.

Religions of authority provide an “easy way out,” rejecting spiritual struggles and eternal uncertainties. Membership offers all the crystallized dogmas and creeds one “needs,” handed down by some over-seeing and controlling leadership, devoid of any openness to truth. They are, in a way, religions of bondage, as they crave conformity and are

rigid in their definition of truth; as long as it aligns with their religion, all others are considered “wrong.”

In the “new religion, it is a spiritual quest for truth, wherever the search for it may lead one and from whatever source it may come. It is not an easy religion, as it entails effort, struggle, conflict, faith, determination, love, loyalty, and progress. However, in spite of all those enumerated hardships, Jesus tells us the “... gospel yoke is easy and the burden of truth is light.” (UB159:3.8) Who is he kidding?

In the “new religion,” the primary appeal is the knowledge of the Father dwelling within us. Its authority comes from the fruits of its acceptance that manifest in a person’s life and experience. While authority-based religions are handed down and linked to the past, the “new religion” is rooted in the soil of revelation and is developed through living experience.

Just remember, the truth is out there.



Where O where is the Spirit of
Truth. O, where, O where can he be?

I found many of the quotes related to scientific living to have a significant impact on things that have been on my mind for some time. However, the first one that jumped out at me was:

“Only comprehension of facts and wise manipulation within the laws of nature will enable man to get what he wants and to avoid what he does not want. Scientific knowledge, leading to SCIENTIFIC ACTION, is the only antidote for so-called accidental ills.” (UB86:7.4)

The reason is that we seem to find ourselves in the midst of the denigration of science as "truth," and it being either "truthiness," as Stephen Colbert likes to say, or as fiction masquerading as truth for purposes other than righteous ones. Now, this is not new. We can see in Part IV of *The Urantia Book* the same tactics being applied by the Jewish leadership in their determination to do away with Jesus. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Hebrew priests and scribes were trying to protect the power and control they exercised over the Jewish populace. And this, it appears, has always been the way of the governing classes. I think what is different today is that facts no longer matter to a great many, perhaps a majority of people. Statements of alleged fact do not seem to matter to most, neither to the speaker of the falsehoods nor to the audiences that should know better, if only by a little thought about the absurdity of the statements being made.

We might be far from a truth-coordinated existence as a nation and as a world. I perceive a chasm between today and the time when *The Urantia Book's* last words were recorded. *“The standard of true values must be looked for in the spiritual world and on divine levels of eternal reality. To an ascending mortal all lower and material standards must be recognized as transient, partial, and inferior. The scientist,*

as such, is limited to the discovery of the relatedness of material facts. Technically, he has no right to assert that he is either materialist or idealist, for in so doing he has assumed to forsake the attitude of a true scientist since any and all such assertions of attitude are the very essence of philosophy.” (UB132:1.2)

“The materialistic scientist and the extreme idealist are destined always to be at loggerheads. This is not true of those scientists and idealists who are in possession of a common standard of high moral values and spiritual test levels. In every age scientists and religionists must recognize that they are on trial before the bar of human need. They must eschew all warfare between themselves while they strive valiantly to justify their continued survival by enhanced devotion to the service of human progress. If the so-called science or religion of any age is false, then must it either purify its activities or pass away before the emergence of a material science or spiritual religion of a truer and more worthy order.” (UB132:1.4)



What is “divine mercy?”

Divine mercy “...is simply justice tempered by that wisdom which grows out of perfection of knowledge and the full recognition of the natural weaknesses and environmental handicaps of finite creatures.” (UB2:4.1)

To share this concept of divine mercy requires understanding, at various levels of knowledge, the causes and consequences of individual acts and possessing the wisdom to use the tools of justice and mercy in a manner that allows each person to comprehend what they contributed to the act in question. Furthermore, it is important for each party to be entirely open, without prejudice or premature judgment, about their own role in the act, whether it is antecedent or subsequent—this means taking full responsibility for one's actions. It sounds like a tall order to me.

“Only the discernment of infinite wisdom enables...” anyone “...to minister justice and mercy at the same time and in any given universe situation.” But divine mercy “... is the natural and inevitable offspring of goodness and love. ... Eternal justice and divine mercy together constitute what in human experience would be called fairness.” (UB2:4.3)

“Divine mercy represents a fairness technique of adjustment between the universe levels of perfection and imperfection...” and “...adapted to the situations of the evolving finite....” (UB2:4.4)

Still sounds like a tall order.

Recall that God's forgiveness is not recognized by us until we forgive all others. We are forgiven instantly, but we cannot understand it until we act. "Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors." Is that what we mean by divine mercy?

How can we be fair in our daily experiences? I have found it very uplifting to try to be so, even feeling a bit tickled with myself (but where is my humility?) In my daily comings and goings, I usually take other people's actions and words at face value until it seems like a mistake to do so. I give a lot of credit where it's due and sometimes where it isn't. I would rather err on the side of being overly fair than not. Occasionally, I have been left in the dust by such actions. The power I feel to dust myself off, forgive the unfairness, and move on is something I thrive on. I thus choose to live in the world but not to be of it.



Mercy without judgment

The question arises: Before obtaining the right to progress in the ascent of the universe, we must undergo an actual judgment day where mercy accounts and living records are examined. How does this contrast with the abundant mercy we receive from the Father? What is its true role?

The simple answer is that the “lavish mercy” is not available where there is no call for it. True, the Universal Father is merciful, but the mechanism of that mercy in operation is a bit more complex. *“True mercy comes only as the beautiful climax to these preceding adjuncts to group understanding, mutual appreciation, fraternal fellowship, spiritual communion, and divine harmony.”* (UB28:6.8) *“For mercy is not to be thrust upon those who despise it....”* (UB28:6.7)



What is fake mercy?

How can one show genuine mercy?

My first idea: To achieve genuine mercy, the starting point must be a righteous judgment. This righteous judgment must consider all facts (evidence, context, and circumstances—the what, when, and how), along with the intention (motivation or motive—the why) of the actor, and the circumstantial factors (state of mind, mental capacity of the actor or others) surrounding the event or events in question. If all these can be discovered and understood to the extent that a judgment can be made, there is one last consideration: whether or not mercy must be applied to reach a conclusion that is truly fair. This is applied mercy, genuine mercy. This is as far as I can go.

We also read that fairness is justice with mercy applied. However, the following paragraph suggests that the Tertiary Seconaphim perceive it from a more spiritual perspective.

“While the spirit techniques of mercy ministry are beyond your concept, you should even now understand that mercy is a quality of growth. You should realize that there is a great reward reward of personal satisfaction in being first just, next fair, then patient, then kind. And then, on that foundation, if you choose and have it in your heart, you can take the next step and really show mercy; but you cannot

exhibit mercy in and of itself. These steps must be traversed” (UB28:6.8)

Comment to another: You provide a valuable service to the rest of us by reminding us that we, too, have personal roles in this process. It is one thing to discuss the topic, or any topic for that matter, but quite another to truly engage, testing yourself against the criteria or steps in how you perform for each of them. Great job. Now I need to take some time to reflect on my own role in this regard. Thank you.

C H A P T E R 1 0

Will



Free Will or Free Willy

What does free will mean? Ideally, it means the ability to exist free of the coercion of others' influences, free to make choices that one deems to be the best choices given one's "concept framework" of what life is for and about, and to be able to make those choices regardless of societal mores and norms. (Some folks will go as far as saying that free will is making those choices without consequences or repercussions for one's own self, i.e., taking no

responsibilities for one's actions.) Thus, free will, as defined above, can involve doing God's will (a nice coincidence—or is it?), or acting out of evil (or error), that is, ignorance; or purposefully acting in sin or iniquity. (These are the UB's uses of the terms as Jesus taught us.) As we know, all such causes deriving from human will (or even the will of certain celestial beings!) result in effects, one way or another. Thus, to me, it seems the best and most delightful approach is to have my will align with that of my Father who is in heaven. Safe, huh? But smart. Very smart.

The problems of the carrying out of our will in this world often result from the “coerced” pressures of others: government, schools, the judicial system, our peers—even our sports—, our parents, religious (and most other) beliefs that can run counter to God's will. Added to these are our proclivities to be materialistic in this material world, to be greedy, to be self-serving and self-important, to win so that others lose, and so on. So many of these outside influences stand in the way of truly being able to exercise one's own free will, even a free will that insists it will do only God's will.

I read a book by Dinesh D'Souza, *What's So Great About Christianity*. Written in 2007, it tells the story of what has shaped our Western civilization and the forces that threaten to destroy it. What I did not know was the extent to which so-called atheists are going to take faith and religion out of our society and world. They are exercising their free will in expressing their beliefs, but they are also coercing others to conform to their viewpoint through their actions. The reason I mention this is that people in this nation (and most of the

rest of the “Christian” world) lack a solid understanding of what religion is or should be, nor do they possess even the most basic understanding of what Jesus said and how he lived. It is truly shocking how ignorant (evil) we are as a global society when it comes to the truth and reality of this world’s story, not to mention the realities beyond it.

I believe free will resides within our minds initially, and later our hearts take over as we begin to comprehend what it all signifies for us and our world. (I suspect some people never escape their thoughts, regardless of the influence of their Thought Adjuster, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, and so on. But does this mean I don’t act without thinking? Of course, I do. Perhaps less than usual, as I am much more aware of my Thought Adjuster and all the celestial forces that pervade our universe now that I have read *The Urantia Book* many times. I believe I act mostly consciously, keeping God’s will in mind.

I act mostly consciously, keeping God’s will in mind.

Must you be fully conscious to exercise free will? Being fully conscious suggests something beyond normal consciousness, perhaps super-consciousness. Many people are fully aware of committing sinful acts (as defined by the UB) or being iniquitous. Meanwhile, evil (error and ignorance) can manifest without any consciousness involved.

Do you believe you are entirely or partially shaped by previous causes and events? I think partially. Who isn’t? Even Jesus was.

Do you believe that all acts of free will and their consequences carry the same significance in your soul's growth? If not, what factors might distinguish the relative value of our free will choices? Free will is not inherently positive. It can be evil, sinful, full of iniquity, or good. It resembles the word "quality," which conveys little about the nature, high or low, of that quality. Likewise, the term "heart condition" applies to everyone, yet some have healthier conditions than others. Therefore, acts of free will, whether conscious or not, influence the development of the soul. Recall from the UB that our soul, at this time in this world, is in an embryonic stage. Its growth heavily relies on our free will efforts to attain the good, the true, and the beautiful. Through the efforts of our TA, our soul can evolve into the enlightened aspect of ourselves that enables us to continue onward.

One other aspect I wish to mention is the idea expressed by some folks who wonder what God's will is for them. (They could wander and wonder about this all their lives, I suspect.) This notion seems unfortunate to me; the idea that God has a specific will for each of us, which we must discover. If God gave each of us free will, as he did with all his created beings, how can he designate a specific will just for this person or that person? No. There is God's will, and then there is each of us exercising our free will. It is this will that we are gifted with, allowing us to choose whether to do God's will or not.

If your will is out of alignment with God's, you can say, "not my will, but yours be done, Father." If your will IS in alignment, you can say, "my will is for your will to be done."

To reiterate, those who believe that God has a specific will for them are mistaken. They are asked to choose, as it is their will that God has given them as a gift to use as they desire. He doesn't want anyone coerced into following His will. We must all choose it or not. God's will is for Him to be God. His wish is for us to choose righteously, meaning to align with His will.

However, if we don't, we usually have another opportunity later. The last paragraph I included in my statement was somewhat of an afterthought. It struck me that I had heard this statement from several people a few times in the past month. It often comes up in the context of them waiting for God to direct them, that is, to specify what job to take or where to move. Things like that. If they are waiting for that, it could be a very long wait.

To pray for guidance is not to request God's will; it is to seek guidance. One still must make a choice. Rarely are the options black or white. A friend of mine says God's will is the one filled with the most love. I appreciate that idea. Search for it. Seek for it; knock for it; ask for it. We must make the first move.



My way or the highway? God's will or mine? I'm confused....

“I have heard people say, “what is God's will for me?” Or, “I am giving my will over to God.” This is one of those misunderstandings about God, God's will, his gift of “free will” to us, his children.

If God gave us free will, as He has given to all His evolving children of time and space, how can we give it back to Him? We can't. To do so would undermine the entire concept of the value of our experience and our learning to fulfill God's will. We can't very well do God's will ourselves if we gave it back to Him, could we? To think that God has a will for us implies that we lack one of our own. This is not possible. If God had a will for us (and He does not), it might be for us to recognize that He granted us free will and to make use of it—not to give it back or to attribute our decisions to his.

It is only by our having free will that we can choose to do God's will. We could not choose to do God's will if we gave it back to Him, or if we think He already has our will.

It is our duty, our responsibility to choose, to decide, to set out on a path that leads us to God, or not. It's up to us. However, if we ask, if we seek, if we knock....

Recently, our music director decided she wanted to challenge the congregation's perspective on the nature of God. She

drew from a message given on Sunday, which stated that God already "...knows what you need even before you ask him." (Matthew 6:9-13, also UB140:6.11) Then she altered the words of the singing of the Lord's Prayer by placing the word "you" at the beginning of almost every line, starting with "You give us this day...", "You forgive us our...", "You lead us...", and so forth. To me, this diminishes our responsibility to exercise our will and entrust everything to God. It feels as though we don't need to take any action; He will simply handle it, whether we ask or not. Sorry, but that's not how it works.

The whole point of doing God's will is NOT to give up your own will. It is for you to choose to be in harmony with God's will. It's like a team of relay sprinters, each choosing to express his will to run the race, and together they will succeed. If either one gives his will to the other, the race falls apart, "whatever...."

Jesus "...came to create in man a new spirit, a new will - to impart a new capacity for knowing the truth, experiencing compassion, and choosing goodness - the will to be in harmony with God's will,...." (UB140:8.32) And, "When God's will is your law, you are noble slave subjects; but when you believe in this new gospel of divine sonship, my Father's will becomes your will, and you are elevated to the high position of the free children of God, liberated sons of the kingdom." (UB: 141:2.2)



What does it mean to me to do the will of God?

Is it my conscious intention to seek and discern the will of God moment by moment as Jesus did throughout my life? That would be nice, but perhaps it's impossible. Did Jesus have God's will in mind at every moment? I suspect not. He, too, had the mundaneness of human existence to contend with each day, although he occasionally had some assistance. His assistance came primarily from his Thought Adjuster, who was pre-personal until his baptism. His Thought Adjuster became aware to him at an early age and aided his thinking throughout his youth and into early adulthood. His profound understanding of things, which the Thought Adjuster surely conveyed to him, allowed him to live a relatively worry-free and fearless life.

I wish we could all have personal Thought Adjusters like his. But since we don't, let's not even go there.

For me, doing the will of God means remembering that it has little to do with our actual material world, such as what we eat, buy, where we go, and so on. What DOES it have to do with our thoughts, words, and deeds in relation to our brothers and sisters here on Urantia? To the extent that my purchases impact others in our beautiful world, I need to be mindful. Otherwise, much of life can be lived without being concerned about God's will. Ignoring this could be crippling. God's will occupies my thoughts much of the time; I

consciously try to seek and discern God's will quite often, especially when I know it could lead to a more benevolent outcome for myself or others, and because I find it enjoyable to sort out what that will is.

For example, we are concerned today with the “Islamic State,” which is neither Islamic nor a state. But who are those individuals, and where do they fit into my understanding of God's will? Does each IS terrorist—er, excuse me, freedom fighter—truly believe he or she is doing God's will? Perhaps, and I think they genuinely believe they are. If so, how should I regard the actions and results of those individuals? What about my own reactions to what I see on TV?



The power of choice

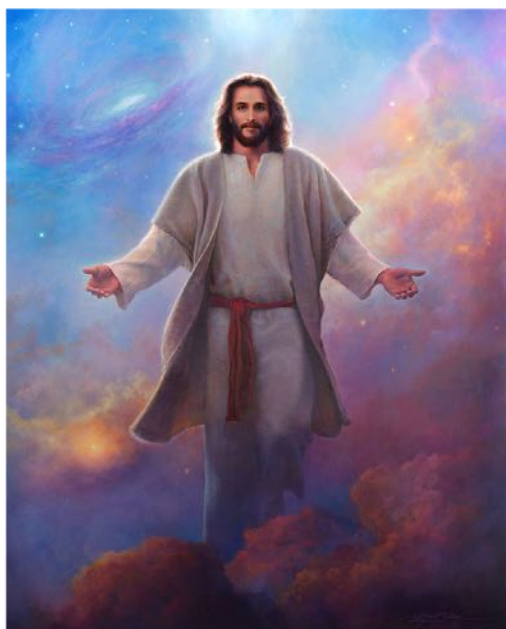
“The moment the Creators bring into existence evolving individuals with the power of choice, that moment a departure is made from the smooth working of divine perfection...” (UB25:3.7)

In this world, choice is what drives experience. For a perfect being, existential beings experience choice differently; it is suggested that such choice may not exist—if it does, it's not between good and evil (ignorance), but rather between one good and another good, that is, between two perfectly good alternatives. I am guessing here. However, perfected beings

also possess a different sense of time and no time. This is bound to impact the entire notion of choice, which occurs in time. If we had access to the Conciliators, we would have access to the highest truth we could comprehend. That truth is more powerful, more meaningful, and insightful than the best mortal mediators and judges we can produce here on Urantia. Difference? Duh!

C H A P T E R 1 1

Divine Love



What is the nature of divine love?

Our word “love” is insufficient to convey the depth of meaning and values that our Father has for His creations, including us. But it is the best word we have, I suppose. I realize it is a far cry from what He truly means for us. To Him, as reflected by Jesus’ statement, His love is all-

encompassing, unconditional, and omnipresent, and it is also expressed through the Thought Adjusters. If only we had more direct access to our TAs, we would then begin to gain a much better understanding of what love really is.

What allows us to love as Jesus loved us? I think about this question often. I try to visualize the relationship Jesus had with his apostles, including his occasional frustrations with their lack of understanding. But overriding those moments, he must have seen each one as perfecting beings, not perfect, but becoming so, as we are told in the UB. In that sense, I don't need anyone else around me to be perfect either. However, I must hold on to the notion that they are all perfecting beings, just as I am.

I met a woman in our group a few years ago who had no concept of what a father's love should be or even represent, since her father was not remotely loving toward her. It was hard to explain to her this idealized concept of the father-child relationship. I also sense that many families are in dire situations—many through no fault of their own, such as single-parent families without a father at all and orphaned and homeless children on the rise—that the notion of the Father of Jesus' time is difficult for them to grasp.

I wonder if it might be easier to explain the concept of a father's love for a child through the analogy of a child's (or an adult's, for that matter) love for his dog. The dog, who is a child's friend, is an unconditionally loving creature. He is trusting, always happy to see the child, and loves spending time with him. We know the dog loves the child; even when

the dog is upset with the child for some reason, he still loves him. I have to remind myself that to love someone doesn't mean you don't dislike certain behaviors of that person. I bet Jesus understands what I mean.

He loved his apostles but was never hesitant to point out their faults or where they let him down.

Forgiveness is a significant issue for many people. Without it, the experience of love cannot be fully realized. A lack of forgiveness creates a barrier to the unconditional nature of love. We are told that, while we are always instantly forgiven by God (He lacks any knowledge of the need for forgiveness), we cannot accept His forgiveness unless we forgive ourselves and others. We cannot truly experience it ourselves. I am grateful that, for all the things that have occurred in my life (not much that was truly problematic), I carry no baggage when it comes to the need to forgive. Sure, people have treated me poorly in certain situations, but that's life, right? So what? Yes, I have been cheated out of money or such. But again, who hasn't? I accept all of life's events as they come while navigating through it the best I can and letting them be. To live in the present is to have no need for thoughts of forgiveness, let alone negative emotions (like revenge, and so on).

I believe the question of "What do you think happens when we love another person(s) in the way that Jesus, our Creator Son Michael, loves us? What happens to them? What happens to us?" is profoundly important. What does happen? Is it possible to do this outside of our own inner

family group? I don't know. We seem to be heavily influenced by the lingering race-consciousness of the Lucifer Rebellion. Our egos really struggle to stay out of our way.



Life is love in action

I have a different understanding of what Jesus wanted from us, and it was more than “love one’s neighbor as oneself.” With all the talk today from every corner about loving oneself or not loving oneself, this admonition could lead to trouble. If someone enjoys hurting others, they may assume others are like them and will hurt them in return. So it’s better to strike first! If someone lies, they may assume everyone else does the same. This is “loving” in the Old Testament sense: someone is going to die!

And in this paragraph, he is very clear about this: *“You well know the commandment which directs that you love one another; that you love your neighbor even as yourself. But I am not wholly satisfied with even that sincere devotion on the part of my children. I would have you perform still greater acts of love in the kingdom of the believing brotherhood. And so I give you this new commandment: That you love one another even as I have loved you.”* (UB180:1.1)

Well, enough beating around the bush. To answer why “love” is the premier principle of life in the kingdom, one need only look around at creation. Only a loving creator could

instantiate such an array of life in all its complexities. But what of death and “evil,” you ask (meaning, of course, sin and iniquity)? Still, what of free will, I respond. Only a very loving father grants all his children free will, just as He, Himself, has. And life—did you know that life cannot be destroyed? It can change forms but cannot be destroyed, much like the law of thermodynamics.

If that isn’t love, I don’t know what is. Life is love in action. Ah-ha, you say, but the law of thermodynamics states that energy cannot be destroyed NOR created. Ah-ha, so you think this thing we call life is continually being created? If God is infinite, so is love; therefore, life is not being created. It comes into our universe ready to rise up and be. In sum, love precedes life and is the reason for it. It is the primal cause from our First Source and Center.



What’s love got to do with it?

Love is.

Imagine having so much love that you're willing to give everything you have to others. Not just one person, but to everyone! I mean, you are ready to offer all that is exclusively yours. Is that love?

What do I mean by “another”? Anyone and everyone, including friends, lovers, neighbors, the shopkeeper down the block, the congregation at your place of worship—oh, hell,

all the congregations in town—along with those folks who seem so different from you, like people living in other countries, people of different religions, or even those who think they have no religion—people who may even hate you or are determined to harm you.

And people who cross borders to take your job; bank barons who take your money and give so little in return; corporate executives who make more in a year than you will see in several lifetimes; bureaucrats who serve neither you nor their constituents, but only themselves, endlessly; even thieves and murderers.

What do I mean by “give”? I mean if it were in your power to give them unconditional love, without expecting anything in return. The ability to give them enough love and even more so that they may do anything they want and be anything they wish, without judgment or condemnation.

And what do I mean by love? What is love? Can we see it? Or touch it? We know we can’t smell it or taste it. Can we hear it? If we see it, are we actually seeing it or just something within that we can’t describe? Because we can’t really see it, can we? Or if we touch it, we are not really touching love, are we? Can we feel it? Yes, we can, but we are not feeling with our physical senses, are we? We are feeling with the “heart.” Not the actual organ, the heart, but something on the inside that says “I feel love; I am loved.” Your heart knows love. In fact, your dog’s heart knows love also. The mother bear in the woods knows it. As do most mammals, at least in the maternal sense.

So, now are you ready to give unconditional love to everyone mentioned above? You think it's impossible? Not necessarily. To say something is impossible means that no one has ever done it before.

But what if it was possible? What if it has been done before? Wouldn't it be great to discover how and who? And would you want to emulate that person?

There is a catch, though. You need to be willing to do a couple of simple things first. First, you have to ask. Nothing can come to you without your willingness to ask for it. Second, you must be willing and able to receive it. That is, you should be completely open to the possibility—no, the actuality—and ready to accept that

which you desire in your heart. And third, you must have faith; that is, absolute knowing and confidence that it will come to you.

That's all there is to it... maybe.

Notice that there is nothing mentioned about material things here. Those don't matter because they do not last.

So here is the deal. There exists one who is such a person. Some call him or her "God"; some "our Father," some Allah, Jehovah; some call it "a higher power," "Supreme Being." Or you might call him "Ralph." It does not matter so much, except that you call him. Whether you refer to this person as

“him” or “her” or it is a reflection of your relationship to that entity, that person. If he is “Ralph,” he is a friend; if he is “Father,” he is more.

But here is what he has given us, you and me. So listen carefully.

“First, he gave you life, and that life, like God, is eternal. If you will it. That is your opportunity. You choose. Is it possible, you ask? Even science cannot say it is not because science cannot even prove what life is. Science does not know if it is possible or not. So why not hedge on the side of the possible? The probable even. Or the absolute.

Second, he gave you a personality, unique in all the world, unique in all the universe. It does not change. However, you can overlay it with all kinds of characteristics through your choices in how you go about your life—habits, quirks, prejudices, emotions, beliefs—, stuff I call “character.” Some of it great; some perhaps not so great.

Third, he gave you a fragment of his own self to indwell you, to guide you, to console you, to assist you in being the best you can be or will be. This fragment is always with you from the day you made your very first moral decision until..., well, forever, if you will.

Fourth, he provided you with the chance to enrich your life through the experiences you encounter, allowing you to become much greater than you are, even if it involves some

struggle along the way. This is how we learn what we need to learn.

Fifth, he gifted you a world to live in and worlds still to be experienced.

Sixth, he provided you with an infinite (yes, literally) sources of guidance, both internally and externally, to help you along your path.

Seventh, he provided you with the opportunity for you to become perfect! And to experience perfection in all its creative grandeur. The whole universe is yours for the asking.

Now let me ask you: What is the word that best describes the gifts you have the opportunity to receive? I think the word is “love.” What else would you call it? Generosity? Based on what? What is the motivation?

And what are you expected to do or give in return? Nothing. Yes, really, nothing!

One other gift he gave you personally was what is known as “free will.” You are free to choose or reject some or all of the gifts; again, the choice is yours.

Remember the word “unconditional”? That is what unconditional love is. God expects nothing in return. This doesn’t mean He wouldn’t be happy if you acknowledged Him and His love for you. In fact, the more you do so, the more meaningful life will become. This means more fun,

filled with love and friendships, more excitement, and even more productivity. At least, that is what I have found. However, there is one concept worth mentioning: the idea of “paying it forward.” We all know what that is. In fact, isn’t that what God, your Father, did for you? He gave you all these gifts in advance, without knowing whether you would even appreciate them. That is somewhat like paying it forward. You can do the same for others if you choose to. That is the best “pay-back” there can possibly be.

Now you are ready to go out and live your life to its fullest, taking advantage of the wonderful gifts of God, your Father.

But wait, you ask, what about all these other things you’ve promised: the promise of eternal life and all the other aspects? They are already yours if you accept them. How? Ask, have faith, and receive as you are able. But you insist, aren’t these conditions— that you must ask, that you must receive, and so forth? Yes, they are conditions, but they are conditions that only you control. Not God. Look at it this way: God loves you unconditionally, but how will you ever know that love if you do not ask for it or are unwilling to receive it? That would be similar to wanting to get to know someone and yet never speaking to them. It is up to you.

That is what love is. It is always present, never hiding. It waits for you to choose it. How? By asking for it and receiving it. It is always there, even if you do not choose it, ask for it, or receive it. After all, God is love, and it is the substance of which the universe is made.

“All true love is from God, and man receives the divine affection as he himself bestows this love upon his fellows. Love is dynamic. It can never be captured; it is alive, free, thrilling, and always moving. Man can never take the love of the Father and imprison it within his heart. The Father’s love can become real to mortal man only by passing through that man’s personality as he in turn bestows this love upon his fellows.” (UB117:6.10)



No fear—just love

What I love about the words, or word phrase, “truth, beauty, and goodness” is that each word speaks to the reality of all existence, that is Reality. The word “love” encapsulates those three concepts as reflected in the cosmos. Truth represents the mental aspect of existence—intelligence, knowledge, facts. Beauty encompasses all material, morontial, and spiritual forms and substances. Goodness embodies the non-intellectual aspect of spiritual perfection, a qualitative experience of existence that pervades all creativity.

I feel I have lived my life in search of truth and beauty. As an architect and urban designer, I have consistently aimed to work within the concepts of truth in design. For example, I have always disliked the idea of fake wood or any material that plastic laminates can be made to resemble. I struggled for years with the notion of brick veneers on walls. These are just two small examples. However, the intent behind my

thinking was that it is never a good idea to hide what something is or to pretend it is something it is not.

Examples: Paint is great; it is what it is. Concrete block is a thing of beauty when it is conceived as such. Notice the qualifier. The trouble is that most architects and designers (and developers, owners, community design committees, and so on) don't see it that way because they have only experienced it as "concrete block is ugly."



The best architecture is one that does contain within the forms and spaces (remember, architecture is about space as much as form, sometimes more so) not only the truth of the expressions of the forms and materials (and even the functions), but once experienced also expresses the spirit of creativity and humanity and intellectual integrity that went into it. There is not a lot of that kind of architecture around. When you find it, you understand why, and the love of creativity that the architect put into the work is clear to see and feel. That is great architecture.

“Only a poet can discern poetry in the commonplace prose of routine existence.” (UB48:7.22) One of the architect's jobs is to bring that poetry into the mainstream of human existence where it can, hopefully, be discerned by others as well.

We are all learning, as readers of the UB, that “love is the greatest thing in the universe,” and that God is love. What we don’t yet know is how all that we feel, see, think, and experience relates to these universal truths of truth, beauty, and goodness, much less to “love.” But a leap of faith can take us there now. That love is the unified embrace of truth, beauty, and goodness, and with this understanding, we know we are free. We are loved. We are “perfect” beings where we are in this perfect place at this perfect time, all heading for true perfection.

No fear. Just love. And the desire to do good. Period.

C H A P T E R 1 2

One Mind



One Mind?

The “one mind” of Deity is a strong metaphysical concept within “new thought” religious groups. It serves as a powerful image of our unity in one mind. *The Urantia Book* supports this idea as well, presenting it as the ultimate expression of the totality of all that exists within the First Source and Center.

However, upon reflecting on section 4, "*The Absolute Mind*," from Paper Nine, "*Relation of the Infinite Spirit to the Universe*," there is an implication that this is not the case.

As it states: "*The absolute mind is the mind of the Third Person [the Infinite Spirit]; it is inseparable from the personality of God the Spirit [also the Infinite Spirit]. Mind, in functioning beings, is not separated from energy or spirit, or both. Mind is not inherent in energy; energy is receptive and responsive to mind; mind can be superimposed upon energy, but consciousness is not inherent in the purely material level. Mind does not have to be added to pure spirit, for spirit is innately conscious and identifying. Spirit is always intelligent, minded in some way. It may be this mind or that mind, it may be premind or supermind, even spirit mind, but it does the equivalent of thinking and knowing. The insight of spirit transcends, supervenes, and theoretically antedates the consciousness of mind.*" (UB9:4.2)

And "*The Conjoint Creator is absolute only in the domain of mind, in the realms of universal intelligence. The mind of the Third Source and Center is infinite; it utterly transcends the active and functioning mind circuits of the universe of universes. The mind endowment of the seven superuniverses is derived from the Seven Master Spirits, the primary personalities of the Conjoint Creator. These Master Spirits distribute mind to the grand universe as the cosmic mind, and your local universe is pervaded by the Nebadon variant of the Orvonton type of cosmic mind.*" (UB9:4.3)

Doesn't this sound like many minds out there? Yes, but as you say, they are all connected to the Cosmic Mind of the grand universe, linked to the Seven Master Spirits. Okay, but that implies at least seven Cosmic Minds, doesn't it? How about this? If the First Source and Center, God the Father, bestows fragments of himself upon his normal-minded will creatures.

The mind inherent in the Thought Adjuster cannot be the same as the Cosmic Mind nor the mind of the Infinite Spirit. And what of the mind of the Eternal Son? Surely his is also unique to him.

It seems to me that the concept of "one mind" we discuss in church is simply a misunderstanding of our religious traditions regarding what constitutes the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

There is not one God, but actually three: God the Father, God the Eternal Son, and God the Infinite Spirit. Elohim is plural for Gods. These are the existential Deities of Paradise, and that is what the Bible meant. We need to include the evolving experiential Deities among the potential Deities of eternity.

But, then again, all of these "minds" work together as one, One Universal Mind. In our daily lives, we cannot distinguish these different minds I speak of. In our experience, there is just one mind. But it is still cool to think about the many Deities and other personalities and pre-personalities that also have minds contributing to the one great Mind of the Universal First Source and Center.

Still, is there only one God? No, and thank God for that.



Why Prayer?

I can't help but think that praying and worshiping give one a greater connection to other human beings, as well as to spiritual influences. It is hard to consider someone who genuinely prays for themselves and others as being less than empathetic toward those individuals, which would extend to even more people beyond that.



Worship is divinely creative, with creativity being “God’s fundamental personality attribute.” Someone said, “Worship thereby enriches such capacity and improves its effectiveness.” We begin to look more to God for inspiration

and guidance, as well as doing more to serve the brotherhood of man. That is my experience, anyway.

I want to draw a chart, the “Circle of Love.” God loves His Sons, loves his brothers and sisters, and expands love into the Supreme Being, which reflects it back to God.

I believe my daily meditation and prayer/worship sessions have increased my capacity to extend love, do the will of God, serve others more willingly, and have other tangible and intangible effects.

How can we make daily life divinely relevant to the ongoing outworking of the Father’s eternal cosmic plan? Ultimately, wouldn’t the best answer be to do God’s will and extend (express) OUR love as a reflection of God’s infinite love to all our brothers and sisters, and even to all life itself for all creatures, even this expression to our love for our planet, and certainly for the universe in which we stand?

But since we have limited ourselves to a short time, if any, during a day to just a few minutes, how can we best make that daily life divinely relevant in the time we allocate to it? When I get up, the first thing I do is take some time for myself to be still. I meditate to the extent that I can shut out all the hubbub of the tiny world around me (cats wandering, fan whirring, tinnitus humming...) and enter worship mode. I say some prayers, mostly for others; what do I need? I am perfect, after all. Sometimes this lasts 10 minutes, but usually 30 to 40 minutes. Then something nudges into my mind again, and I feel I am done. I often think about my Thought Adjuster, my indwelling fragment of God within. I

look at others throughout the day and consider all the TAs, one in each person I see. I walk the dogs at night and gaze up at the stars, feeling a whole new respect and awe for what I see and for what I know to be out there. When I turn off the light to go to sleep, I say goodnight to my TA, Michael, and Mother.

I believe the most satisfying form of love and worship is the one conveyed to us by Jesus when he instructed his Apostles to love our brothers (and sisters) as he loved us. Jesus and his Father, who is also our Father, are one. If this is what Jesus considers the most beautiful expression, then so it is.

Worship, for me, is expressing gratitude for all that exists in God's creation, including the blessing of each day and moment. This encompasses not only the lessons learned from experiences but also the blessing of God's love for me and my love for Him, which includes Michael, Mother Nebadonia, and all celestial beings and midwayers who share our universe with us, filled with love.

Just imagine if the Father's will were always at the forefront of our minds today. How would the world be different? Of course, evil (error due to ignorance) would still exist, as many things make it difficult to understand what the Father's will truly is. However, there would be no sin or iniquity. Determining the Father's will for our behavior (regardless of our hearts' sincerity) is not easy. Once it is known, it can be challenging to understand which path to take, i.e., wisdom.

How does worship make the worshipper more like the One who is worshipped? Proximity over time to such a benevolent, loving Father (even if only in one's mind) inevitably fosters empathy toward Him and a desire to emulate Him.



What is my understanding of the word symbol “worship”?

It is very interesting to look up the word symbol “worship” in Wikipedia. Almost every religion has a slightly different meaning associated with it. In some, such as Judaism and Islam, it is a prescribed ritual activity; in others, it involves “higher forces to assist in spiritual and material progress.”

In other contexts, it is simply a form of meditation or a means of promoting self-awareness. Worship may be offered in various subjects, including everything from God to saints, sometimes limited to a particular day of the week. At the top of the list from Wikipedia is: “Worship is an act of religious devotion usually directed towards a deity. An act of worship may be performed individually, in an informal or formal group, or by a designated leader.” Devotion means “the act or state of being devoted;” a feeling of strong or fervent affection or dedication; veneration, zeal, or piety; and a prayer. The type of worship that seems most prevalent in our society is this: “... that people no longer simply worship recognized deities, but also (or instead) worship consumer brands, sports teams, and other people (celebrities).

Sociology, therefore, extends this argument to suggest that religion and worship is a process whereby society worships itself, as a form of self-valorization and self-preservation.

To me, and the UB, worship is quite different from prayer (or “supplications”). All worship is directed to God, and it goes through our Thought Adjuster, our Father who is in heaven. It exists for its own sake and often arises as a spontaneous and seemingly autonomous impulse of man’s mind toward its Creator.

Whereas, “...prayer embodies a self- or creature-interest element; that is the great difference between worship and prayer. There is absolutely no self-request or other element of personal interest in true worship; we simply worship God for what we comprehend him to be. Worship asks nothing and expects nothing for the worshiper. We do not worship the Father because of anything we may derive from such veneration; we render such devotion and engage in such worship as a natural and spontaneous reaction to the recognition of the Father’s matchless personality and because of his lovable nature and adorable attributes.” (UB5:3.3) We do it because we love him.

But, “In nature the Son is wholly like the spirit Father. When we worship the Universal Father, actually we at the same time worship God the Son and God the Spirit. God the Son is just as divinely real and eternal in nature as God the Father.” (UB6:2.3)

To wrap up this subject and my understanding of it: *“Sincere worship connotes the mobilization of all the powers of the human personality under the dominance of the evolving soul and subject to the divine directionization of the associated Thought Adjuster. The mind of material limitations can never become highly conscious of the real significance of true worship. Man’s realization of the reality of the worship experience is chiefly determined by the developmental status of his evolving immortal soul.”* (UB5:3.7) The spiritual growth of the soul takes place wholly independently of the intellectual self-consciousness.

“The worship experience consists in the sublime attempt of the betrothed Adjuster to communicate to the divine Father the inexpressible longings and the unutterable aspirations of the human soul — the conjoint creation of the God-seeking “mortal mind and the God-revealing immortal Adjuster. Worship is, therefore, the act of the material mind’s assenting to the attempt of its spiritualizing self, under the guidance of the associated spirit, to communicate with God as a faith son of the Universal Father. The mortal mind consents to worship; the immortal soul craves and initiates worship; the divine Adjuster presence conducts such worship in behalf of the mortal mind and the evolving immortal soul. True worship, in the last analysis, becomes an experience realized on four cosmic levels: the intellectual, the morontial, the spiritual, and the personal — the consciousness of mind, soul, and spirit, and their unification in personality.” (UB5:3.7-8

Some afterthoughts

But, *“In nature the Son is wholly like the spirit Father. When we worship the Universal Father, actually we at the same time worship God the Son and God the Spirit. God the Son is just as divinely real and eternal in nature as God the Father.”* (UB6:2.3) This suggests that worship as an activity involves more than just focusing on the Father. The question arises: does the Paradise Trinity also deserve worship?

I understand your comment about worship being only shadow down here. And I must admit, the quotes you have chosen reinforce that view. But here is where I wonder.... Do you have any doubt that Jesus worshipping of his Father was not of worship with the same degree of intensity—qualitative, not quantitative—that Jesus is the highest quality possible? Does that suggest that it is possible for us here to do likewise, perhaps not now but at some point? I am not suggesting that we all can or do, but I wonder if there are some in this world who can do it. Perhaps not now but at some point? I'm not suggesting that we can all worship with the same degree of intensity—qualitative, not quantitative—that Jesus did, but I wonder if there are some in this world who can do it.

It seems reasonable to think that those of us who have discovered the UB and taken it as our most sacred scripture are capable of participating in the highest quality of worship activity, at least in this world. I suspect there are others who have not discovered the book that can do the same. You said yourself that there are moments when one cannot help but

call out in worship to our Father upon some spontaneous stimuli. That is powerful.

Of course, I could be totally mistaken here. After all, why are there so many seraphic groups and others in the ascension worlds that emphasize worship as part of our ongoing education? This does imply we are still in our training wheels. And when in doubt, I, too, rely on our text. It's clear that I'm constantly reflecting on what the book says regarding how to move forward with my life. What fun.

Values and Patterns



Absolute values and relative values

How can I clarify the difference between perceived absolute values and relative values?

A couple of things come to mind. First is the notion of “patterns.” Patterns are important in *The Urantia Book* because so much of what is created in the universes is based on eternal and perfected patterns. While God the Father in Paradise bestowed personality upon us, His is the primary personality. Yet through the Eternal Son, God’s patterned personality is expressed to all of us as each one of us possesses a unique personality identity made in the image of God.

In my reading of the UB, this idea stood out to me. It was a discussion of the difference between traditional, classical theology of God and man, compared to that expressed in *The Urantia Book*. The view of God in the Abrahamic tradition “... suffers from an authoritarian premise that does not countenance a cooperative relationship between God and his creatures.” That is, God is “...absolute, complete, perfect, eternal, and self-sufficient, needing nothing.” What the author calls the “*synthetic hypothesis*,” a great reformation in theology that “... allows a perfect God to cocreate a perfected universe in partnership with his imperfect creatures.” In this case, traditional theology serves as the thesis, while *The Urantia Book* provides the basis for the antithesis for the first time, resulting in the new “synthetic hypothesis.”

PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS

1

H

Hydrogen

Nonmetal

3

Li

Lithium

Metal

4

Be

Beryllium

Metal

11

Na

Sodium

Metal

12

Mg

Magnesium

Metal

1

H

Hydrogen

Nonmetal

Atomic Number

Symbol

Name

Chemical Group Block

5

B

Boron

Metalloid

6

C

Carbon

Nonmetal

7

N

Nitrogen

Nonmetal

8

O

Oxygen

Nonmetal

9

F

Fluorine

Nonmetal

10

Ne

Neon

Noble Gas

13

Al

Aluminum

Metal

14

Si

Silicon

Metalloid

15

P

Phosphorus

Nonmetal

16

S

Sulfur

Nonmetal

17

Cl

Chlorine

Nonmetal

18

Ar

Argon

Noble Gas

19

K

Potassium

Metal

20

Ca

Calcium

Metal

21

Sc

Scandium

Metal

22

Ti

Titanium

Metal

23

V

Vanadium

Metal

24

Cr

Chromium

Metal

25

Mn

Manganese

Metal

26

Fe

Iron

Metal

27

Co

Cobalt

Metal

28

Ni

Nickel

Metal

29

Cu

Copper

Metal

30

Zn

Zinc

Metal

31

Ga

Gallium

Metal

32

Ge

Germanium

Metalloid

33

As

Arsenic

Metalloid

34

Se

Selenium

Metalloid

35

Br

Bromine

Nonmetal

36

Kr

Krypton

Noble Gas

37

Rb

Rubidium

Metal

38

Sr

Strontium

Metal

39

Y

Yttrium

Metal

40

Zr

Zirconium

Metal

41

Nb

Niobium

Metal

42

Mo

Molybdenum

Metal

43

Tc

Technetium

Metal

44

Ru

Ruthenium

Metal

45

Rh

Rhodium

Metal

46

Pd

Palladium

Metal

47

Ag

Silver

Metal

48

Cd

Cadmium

Metal

49

In

Indium

Metal

50

Sn

Tin

Metal

51

Sb

Antimony

Metalloid

52

Te

Tellurium

Metalloid

53

I

Iodine

Nonmetal

54

Xe

Xenon

Noble Gas

55

Cs

Cesium

Metal

56

Ba

Barium

Metal

72

Hf

Hafnium

Metal

73

Ta

Tantalum

Metal

74

W

Tungsten

Metal

75

Re

Rhenium

Metal

76

Os

Osmium

Metal

77

Ir

Iridium

Metal

78

Pt

Platinum

Metal

79

Au

Gold

Metal

80

Hg

Mercury

Metal

81

Tl

Thallium

Metal

82

Pb

Lead

Metal

83

Bi

Bismuth

Metal

84

Po

Polonium

Metal

85

At

Astatine

Metal

86

Rn

Radon

Noble Gas

87

Fr

Francium

Metal

88

Ra

Radium

Metal

104

Rf

Rutherfordium

Metal

105

Db

Dubnium

Metal

106

Sg

Seaborgium

Metal

107

Bh

Bohrium

Metal

108

Hs

Hassium

Metal

109

Mt

Meitnerium

Metal

110

Ds

Darmstadtium

Metal

111

Rg

Roentgenium

Metal

112

Cn

Copernicium

Metal

113

Nh

Nihonium

Metal

114

Fl

Flerovium

Metal

115

Mc

Moscovium

Metal

116

Lv

Livermorium

Metal

117

Ts

Tennessine

Metal

118

Og

Oganesson

Metal

57

La

Lanthanum

f-block

58

Ce

Cerium

f-block

59

Pr

Praseodymium

f-block

60

Nd

Niobium

f-block

61

Pm

Promethium

f-block

62

Sm

Samarium

f-block

63

Eu

Europium

f-block

64

Gd

Gadolinium

f-block

65

Tb

Terbium

f-block

66

Dy

Dysprosium

f-block

67

Ho

Holmium

f-block

68

Er

Erbium

f-block

69

Tm

Thulium

f-block

70

Yb

Ytterbium

f-block

71

Lu

Lutetium

f-block

89

Ac

Actinium

f-block

90

Th

Thorium

f-block

91

Pa

Protactinium

f-block

92

U

Uranium

f-block

93

Np

Neptunium

f-block

94

Pu

Plutonium

f-block

95

Am

Americium

f-block

96

Cm

Curium

f-block

97

Bk

Berkelium

f-block

98

Cf

Californium

f-block

99

Es

Einsteinium

f-block

100

Fm

Fermium

f-block

101

Md

Mendelevium

f-block

102

No

Nobelium

f-block

103

Lr

Lutetium

f-block

PubChem

Whenever I see the word “pattern” in *The Urantia Book*, I take notice. Here is one reason why: Decades ago, an urban designer and architect named Christopher Alexander wrote a book called *A Pattern Language*. In it, he examines each component of a house, a neighborhood, a village, a city, and a country, laying out his best ideas for the perfect pattern for, for instance, a sidewalk, a driveway, a curb, and so on. Note that each of these elements has a relationship with the others. In fact, all components of a built environment have relationships with many, many other parts. While the relationships are important, the specific components are based on the original pattern idea but are not necessarily the same size or shape as the pattern. Think, for example, of Plato’s idea of the perfect chair. The concept of perfection for a perfect chair is an imaginary pattern. There can be an infinite number of chairs, but if they are to be any good, they must somehow reflect the ideal pattern. The same applies to buildings and towns.

A few years ago, a book called *Sane Polity: A Pattern Language* was recommended to me. The author, William Ophuls, based his approach to a sane polity on Alexander’s idea of the pattern language, but he created the ideal patterns for what a “polity” must incorporate to build a civilized society that is worthy of the effort. He starts with nature first (as does Alexander) and then goes through a litany of patterns for each aspect of his collective construct of the best civilization that would result, such as mores, prudence, tolerance, strong governance, minimal laws, small administration, collective leadership, restrained liberty, civil

rights, voting, and so on. This book is well worth reading because, to me, it incorporates the best concepts of humanity existing with humanity that we also find discussed in *The Urantia Book*.

Returning to thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, I view the antithesis of the pattern language as a response to the thesis of humanity living with humanity, whether it addresses the built environment or the socio-political-economic sphere. The synthesis emerges from the two intertwined and combined concepts, creating an opportunity for a more meaningful existence, perhaps—within each’s own context—a more beautiful, truthful, and better—even good—cosmic citizenry.

In the larger, significantly larger context, our imperfect world, along with all the flawed worlds of the seven superuniverses, represents the thesis; Havona serves as the synthesis; the worlds of Life and Light also embody the synthesis.

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1. Belitsos, Byron, *Your Evolving Soul*, San Rafael CA, Orion Press, 2017, p. 65.
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Morals, Character, and Ethics



A personal sense of morality

Where does personal morality come from? Do you think it's possible for the first moral decision to arise without an inbuilt mechanism (or feeling or urge or whatever) to trigger it? When we consider the spirit influences that emerge in our early life sequentially—and

even all other animals possess five of these spirit influences of the mind adjutant spirits—could one or more of these influences be the source of our sense of morality? Or is there something more? Is morality a built-in function of the gift of personality? We know it cannot initially derive from the Thought Adjuster, since the Thought Adjuster is initiated by that first moral decision. This is not to say it does not participate in subsequent moral decisions. However, the occurrence of that very first one results in several simultaneous events: the arrival of the sixth and seventh mind adjutant spirits, the entrance of the Thought Adjuster, and, today, the circuit of the Spirit of Truth and the recognition of the circuit of the Holy Spirit's activity.

One consideration more: If other animals have the same five adjutant mind spirits as we do, and if—a big if—the source of personal morality is due the presence of one or more of these spirits, then, do animals have a personal sense of morality also? When I look at the personal morality reflected in the actions of large numbers of people today, I wonder if there isn't more morality in our animal cousins than in ourselves as a species. But that is a discussion for another day.



Ethics vs morals—as above, so below

Ethics and morals relate to “right” and “wrong” conduct. While they are sometimes used interchangeably, they differ: ethics refers to rules provided by an external source, such as codes of conduct in workplaces or principles in

religions. Morals refer to an individual's own principles regarding right and wrong.

In this world, as we understand it, “ethics” refers to rules provided by an exterior source, usually by society or an aspect of society. After reading Paper 27, Ministry of Primary Supernaphim, how can we better apply the principles outlined above to the realm below, here and now, on Urantia? For example, how can we better manage our rest? Or interpret our ethics? Live by our conduct?

Morality, on the other hand, is a personal attribute; it is inherent in our personality or in the development of our intelligence as a result of the Seven Adjutant Spirits. (I am not sure which of these makes sense.) While what is morally right or wrong can be taught, our personal morality is truly a response to our “truth compass” within. (One reason it can be taught is that there are also two systems of personal morality related to ways of making a living. But that is not what I am discussing here.)

Since one of the groups of Supernaphim is termed “Interpreters of Ethics,” it would seem that ethics is a very important aspect of the ascending life. However, that certainly comes as no surprise. It suggests that we may be quite behind the eight ball when it comes to appreciating ethics, much less living up to a code of ethics in our social lives. I wonder if we all had the same concept of personal morality—which we likely would if it weren't for the various belief systems out there—then the issue of group or mankind ethics would be much easier to navigate. Unfortunately,

Meandering Through The Urantia Book

	Ethics	Morals
What are they?	The rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group or culture.	Principles or habits with respect to right or wrong conduct. While morals also prescribe dos and don'ts, morality is ultimately a personal compass of right and wrong.
Where do they come from?	Social system - External	Individual - Internal
Why we do it?	Because society says it is the right thing to do.	Because we believe in something being right or wrong.
Flexibility	Ethics are dependent on others for definition. They tend to be consistent within a certain context, but can vary between contexts.	Usually consistent, although can change if an individual's beliefs change.
The "Gray"	A person strictly following Ethical Principles may not have any Morals at all. Likewise, one could violate Ethical Principles within a given system of rules in order to maintain Moral integrity.	A Moral Person although perhaps bound by a higher covenant, may choose to follow a code of ethics as it would apply to a system. "Make it fit"
Origin	Greek word "ethos" meaning "character"	Latin word "mos" meaning "custom"
Acceptability	Ethics are governed by professional and legal guidelines within a particular time and place	Morality transcends cultural norms

many of our personal belief systems do not align with our senses of morality. Consequently, the idea of group ethics becomes a societal issue and then a governmental one, often enforced by harsh penalties or even death (which I refer to as "graduation"). Now, thanks to *The Urantia Book*, this tricky issue of ethics remains a concern even up through Havona! At least at this level, the authors tell us that the ethics of

Paradise relationships are “... neither meaningless formalities nor the dictations of artificial castes but rather the inherent proprieties ... in the usages of the perfect conduct of the high beings who sojourn on the central Isle of Light and Life.” Whew! I’m just sayin’.

I was reading in one of the Fellowship Herald magazines from a few years ago. An article on “patterns” discussed how the patterns of Paradise and then Havona, extrapolated from there down to us, all initiated by the Infinite Spirit, led the way for our awakening to the reality of God’s request for us to be as he is: perfect. So, my conclusion is that those offspring of the Infinite Spirit, including the Super naphim, are helping us to become what we need to be, but our job is to experience this life and beyond as we grow more aware of that which is calling us. However, *The Urantia Book* defines ethics or morality; these qualities must start within us. By our fruits, we can spread these same qualities into our other institutions.



Moral thinking and moral choosing

If there is a distinction between “moral thinking” and “moral choosing,” I would argue it stems from the moral, i.e., spiritual, thinking—an intellectual effort—followed by the choice to act on that thinking within the context of experience. Another way to express this is the difference between “intention” and action based on intention.

Then there is the idea that spiritual morality has an unconscious nature. This refers to behavior that occurs naturally because of the actor's moral character. In this situation, if moral intellectualizing interferes, the behavior may not reflect the original intention.

In paragraph 133:6.5, Jesus tells us, *“Moral self-consciousness is true human self-realization and constitutes the foundation of the human soul, and the soul is that part of man which represents the potential survival value of human experience. Moral choice and spiritual attainment, the ability to know God and the urge to be like him, are the characteristics of the soul. The soul of man cannot exist apart from moral thinking and spiritual activity.”* Later in the following paragraph: *“Salvation is the spiritualization of the self-realization of the moral consciousness, which thereby becomes possessed of survival value.”* This statement is significant since it tells us, to restate it, survival value may not come about without spiritualization of the “self-realization” of mortal consciousness.

Moral choosing has its roots in moral consciousness, that is, “spiritual intent.” However, I believe that the initial moral choice that brings forth the Thought Adjuster et al. must also be inherent in one (or more in combination) of the first five Adjutant Mind Spirits. This serves as the catalyst for the soul to embark on its path of upward mobility.

Is moral choosing always spiritual? I would think not. A lot can happen between an initial intention and the free will action of choosing. Can the soul choose? I believe it has an

increasing role to play in the action of choosing, as it is a creation of the ever-evolving mind and Thought Adjuster in partnership with the personality. However, by itself, I have my doubts. Once we move on into the morontia worlds, we are linked with Cosmic Mind, and the soul should have a greater opportunity to make choices from a Mota level of intelligence.

Now, to mix things up a bit, I want to amend my response above based upon, again, paragraph 133:6.5: *“The soul is the self-reflective, truth-discerning, and spirit-perceiving part of man which forever elevates the human being above the level of the animal world. Self-consciousness, in and of itself, is not the soul. Moral self-consciousness is true human self-realization and constitutes the foundation of the human soul, and the soul is that part of man which represents the potential survival value of human experience. Moral choice and spiritual attainment, the ability to know God and the urge to be like him, are the characteristics of the soul. The soul of man cannot exist apart from moral thinking and spiritual activity. A stagnant soul is a dying soul. But the soul of man is distinct from the divine spirit which dwells within the mind. The divine spirit arrives simultaneously with the first moral activity of the human mind, and that is the occasion of the birth of the soul.”*

Moral choice is a characteristic of the soul, as the paragraph makes clear, but it does not mean that the soul actually has the power to make moral choices. Those choices, just like the other aspects of our spiritual growth—such as the ability for spiritual attainment, the ability to know God, or the urge to

be like Him—are confined to our free-will mind, which makes those choices based on our evolving moral character, spiritual development, and daily decisions in life.



Our moral obligations towards others

What are our moral obligations towards others?

If we ask this question to others, we will see a broad range of answers from having no obligations to helping others understand, for example, *The Urantia Book* concepts on the one hand, to attempting to provide continuous and impertinent insistence on them to understand the concepts fearing they will not be deemed to be fit for the next phases of live after this world.

So what is the right approach? The UB outlines what I believe are the proper ways to view our moral obligations to our brothers and sisters.

Our supreme obligations to this life, this culture, and the world are many, but only a few seem to have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. This does not mean these other people are “bad” people, but rather “evil” in the sense of Jesus' definition of being ignorant, not sinful or iniquitous.

There are others out there who are, indeed, “evil” in our current jargon; that is, sinful and iniquitous. Sinfulness is usually periodic and infrequent, and may arise from

circumstances inherent in an individual's life context. In contrast, iniquitousness is purposefully sinful most of the time. Those individuals' innate sense of moral consciousness is either defective or deliberately ignored. It is this latter category that risks being "deemed unfit for the next phase of life," and annihilation may be their future—through "adjudication."

There will be others in the sinful category who, once they find out what is entailed for them in order to move on, may choose not to do so—"self-choice." However, in this world, *"[t]hough the cosmic circles of personality growth must eventually be attained, if, through no fault of your own, the accidents of time and the handicaps of material existence prevent your mastering these levels on your native planet, if your intentions and desires are of survival value, there are issued the decrees of probation extension. You will be afforded additional time in which to prove yourself."* (UB112:5.6)

At least every person gets a bona fide chance to make the knowledgeable decision to go on or not. *"This does not mean that human beings are to enjoy a second opportunity in the face of the rejection of a first, not at all. But it does signify that all will creatures are to experience one true opportunity to make one undoubted, self-conscious, and final choice. The sovereign Judges of the universes will not deprive any being of personality status who has not finally and fully made the eternal choice; the soul of man must and will be given full and ample opportunity to reveal its true intent and real purpose."* (UB112:5.9)

Considering the above, what could my moral obligations be toward these fellow beings in assisting them not to join the army of the dead? I can do many things, but my efforts can only go so far. The publication of *The Urantia Book* is the greatest tool any of us have for helping others become interested in survival while still in this world, if only we can get the word out to the right people. We don't need to reach everyone; we only need to reach those most in need of a turnaround. As Jesus tells us, "*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*" (UB157:6.9)

I have a colleague, Mary Ebben Livingston, who works with incarcerated individuals in a state prison system. She teaches *The Urantia Book* to prisoners who wish to understand it. She even authored a book, *Quivering on the Brink*, which explains the UB story and concept at an eighth-grade level. It is available on Amazon. "Mary Livingston did not want to influence or interpret the UB; her goal was to present the basic concepts in a clear and easy-to-read format. The Author's Notes explain why and how this was accomplished." (Amazon description)

I have an idea for a very simple introductory primer on the concepts of the UB that identifies all the elements of conventional religious teachings and aligns them with the teachings of the UB, avoiding any controversial statements. Surely, there are enough similarities between the UB and the world's religious teachings that anyone would find acceptable. This could serve as a fresh start.

Others are out there trying to make a difference. For example, there's God's Gumshoe, who is busy working with Gary Tonge and others on *The Urantia Book for Dummies* YouTube video series (<https://www.youtube.com/godsgumshoe>). Or Pato Banton's work on the words of Christ (<https://officialpatobanton.com/product/the-words-of-christ-7cd-box-set>). Check out Gary Tonge's website, Visions Afar (<https://visionafar.com/>) where you will find incredible videos and music based upon *The Urantia Book*. I can imagine the incredible number of good ideas that will come forth when the time is right.

One of my favorite sayings of Jesus is this: *“Discern the truth clearly; live the righteous life fearlessly; and so shall you be my apostles and my Father’s ambassadors. You have heard it said: ‘If the blind lead the blind, they both shall fall into the pit.’ If you would guide others into the kingdom, you must yourselves walk in the clear light of living truth. In all the business of the kingdom I exhort you to show just judgment and keen wisdom. Present not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample your gems under foot and turn to rend you.”* (UB140:3.18)

The reason I like it is that it covers a lot of ground in a succinct way that give us good guidance for growing ourselves and dealing with others. Now, more to the point of your response, which was: “We have a moral obligation to love our Brothers and Sisters. We give without expectation. So, I would give to these less fortunate ascenders the same

regardless of their level of understanding or comprehension.”

There are many out there who clearly fall into the “dogs” and “swine” categories. We can give what we can give in love and with no expectation of return, but there will be times, as in Jesus' life, when going further will be unproductive for you and the subject of your attention. Life in this world is too short to try to steer everyone to where you think they should be.

I am reminded of the introduction to *A Course In Miracles* that states: “This is a course in miracles. It is a required course. Only the time you take it is voluntary. Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you can elect what you want to take at a given time.”

In the context of *The Urantia Book*, it is the same approach. For us survivors, our progression along the ascension path follows an established curriculum. However, the time it may take depends on the individual. Those who do not “get it” here will have more opportunities to get it later. And they will get it. So my advice is to focus your energies on those things that can make the biggest difference to the most people now. Leave the others for the next worlds.

In addition, there are several things to keep in mind. The “unfortunates” are mostly content with where they are, or they would not be there. I truly believe that. Second, no reader of *The Urantia Book* can be counted among those “unfortunates” unless he or she truly does not believe what

they read or has little to no faith that what they read is real. Third, all of God's children will have the opportunity to journey "back" to God. The only time this may not happen is when a person chooses NOT to do so. That is what free will means: the will to choose not to survive, or—most likely—the will to move forward into eternal survival.

We are told every sincere person gets one real, bona fide, opportunity to knowingly choose survival. Period. Whatever happens on this world to a person, no matter what, is most likely not providing a real choice to that person since he or she does not yet understand the nature of reality and eternal survival. So not to worry. All is in divine order.



Proper conduct

If proper conduct is essential to progress, then isn't the lack of proper conduct under the pretense of "freedom of speech and expression" wrong? Where is the line for liberty of expression drawn? In your opinion, how can we apply proper conduct here on Urantia?

What are the criteria for "proper conduct"? To what extent are the criteria derived from our inner intellectual and spiritual guidance versus from external sources? Starting with our very own U.S. Constitution, we have what is termed the "freedom of speech" and the "freedom of expression." There is much, often objectionable to some, that falls within those freedom protections. However, some expressions have

come to be exempt from protection. One early case, for example, involved the act of “shouting out” the word “fire” in a crowded theater when there is no fire.

Today we have a new category of limitations on the protections of free speech known as “hate speech.” Hate speech is speech that attacks a person or group based on attributes such as gender, ethnic origin, religion, race, disability, or sexual orientation. And there are certain limitations placed on the publication of words related to hate speech, as well as restrictions on concepts like pornography. In my opinion, on a societal level, Urantia’s best hope lies in the ultimate unification of world governments and an agreement to establish doctrines that world courts can use to help societies address these issues.

Regarding individual conduct, we understand that our behavior can serve as an example and is perhaps the best way to influence others’ actions. Once we grasp what is required of us to fulfill our Father’s will, we can be the light that guides others to follow. How? By understanding and following the path that Jesus laid out for us. His exemplary conduct set the standard, the pattern, for us to emulate. In this sense, we already have the best example, equal to any instruction to “... the new members of Paradise society in the usages of the perfect conduct of the high beings who sojourn on the central Isle of Light and Life.” While there is a “divine technique” in the approach to Divinity that must await its unveiling, we can do our mortal best to embody the same qualities Jesus displayed while here on Urantia in all his interactions with his brothers and sisters. We can achieve

this. Our actions may not be as spontaneous as they would be in Paradise, but we can strive to lead the way, even as we pass by.

Can you even imagine what it would mean to never suppress the most outrageous, hurtful thoughts? Even without the hurt, communication would completely shut down. Why do you suppose the Multiuniverse Administration cut the circuits to our planet when the rebellion broke out? That was then; this is now. We continue to live this day with the results of the Luciferian Rebellion and its effects on our world.

Throughout the UB, we are told that we can receive only according to our capabilities. That is, all communication, regardless of content, must at least meet the level of understanding of the recipient, or there is no communication at all. The Revelators emphasize this repeatedly. So did Jesus. For example, he once admonished his Apostles to *“[d]isplay wisdom and exhibit sagacity in your dealings with unbelieving civil rulers. By discretion show yourselves to be expert in ironing out minor disagreements and in adjusting trifling misunderstandings. In every possible way. . . seek to live peaceably with all men. Be you always as wise as serpents but as harmless as doves.”* (UB178:1.7) And even something as simple as flattery, he said, “I would warn you to beware the slippery paths of flattery and the poison darts of ridicule.” (UB174:0.2) Both the Revelators and Jesus cautioned us against being disrespectful of others' feelings due to their limited understanding and comprehension.

A couple of statements made by Jesus that I love to keep in mind are these: *“It is not that which enters into the mouth that spiritually defiles the man, but rather that which proceeds out of the mouth and from the heart.(UB153:3.5) Thus: “I admonish you to become more thoughtful in your speech.” (UB137:1.3)*

Today we are beginning to observe a campaign of “alternative facts,” non-truths being presented as if they were truth. I view this as an extension of the efforts of some to create “so-called think tanks” to produce misleading reports on various subjects, from the health benefits of smoking to climate changelessness. Furthermore, all of this can be accomplished and evaded because even lies are protected by “freedom of speech.” Are we coming full circle from Lucifer's declaration that there was no God?

“But hearken while I tell you the truth concerning those things which morally defile and spiritually contaminate men. I declare it is not that which enters the body by the mouth or gains access to the mind through the eyes and ears, that defiles the man. Man is only defiled by that evil which may originate within the heart, and which finds expression in the words and deeds....” -Jesus (UB153:3.5)

Other thoughts: “Falsely shouting fire in a crowded theater” is a popular metaphor for speech or actions made for the principal purpose of creating unnecessary panic. The phrase is a paraphrasing of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.'s opinion in the United States Supreme Court case *Schenck v. United*

States in 1919, which held that the defendant's speech in opposition to the draft during World War I was not protected free speech under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Holmes wrote: "The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic. ... The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent." There is much more on this in Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shouting_fire_in_a_crowded_theater).

In the laws of some countries, hate speech is defined as speech, gesture, conduct, writing, or display that is prohibited because it incites violence or prejudicial action against or by a protected group or individual based on their group membership, or because it disparages or intimidates a protected group or individual due to their membership in that group. The law may identify a protected group by certain characteristics. A website that utilizes hate speech may be referred to as a hate site. Most of these sites include internet forums and news briefs that emphasize a particular viewpoint. There has been ongoing debate about freedom of speech, hate speech, and hate speech legislation. Critics have argued that the term "hate speech" is used to silence critics of social policies that have been poorly implemented. (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hate_speech).

C H A P T E R 1 3

Truth, Beauty, And Goodness



What is truth? What is beauty? How can we associate these divine realities in our own lives?

The ultimate eternal truth is God; all of our truth is relative to our contextual existence and experience. That which is no truth is evil (ignorance) or worse. While truth is relative, it is not subjective; there can be partial truth, but not non-truthful truth. (“Truthiness” may be partial facts masquerading as an aspect of truth, but not truth itself.)

Beauty is different. It can result in an infinite variety of material and energetic creations that bring forth intellectual and spiritual meaning and values of the highest order. And if it is “... diffused with purpose derived from high spiritual motivation,” and “...it is ethical and to the extent that it enriches the concept of the moral,” it can be one of the closest experiences to spirituality we can discern in our lowly worlds.

Perhaps beauty best expresses the quality of knowledge (facts), meaning, and values, resulting in a “spiritual” quality most often felt internally in the heart and soul of an individual personality. As such, it can be very subjective. As an architect, I had another thought. What about the beauty of everyday architecture? I don’t mean buildings that pop up everywhere or the rare “jewel” in the civic landscape. Instead, I refer to a structure that someone deemed worthy of careful attention to every detail, to “we associate these divine realities in our own lives?”

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As an architect, I had another thought: what about the beauty of everyday architecture? I don’t mean buildings that pop up everywhere or the rarely constructed “jewel” in the civic landscape. Instead, I refer to a structure that someone deemed worthy enough to pay careful attention to every form, every detail, and the expression of the truthfulness of the materials used along with the functions contained within. We can understand subjective beauty (“I know what I like...”) which can be based on ignorance of art and pattern perfection. But can architecture have an objective beauty? Ask an architectural critic or an architect who creates these kinds of buildings (if one can be found). Is the Spirit of Truth at work here as well? There is a connection, I believe.

Don't you just love the idea that, while we struggle to understand what truth is as mortals—however partial and relative—we can have more direct contact with beauty in our daily lives? We are just a blink away from the exquisiteness of God's (and Michael's) incredible creations everywhere we look. In a way, it is like being “closer than ever” to perfection when I see it from that perspective.

And if we can't have it all now, why not have it “flavored”? What a great imagery: our humble mortal selves are flavored with the most beneficent overcare of love, goodness, mercy, truth and beauty imaginable. I can taste it now

A footnote in response to another's comments: You say “Truth is that which is.” Thus, untruth is that which isn't—an illusion. You say truth “is knowledge, logic, and rational.” Yet wisdom is not the same as knowledge. It often is neither logical nor rational, especially to our human minds. And beauty is so subjective to us (sort of like truth and truthiness) that we often don't know what to think when confronted with another's opinions regarding something we consider ugly but that the other doesn't agree with. I read recently that most people would rather not know the truth; it requires too much thinking. Just look around to prove this. And we can be hit between the eyes with something incredibly beautiful for which we can find no reason for it to be so. It is through our ascendant experiences that we gradually become more attuned to what is in reality truth, beauty, and goodness. Seldom do we all come to an agreement on these ideals in this world.



Perfection



“Out in the universes, perfection must necessarily be a relative term...”

There is a saying: “Perfection is the enemy of good.” In understanding the concepts of perfection and good, we come to realize that we are “perfecting” beings. Perfection is not required of us at any point along our journey, but it is rather our goal. Thus, perfection and good can coexist harmoniously.

Perfection, like truth, is relative. Only God in Paradise holds the ultimate truth of being; the rest of us are continually harvesting relative truths to the extent that we are able to do

so. Rather than being perfect, we are striving for “...*only one sort of perfection—perfection of purpose.*” (UB26:4.13)

As for “good,” we can be good wherever we are if we choose to be. To actually be good and actively do good as we go about our lives is a path to perfection.

We think Jesus was perfect, and we are told many stories about his life that may suggest his perfection.... Or do they? I believe that as perfect as he was, relative to us, part of his bestowal journey was to live his life as a human being, "with warts and all." We know that, as a child, he faced at least one sickness. I suspect that he, as a child, stubbed his toe while going up to the rooftop to play more than once. It would not be unreasonable to suggest he had some "human" imperfections. I also suspect he overcame most of those as he approached his Baptism. Despite his perfections, he experienced disappointments throughout his life—with his apostles and fickle others, especially with many of the Jewish religious leaders. Is disappointment a lapse in perfection? Perhaps not. Does this suggest we will continue to experience disappointments as we progress upward and inward? I suspect so.

Each of us has a different way of viewing the question; our answers may reflect our current understanding of where we are being led and what we can discover on our own. That is what is great about our minds and our interpretations of the UB.

C H A P T E R 1 4

Error, Evil, Sin, and Iniquity



“... And deliver us from error”

In *The Urantia Book* (130:1.5), Jesus explains to Gadhia at Joppa the fine distinction between evil, sin, and iniquity. He says: “Evil is the immature choosing and the unthinking misstep of those who are resistant to goodness, rejecting of beauty, and disloyal to truth. Evil is only the mis-adaptation of immaturity or the disruptive and distorting influence of

ignorance. Evil is the inevitable darkness which follows upon the heels of the unwise rejection of light. Evil is that which is dark and untrue, and which, when consciously embraced and willfully endorsed, becomes sin.” And we learn that persistent sin results in iniquity. Very bad.

In the ordination of the twelve, he discusses evil as being opposed to good. He then parallels the just with the unjust, implying that JUST = GOOD while UNJUST = EVIL. (See UB 140:3.14,16.)

His orders to his twelve, as ambassadors of the Kingdom, were: “*Be willing to suffer injustice rather than to go to law among yourselves.*” Turning the other cheek was an Aramaic idiom meaning “*do not start an argument.*”

Later, he discusses how a good tree produces good fruit, while a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. Thus, GOOD = GOOD and EVIL = CORRUPT. Furthermore, the corrupt tree will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Ouch.

To me, there is confusion about evil, while sin and iniquity seem relatively clear. If evil is error, ignorance, or unknowingly acting against the will of God, then it is also corrupt and is used throughout the book interchangeably with sin, that is, intentional badness. Each time I see the word “evil,” I try to determine which meaning is intended: error and ignorance or bad and sinful.

It’s no wonder that today the word “evil” means, to most people, sin and iniquity, along with an understanding of

wrongdoing that lies within the heart or intent. Furthermore, the reality is that what truly resides in someone's heart is impossible to comprehend. We typically only have outward appearances and actions to help us judge righteously. While all of this presents challenges in our daily lives and worldly affairs, the saving grace is this: *"... the Father in heaven judges by the intent."*

I wonder if the change in the Lord's Prayer from using the word "evil" to using the word "error" is an attempt to adhere to Jesus' original meaning of the word.

If I had been an apostle, I, too, might feel a bit confused about these distinctions. And how does one judge righteously, anyway?

Death





Death gets a bad rap!

Death has received a bad reputation over the ages, and perhaps deservedly so, especially before the more enlightened and advanced understandings that Jesus brought to the world. Death smeth!

He told us that to live righteously and in faith, we would not die, but have life everlasting. To repent our wrongdoings leads to that same outcome. The world witnessed this truth 2000 years ago. American Indian tribes spoke of the “happy hunting grounds” while Romans spoke of the Elysian Fields. Throughout human civilization, cultures and individuals have nourished the idea of a life beyond this one. It, as we learned, is built into our minds through one of our adjutant spirits of wisdom, later reinforced by our indwelling spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth, or the Holy Spirit; I’m not sure which one, or perhaps all three, are trying to make the point. For the past few decades (perhaps scores of them), many churches have not referred to death as a final gasp but as a “transition,” a return to God. Most recently, Urantians like to use the term “graduation.”

With all this positive thought about the nature of death, why is the fear of it so prevalent? Well, for one thing, we seem to be living in a fear-oriented society. This country has grown up with the notion that one must fear God without realizing that you cannot truly love someone you fear. That would be an oxymoron, but since we are mostly morons when it comes

to understanding life in its fullest, perhaps an oxymoron is the best we can do to reflect society's understanding.

These fears of death are compounded by a society that largely seems to revel in death (at least of others) in many forms: the numerous wars we are currently engaged in, the ongoing and increasing trade in weapons (have you noticed we seem to have replaced the “arms race” with trying to see who can sell the most weapons?), entertainment focused on death and violence (movies, television, and now video games), and the rising gang culture in our cities, to name a few obvious examples.

Whenever we have an issue to resolve, we tackle it like a war: war on drugs, war on poverty, war on terror. And how are those working? The universal law of attraction predicts the outcome. Perhaps if there were a war on religion, religions would thrive more (oh, that’s right; there is. It is called secular humanism).

Now comes *The Urantia Book*.

For those who have read the parts of the book regarding the end of life in this temporal world and what happens to us in the next Morontia worlds and beyond, death brings a whole new wardrobe. We begin to understand that our physical death here is merely a stepping stone to the next world. Once that step is taken, there need not be another thought of death ever again. Ever!

The Urantia Book gives me a warm and fuzzy feeling about death. For me, there is nothing to fear. Jesus kept telling us to fear not. What difference does it make if the world ends tomorrow? (Check out the “Sermon on the Mount,” Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7 and *The Urantia Book*, Paper 140, The Ordination of the Twelve). The adventure continues.

Today, when someone “passes”—excuse me, I meant to say “graduates”—I think about what happens next for that person, and I am silently pleased. And when I hear of a convicted felon placed on death row or see the news of some criminal gunned down for his evil deeds, I think to myself, “He got off scot-free from this world.”

I am currently on my second reading of a wonderful book by Richard Rohr titled *Immortal Diamond*. Mr. Rohr, or rather Father Rohr, is a Franciscan, but he writes like a son-of-a-gun! “Once you know that life and death,” he tells us, “are not two but are part of a whole, you will begin to view reality in a holistic, non-split way, and that will be the change that changes everything.” Additionally, “Matter and spirit are forever bound together; divine and mortal forever penetrate and manifest one another. . . . The changing of forms is called resurrection, and the return is called ascension, although to us it just looks like death.”

To me, dying is living renewed, without fear, and moving on to the next big adventure. It is certainly something to look forward to, not something to fear. I keep thinking that if the rest of the world, or even a small percentage of it, could view

death in the same way, what a different place Urantia would be.



How would I explain the mechanics of this transformative process to a friend?

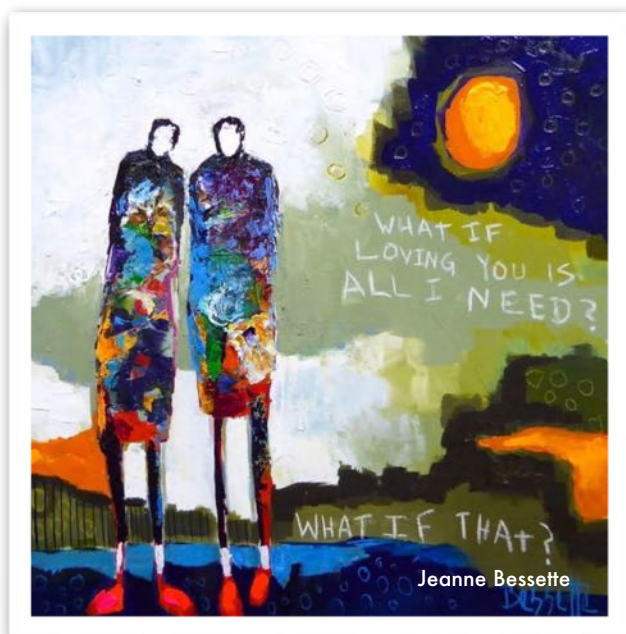
“When I die, I will be an angel sitting on a cloud with my harp.” (yawn) NOT!

If I wanted to keep my friend, I’d be very careful and lay a lot of groundwork ahead of time. Regarding the mechanics, I would need to start by explaining the idea that we are, in actuality, a “... human personality [that] may be viewed as functioning in a physical mechanism...” given life by other than material means and “... consisting of the planetary modification ... of the ... type of organism belonging to the electrochemical order of life activation and endowed with ... the cosmic mind ...” given to us by our universe creator. If I can get through that, I might be able to explain the logic of not being able to go from death in this world to a full-blown spirit being, which is the notion of most Christian faiths, as though we all become angels. Tiny steps, tiny steps. After all, we have all eternity to do it.

It seems to me that there are very distinct requirements to advance from one level to another. No pressure, since we have all the time we need to take, but once we reach the threshold, we do move on automatically.

C H A P T E R 1 5

The Nature of Personality



The origin and destiny of personality

“Personality is a level of deified reality and ranges from the mortal and midwayer level of the higher mind activation of worship and wisdom up through the morontial and spiritual to the attainment of finality of personality status. That is the evolutionary ascent of mortal- and

kindred-creature personality, but there are numerous other orders of universe personalities.” (UBo:5.1)

“Personality is never spontaneous; it is the gift of the Paradise Father. Personality is superimposed upon energy, and it is associated only with living energy systems; identity can be associated with nonliving energy patterns.” (UB50:5.4)

“The Universal Father is the secret of the reality of personality, the bestowal of personality, and the destiny of personality. The Eternal Son is the absolute personality, the secret of spiritual energy, morontia spirits, and perfected spirits. The Conjoint Actor is the spirit-mind personality, the source of intelligence, reason, and the universal mind.” (UBo:5.5)

“The personality of mortal man is neither body, mind, nor spirit; neither is it the soul. Personality is the one changeless reality in an otherwise ever-changing creature experience; and it unifies all other associated factors of individuality. The personality is the unique bestowal which the Universal Father makes upon the living and associated energies of matter, mind, and spirit, and which survives with the survival of the morontial soul.” (UBo:5.11)

“In personality, mind ever intervenes between spirit and matter; therefore is the universe illuminated by three kinds of light: material light, intellectual insight, and spirit luminosity.” (UBo:6.8)

Will creatures, you and I: “They will never have an end, but they do have personality beginnings.” (UBO:9.5)

The origin of personality for each individual lies with God. It is a direct gift, a bestowal, from our Paradise Father. Later, after a few years and a first moral decision, a person receives the fragment of God, the Thought Adjuster. Personality is unique, yet it is of God. How can something given by the Father who “changes not” be unique? Another one of those miracle things, I guess.

At any rate, the personality is so important to God that it is never lost, but must find its way back to God, one way or another. So important that even those will creatures who, in their free will, decided not to continue in the ascension plan still have their personality returned to God through the Supreme Being.

As for the rest of us, the personality, along with the evolving soul and soul-making memory experiences, eventually fuses with the Thought Adjuster. As a result, we take on the nature of Spirit, while the Thought Adjuster is no longer considered pre-personal, since it has assumed our personality. (Note, I don’t think it is considered “personalized” either.)

Meanwhile, we are also contributing to the Supreme through our experiences and memories, and I believe we are doing this every moment.

Whether our contributions augment Deity’s nature depends on how we define the idea of “nature.” When we discuss God being not subject to change, we also acknowledge that,

through his delegation of prerogative to his coordinates and subordinate beings and through the Thought Adjusters, he experiences much, in fact, everything! But does this change his nature? If by nature we mean his essential beingness, I think the answer is no; it does not change him, only his experiences.

In the Foreword of *The Urantia Book* (section I), we find a discussion and definition of Deity and levels of reality. The first or finite level of reality is the one of which we experience with its space-time limitation. We have beginnings but not necessarily endings.

The second level of reality is the absonite, which “... is *characterized by things and beings without beginnings or endings and by the transcendence of time and space.*” Absonite beings are eventuated; that is, they are not created. They simply are.

The third level of reality is the absolute level. It has no beginning and no ending, is spaceless, and exists outside of time. We are told this level is “Trinity attained,” existentially by the Paradise Deities, but it is not yet fully unified in terms of experience.

“When the creature submits to the will of the Creator, he does not submerge or surrender his personality; the individual personality participants in the actualization of the finite God do not lose their volitional selfhood by so functioning. Rather are such personalities progressively augmented by participation in this great Deity adventure; by

such union with divinity man exalts, enriches, spiritualizes, and unifies his evolving self to the very threshold of supremacy.”

“The evolving immortal soul of man, the joint creation of the material mind and the Adjuster, ascends as such to Paradise and subsequently, when mustered into the Corps of the Finality, becomes allied in some new way with the spirit-gravity circuit of the Eternal Son by a technique of experience known as finaliter transcendation. Such finaliters thus become acceptable candidates for experiential recognition as personalities of God the Supreme. And when these mortal intellects in the unrevealed future assignments of the Corps of the Finality attain the seventh stage of spirit existence, such dual minds will become triune. These two attuned minds, the human and the divine, will become glorified in union with the experiential mind of the then actualized Supreme Being.”
(UB117:5.2-3)

Trinity-attained augmentation, as it pertains to us lowly will creatures, results in the completion of the ascension career and reaching the “*Finaliter*” status.



Personality and Identity - the same or not?

We often confuse the concepts of personality and identity, but they are different. Each animal (and plant) has a unique identity. No two are alike. Anyone who has owned multiple

pets knows this to be true. Additionally, horse owners and trainers understand it as well. In fact, every living animal is unique in this regard.

Before discovering and reading *The Urantia Book*, I used to believe these animals all had unique personalities. I thought identity and personality were the same. Even after reading the book, I would try to find passages that stated or suggested animals (other than humans) had personality. For example, one such passage is where the book tells us that Andon and Fonta, clearly animal primates, each had a “...vague feeling of being something more than mere animals was due to the possession of personality....” (UB63:1.4)



I believe my early ideas attempted to link the bestowal of five of the seven Adjutant Mind Spirits—gifts from our Universe Mother Spirit that create intelligence in the animal kingdom—with the idea that there may be some aspect of personality

embedded within one or more of those adjutant spirits. This could potentially endow our beloved pet friends, at the very least, with a personality quality. Furthermore, the “fact” that they can express love and receive it seems very much like a person.

Getting back to identity and its uniqueness, I believe the identity factor arises from DNA, which is a non-living entity that carries the life force of its principle. While DNA serves to establish almost absolute uniqueness in individual animals, it lacks life of its own. However, even DNA does not encompass identity in relation to our divine evolution into the mansion worlds and beyond. In that context, identity is something greater and should not be minimized. The book refers to identity as “*living energy factors.*” (UB2:3.4)

In its own way, this unique identity is crucial to the ascension plan. It is the very thing that fuses with its Thought Adjuster. In fact, both the will creature and the Thought Adjuster have identities. “*The material self has personality and identity, tem-poral identity; the prepersonal spirit Adjuster also has identity, eternal identity. This material personality and this spirit prepersonality are capable of so uniting their creative attributes as to bring into existence the surviving identity of the immortal soul.*” (UB5:6.7)

In this regard, human identity plays an almost equally important role as the soul. However, no matter how significant identity is, it cannot survive annihilation, whereas personality will endure as it transitions into the Supreme

Being. In the case of the death of other animals, identity is lost: *“The life bestowed upon plants and animals by the Life Carriers does not return to the Life Carriers upon the death of plant or animal. The departing life of such a living thing possesses neither identity nor personality; it does not individually survive death. During its existence and the time of its sojourn in the body of matter, it has undergone a change; it has undergone energy evolution and survives only as a part of the cosmic forces of the universe; it does not survive as individual life.”*

But in the case of us humans, *“The survival of mortal creatures...” and thus their identity, “... is wholly predicated on the evolvement of an immortal soul within the mortal mind.”* (UB36:5.6)



Personality and Identity, Character and Ego

Personality and identity are often confused with one another. This applies to humans as well as to most animals that we perceive as having a personality, such as your dog or cat. They certainly seem to have a personality, don't they?

Identity is unique to all animals. The uniqueness, I believe, is a result of DNA—a physical entity—that serves as the vehicle through which living organisms replicate their specialness—species-ness—but not their identicalness. Only we human

beings possess what the book defines as Personality; it is NOT the same as identity. While identity is unique to all animals, personality is also unique, but it is a gift from the Father in Paradise, applicable only to us mortal beings.

A person's character is the accumulation of "stuff" that develops around our personality over time, from birth to death. It can and does change. The goal of soul-building is the co-creation of a moral character, an aspect of a maturing, yet still infant soul in this lifetime. The soul itself is a morontia creation. You will note that the word "ego" occurs very seldom in *The Urantia Book*. I think the word "ego" has taken on a distasteful quality, as if it is always a negative thing.

To me, my ego is my evolving character, and it, by itself, is neither good nor bad. It simply is what it is and changes over time, depending on my growth in intellectual achievement and spiritual insight, which is a result of my doing my best to fulfill God's will. The ego, in its youthful stages, is what drives us to learn to walk, ride a bike, or bake a cake. It constantly pushes us to do more.

As we get older, still in the grip of a developing prefrontal cortex, our ego may urge us to do stupid things too, especially with members of the opposite sex around. "Here, hold my beer. Watch this!" Sometimes, the prefrontal cortex gets stuck in its development, resulting in, well, some strange behaviors and perhaps nominations for the Darwin Awards.

Personality supersedes identity. And while Personality (always a capital P) stands above identity—since Personality has a spiritual origin and identity does not—identity is a unique physical manifestation. As I mentioned earlier, all animals, and I suspect all plants, are unique; that is, no two are alike. But it is Personality that makes us human beings, and without Personality, we would not be the willful creatures that we are.

Our very selves, our individual nature, consist of our unique personality, upon which our character is built. We do not acquire personality through an endowment of mind and will. It is a direct gift from God, operational at birth—or close to that event, as there is some discussion on this point. While the Thought Adjuster is also a gift from God that arrives a few years later, our spiritual beacon beckoning us home, it is seldom recognized as a real thing by most humans, with the still, small voice not being heard during their lifetimes.

But let's explore this concept we call the “ego,” the “I.” Two things come to mind: First, the I, the ego, is actually a personality expression shaped by years of character development, ideally leading to a strong moral character that enriches and enlivens one's soul... –or not. However, to the extent that it supports soul growth, it must also collaborate and cooperate with the Thought Adjuster. Second, I like to think of this ego or “I” as my Personality synthesis, my spiritual “I AM,” my connection to God through the personality circuit.

The saving grace is that the Personality and the Thought Adjuster must always align with each other, as they originate from the same source. We learn from our text that as we move upward and inward toward Paradise, our new material self will increasingly resemble the pure expression of our true self, our Personality—a material synthesis of truth, beauty, and goodness.



Personality and Truth, Beauty, and Goodness

“Hence materialism, atheism, is the maximation of ugliness, the climax of the finite antithesis of the beautiful. Highest beauty consists in the panorama of the unification of the variations which have been born of pre-existent harmonious reality.” (UB56:10.4)

“The false science of materialism would sentence mortal man to become an outcast in the universe. Such partial knowledge is potentially evil; it is knowledge composed of both good and evil. Truth is beautiful because it is both replete and symmetrical. When man searches for truth, he pursues the divinely real.” (UB2:7.4)

What are the contrasts to Truth, Beauty, and Goodness? How about “materialism” (or atheism), ugliness, and sin?

If “[t]ruth is the basis of science and philosophy, presenting the intellectual foundation of religion,” Then its contrast is

falsehood and cannot serve as the basis for any universe or cosmic reality. It is an illusion, but there is nothing to suggest that illusion isn't active in our evolutionary worlds. *"The meanings of eternal truth make a combined appeal to the intellectual and spiritual natures of mortal man."* (UB56:10.9-10)

If beauty constitutes "... the presence of appreciative creature mind," then its contrast would be the non-presence of appreciation, that is, the non-appreciative creature mind. "Beauty is the intellectual recognition of the harmonious time-space synthesis of the far-flung diversification of phenomenal reality, all of which stems from pre-existent and eternal oneness." Thus, the contrast would be the non-intellectual, or non-recognition, of such harmonious synthesis. As "[u]niversal beauty embraces the harmonious relations and rhythms of the cosmic creation...", resulting in intellectual appeal and leading toward a "... unified and synchronous comprehension of the material universe," then its contrast leads to what we term "ugliness, the quality of being unpleasant or repulsive in appearance." But, hey, I know what I like!

A bit more on this. I believe there is an inherent sense of rightness associated with beauty, a quality of truth evident when the appropriate combinations of harmony, form, color, melody, or whatever the medium may be, resonate with all mentally coherent individuals. Perhaps this is akin to the built-in intuitive response to personal morality. And maybe it is the Thought Adjuster or the Spirit of Truth that is

leading the charge, fostering a feeling of oneness that is perceived as truth, or at least truthiness. (UB56:10.9-12)

What is goodness? We learn that “[d]ivine goodness represents the revelation of infinite values to the finite mind....” “The recognition of goodness implies a mind of moral status, a personal mind with ability to discriminate between good and evil.” This is evil in the sense of sin and iniquity. But what about evil in the sense of ignorance or error? Given the strict meaning of what divine goodness is, even simple ignorance and error fall outside the definition of goodness.

“But the possession of goodness, greatness, is the measure of real divinity attainment.” This suggests the contrast of goodness may not measure up to any attainment of divinity reality. (UB56:10.9-12)

Personally, I have discovered—or decided—that living a life contrasting with truth, beauty, and goodness is far too much work! Non-truth, falsehood, in daily living requires a memory that must consistently recall the lies told to everyone, as well as to oneself. It's too hard. As an architect and urban designer, I have always desired to advocate for the best efforts in combining form and materials, budget and schedule, regulations and client needs, along with some talent, resulting in a design that is compatible with its own identity and delightful to view and explore. No “pleather,” thank you. While my interests in good and beautiful design have not waned, the visual results of most of our built environment indicate that I am in the minority.

The idea of doing good, even as I pass by, is a satisfying way to think, be, and act. Sometimes the urge may arise not to take responsibility for something—I might say to the teacher that my dog ate it—but then, upon reflection, why should I give my power to a dog? I will own it. I do get a charge out of that. I also enjoy helping others, serving others, as it were. As I spend at least an hour every day working on some aspect of *The Urantia Book*—reading, answering questions like these—I try to slip the dollar tip into the jar without the Starbucks partner noticing me. Why let the right hand know what the left is doing all the time, eh?



A mystery - the disappearing personality

As a point of curiosity, it is of some interest to me to try to get a better understanding of the scope of survival termination—that is, non-survival—on this world. In *The Urantia Book* we read: “Urantians generally recognize only one kind of death, the physical cessation of life energies; but concerning personality survival, there are really three kinds:

“1. Spiritual (soul) death. If and when mortal man has finally rejected survival, when he has been pronounced spiritually insolvent, morontially bankrupt, in the conjoint opinion of the Adjuster and the surviving seraphim....” The Adjuster leaves the mortal and from “... the cosmic standpoint the mortal is already dead; the continuing life merely indicates the persistence of the material momentum

of cosmic energies.” There is no resurrection and the soul does not survive.

“2. Intellectual (mind) death. When the vital circuits of higher adjutant ministry are disrupted through the aberrations of intellect or because of the partial destruction of the mechanism of the brain...” beyond a point of no return, so to speak. While the Adjuster leaves the mortal, the mortal’s soul may still survive. The word “may” is intriguing and provokes further thought as well.

“3. Physical (body and mind) death. When death overtakes a human being, the Adjuster re-mains in the citadel of the mind until it ceases to function as an intelligent mechanism....”

Such a type would be an accident or anything that kills a mortal. (UB112:3.1-4)

The first one—number 1 above—is the one that is the one that is of interest. We are told that even before the birth of a mortal events are happening that suggest great optimism on the part of the Thought Adjusters in the anticipation of a successful fusion with a mortal. We read:

“The volunteering Adjuster is particularly interested in three qualifications of the human candidate:

“1. Intellectual capacity. Is the mind normal? What is the intellectual potential, the intelligence capacity? Can the individual develop into a bona fide will creature? Will wisdom have an opportunity to function?”

“2. Spiritual perception. The prospects of reverential development, the birth and growth of the religious nature. What is the potential of soul, the probable spiritual capacity of receptivity?

“3. Combined intellectual and spiritual powers. The degree to which these two endowments may possibly be associated, combined, so as to produce strength of human character and contribute to the certain evolution of an immortal soul of survival value.” (UB108:1.3-6)

This is remarkable to me in that such an effort by a TA may ultimately result in a failed mission. Once in residence, the Thought Adjuster is working to direct the mortal toward the salvation values that will ensure survival. We read:

“The presence of this divine Adjuster in the human mind is disclosed by three experiential phenomena:

“1. The intellectual capacity for knowing God—God-consciousness.

“2. The spiritual urge to find God—God-seeking.

“3. The personality craving to be like God—the wholehearted desire to do the Father’s will.” (UB1:2.3-6)

The question is: what is the extent of non-cooperation that would ultimately eliminate a person from surviving in this world? We can speculate about the conditions that unequivocally convey a determination to not continue. Intent is the key factor.

Now consider all the people out there who have no understanding of the information we gather from our text.

Or those who wish to understand but may lack the information that would help them, relying instead only on the teachings from their traditional religious beliefs: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and many other belief systems that exist. Thankfully, we read, *“Ignorance alone can never prevent survival; neither can confusional doubts nor fearful uncertainty. Only conscious resistance to the Adjuster’s leading can prevent the survival of the evolving immortal soul.”* (UB110:3.5)

What about Secular Humanists, who are usually considered atheists? In addition to atheists, there are skeptics and agnostics who are labeled as secular humanists. They refer to themselves as "Freethinkers" and "Brights."

However, atheistic beliefs view religions, being religious, or having a spiritual mindset as irrelevant or ineffective in one’s terminal reality; that is, they imply no possibility of survival. There is nothing inherent in secular humanists or atheists that prevents them from embracing all the highest values of humanity and acting righteously to the best of their abilities. Note that I mentioned an atheistic belief. “Who are the secular humanists? Perhaps everyone who believes in the principles of free inquiry, ethics based upon reason, and a commitment to science, democracy, and freedom....” (Paul Kurtz, founder of the Council for Secular Humanism and Free Inquiry Magazine.)

The Free Inquiry website states, “Secular humanism is comprehensive, touching every aspect of life, including issues of values, meaning, and identity. Thus, it is broader

than atheism, which concerns only the nonexistence of god or the supernatural. Important as that may be, there's a lot more to life ... and secular humanism addresses it."

Secular humanism is nonreligious, advocating no belief in a realm or beings thought to exceed ordinary experience. "Secular humanism is a lifestance, ... secular humanism incorporates the Enlightenment principle of individualism, which celebrates emancipating the individual from traditional controls by family, church, and state, increasingly empowering each of us to set the terms of his or her own life."

Does this sound familiar? I believe there is much here that aligns with our way of living, but it lacks acceptance of God and anything associated with a Deity or a religious nature. However, it also sounds like a version of a Luciferian declaration of independence.

The problem here is this: *"Morality without religion fails to reveal ultimate goodness, and it also fails to provide for the survival of even its own moral values."* (UB196:3.27) Also, *"Morality without religion fails to reveal ultimate goodness, and it also fails to provide for the survival of even its own moral values."* (UB196:3.27)

As long as the atheist believes there is nothing more, how can he survive? *"In the inner experience of man, mind is joined to matter. Such material-linked minds cannot survive mortal death. The technique of survival is embraced in those adjustments of the human will and those transformations in the mortal mind whereby such a God-conscious intellect*

gradually becomes spirit taught and eventually spirit led.”
(UB1:3.7)

Moving on, what about the common or uncommon villain—bank robber, serial killer, embezzler, or such? I suspect they are in the ignorant category, or are still, through their own religious traditions, that their sins will be forgiven and will have that “bona fide” opportunity to choose survival. *“One error of human thinking respecting these problems consists in the idea that all evolutionary mortals on an evolving planet would choose to enter upon the Paradise career if sin had not cursed their world. The ability to decline survival does not date from the times of the Lucifer rebellion. Mortal man has always possessed the endowment of freewill choice regarding the Paradise career.”* (UB54:6.9)

We read: *“Human survival is in great measure dependent on consecrating the human will to the choosing of those values selected by this spirit-value sorter—the indwelling interpreter and unifier. Personal religious experience consists in two phases: discovery in the human mind and revelation by the indwelling divine spirit. Through oversophistication or as a result of the irrespend their efforts to discover the God who indwells them; they may fail to progress in and attain the divine revelation. But such attitudes of spiritual nonprogression cannot long persist because of the presence and influence of the indwelling Thought Adjusters.”* (UB196:3.17)

And to add to this discussion is a comment in our text suggesting that the individual must make a decision in this

world to survive. One of the former members of our study group believes this means that very few from our “world of the cross” will go on to the mansion worlds. But this undermines the statement about the individual’s opportunity to make a “bona fide” choice for survival.

Now for the questions: What might be the percentage of those mortals who do not transition from this world? And what is the percentage that will choose not to continue in the Mansion worlds? Just for discussion's sake, I read the figure of those who do not go on, in total, to be about seven percent. But, hey, I could be wrong.

As an aside, the definition of agnosticism and skepticism suggests possibilities for agnostics and skeptics. After all, they will have a “bona fide” opportunity to choose to understand once they are resurrected (from sleeping survival status, I assume) and can make their choice for survival or not.



Why is personality so essential to spiritual growth?

The Urantia Book says, “Divinity is creature comprehensible as truth, beauty, and goodness; correlated in personality as love, mercy, and ministry; disclosed on impersonal levels as justice, power, and sovereignty.” (UBO:1.17)

In addition to the Mindal spirit circuitry of the Universe Mother Spirit—the Holy Spirit— and her seven Adjutant Mind Spirits, there are three key elements that make up the potential and possibility of spiritual growth. *The Urantia Book* tells us the sacred core to existence lies in our God-given design which comprises the inner being of the free-will, normal-minded human being. This sacred core “... is composed of the evolving soul and the Indwelling [fragment of God], and its third component is ... the unique personality or personhood.”¹

This sacred trinity works together as one.

This inner trio is encased within a body-mind system, which with the trio “... creates the conditions for our soul evolution, personality unification, and the eventual eternal fusion of the sacred triad.”¹ It is at this fusion that our indwelling fragment of God, our Thought Adjuster, embodies our personality as well as his spirituality.

entual eternal fusion of the sacred triad.”¹ It is at this fusion that our indwelling fragment of God, our Thought Adjuster, takes on our personality as well as his spirituality.

While *The Urantia Book* broadens our understanding of personality, the one quality that is absolutely vital for spiritual growth is our connection to God through the Personality Circuit. This connection allows us to exercise the prerogatives of personhood as we evolve as immortal souls. These prerogatives include the God-like powers of free will and self-awareness. It is through these prerogatives that we take individual accountability and responsibility for our life

decisions, which are crucial in determining how quickly our embryonic morontia soul evolves in this lifetime and how swiftly we transition from one psychic circle of cosmic enlightenment to another.

One other UB line that stands out to me is this: *“God can be realized only in the realms of human experience....”*

(UB1:2.7) In other words, it pertains to the realms of personality experience. This idea is essential and indispensable to the hope of personality survival.

Footnotes:

1. Belitsos, Byron, *Your Evolving Soul*, San Rafael CA, Orion Press, 2017, p. xviii.
2. Belitsos, Byron, *Your Evolving Soul*, San Rafael CA, Orion Press, 2017, p. 165.

C H A P T E R 1 6

Religious Challenges - The Challenge of the Ages



How does the "religious challenge of this age..." speak to me?

For those who are far-sighted and forward-thinking, it involves constructing a new "...philosophy of living out of

the enlarged and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness”; to “...attract all that is good in the mind of man”; to “...challenge that which is best in the human soul”; and to live in the divine realities of “truth, beauty, and goodness” to the best of my ability and understanding.

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I am reminded of the work of Dr. David Hawkins, who wrote several great books ("Truth vs Falsehood," for example), all focused on spirituality. He also invented what he called a "scale of consciousness," where, through kinesiology or muscle testing, one could determine a level of consciousness for various things. The scale ranged from 0 to 1000 for a planet like ours. For instance, 200 represents the break-even point, with anything below 200 deemed unethical or dishonest—that is, false. Scores above 200 indicate increasing "truthiness." Love scores 500; unconditional love scores 550, which is akin to a cat's purr and a dog wagging its tail, if I recall. My primary point is that the late Dr. Hawkins stated that the scores are exponential in increments of 100, similar to measuring earthquakes. Thus, a score of 300 is 10 times as powerful as 200, and 500 would be 100 times as

powerful as 300, and so forth. The idea is that a small amount of goodness is far more powerful than a significant amount of badness in our finite world's scriptural significance. At least, that is how I recall it. (Check out his website: <http://www.veritaspub.com>.)

My initial journeys into understanding religious thinking and sources of "truth" led me, over several years, through "new thought" religious ideas, then to more esoteric writings, and finally to *The Urantia Book*. Since then, I have stopped searching for "alternative" psychic and spiritual forums and have focused on where the UB is leading me. I am now heavily supplementing my studies with important works by other authors who are writing about today's societal and ethical issues, but few are paying much attention. For example, I am re-reading the works of Jane Jacobs—in reverse order of her writing them—and many Lewis Thomas books, as well as newly published books by authors with extensive experience and, especially, insight to share. The amazing thing to me is how my new reading list reveals so many connections with the substance of *The Urantia Book*. The connections were always there, but it takes an effort like the UB to pull them into focus.



How do I perceive the Father's Presence? And where is the "proof" of the Father's fraternity?

“The proof of fraternity with the divine Adjuster consists wholly in the nature and extent of the fruits of the spirit which are yielded in the life experience of the individual believer. ‘By their fruits you shall know them.’

“It is exceedingly difficult for the meagerly spiritualized, material mind of mortal man to experience marked consciousness of the spirit activities of such divine entities as the Paradise Adjusters. As the soul of joint mind and Adjuster creation becomes increasingly existent, there also evolves a new phase of soul consciousness which is capable of experiencing the presence, and of recognizing the spirit leadings and other supermaterial activities, of the Mystery Monitors.

“The entire experience of Adjuster communion is one involving moral status, mental motivation, and spiritual experience. The self-realization of such an achievement is mainly, though not exclusively, limited to the realms of soul consciousness, but the proofs are forthcoming and abundant in the manifestation of the fruits of the spirit in the lives of all such inner-spirit contactors.” (UB5:2.4-6)

How do I perceive the Father's presence?

The fruits of the Spirit, as outlined above, can be seen in anyone and everyone who expresses them. They are that evidence of God's presence being felt or known within the mind.

But since discovering *The Urantia Book*, I have come to perceive the Father's presence in almost everything I see and in everything happening in the world. To explain, it is clear to me now that God's plan is constantly at work, revealing its true nature. I view current events as an extension of the conflicts caused by the rebel lion initiated by Lucifer and the betrayal of Caligastia. I also recognize these influences in the materialism of the world, which is most vividly displayed in personal and corporate greed and the exploitation of others by individuals and groups. I see it in the corruption of individuals through a lack of integrity and morality, as well as in organizational forms from the lowest levels to nation-states. However, I also understand that the exposure of these "realities" to me and others is a sign that the plan is still in motion and unfolding. We have the promise of Jesus that the brotherhood of the kingdom will come. We may not be here to witness it, but it will come.

I was at Starbucks studying a couple of sections in Paper 16 on The Seven Master Spirits when I read the part regarding "reality response." A comment from a colleague reminded me of this. He said, "Well, I can't truthfully say, 'I feel the Father's presence.'" I seriously doubt he was in the minority about that statement; I can appreciate it. However, when I read the sections on the Cosmic Mind, I came to this: "...
scientific, moral, and spiritual insights, these cosmic

responses, are innate in the cosmic mind, which endows all will creatures. The experience of living never fails to develop these three cosmic intuitions; they are constitutive in the self-consciousness of reflective thinking.” And, “... these three insights of the cosmic mind constitute the a priori assumptions which make it possible for man to function as a rational and self-conscious personality in the realms of science, philosophy, and religion. Stated otherwise, the recognition of the reality of these three manifestations of the Infinite is by a cosmic technique of self-revelation.” (UB16:6.9-10)

As I was reading these words and those that followed, I became aware that whether or not we recognize “feeling the Father’s presence,” the Father certainly knows of ours. Through our Thought Adjusters and especially through the Cosmic Mind, facilitated by our Universal Mother Spirit, Nebadonia, He is guiding us. All our reasoning, reflecting, and insightful observations—some of which are undoubtedly self-revelation—are supported by the inherent qualities of our minds.



How would I explain the three levels of consciousness—reality realization—to another?

First, I need to understand exactly what it is, don’t I? Too often, we take the phrases “God-consciousness” or the “consciousness of God” and just toss them out there thinking

everyone understands what they mean. To some, it can mean a “constant awareness of God's divine presence throughout the various routines of daily life.” Or that, since we are all made by God, we must, naturally, embody his consciousness. Here is what one Unity church has to say: “God is within each one of us so opening our consciousness to the unity of God's pure spiritual consciousness in Christian Mysticism reveals God in the condition of love, which is a kind of spiritual and physical unity. This unity shows us that God's pure consciousness is within, not far removed from us, but with us in the here and now. Jesus also said this when he gave us the saying; The Kingdom of God is within.

Is that clear?

But the UB gives us this: *“God-consciousness, as it is experienced by an evolving mortal of the realms, must consist of three varying factors, three different levels of reality realization.”* They are, and come in sequence as:

1. Mind consciousness—understanding the concept of God;
2. Soul consciousness—realizing the ideal of God.
3. Spirit consciousness—recognizing the spiritual reality of God.

The book explains that by *“... the unification of these factors of the divine realization, no matter how incomplete, the mortal personality at all times overspreads all conscious levels with a realization of the personality of God.”*
(UB5:5.11)

While the "... experience of God-consciousness remains the same from generation to generation, ... with each advancing epoch in human knowledge, the philosophic concept and the theologic definitions of God must change. God-knowingness, religious consciousness, is a universe reality, but no matter how valid (real) religious experience is, it must be willing to subject itself to intelligent criticism and reasonable philosophic interpretation; it must not seek to be a thing apart in the totality of human experience."
(UB5:5.12)

Okay, so now what? If I were to explain the UB to someone who isn't familiar with it, where would I start? I think I would try to simplify the above to something like this:

The idea of being in the presence of the consciousness of God arises through the integration of one's own mind consciousness, which includes the understanding of the concept of God that I think and hope everyone can grasp, along with their soul's consciousness, manifesting the realization of God's ideal, something most people sort of understand. Additionally, there's the embodiment of spirit consciousness, leading to the realization of the reality of God as a spiritual Father to us all, representing an aspect of the indwelling presence of God within one's mind. It doesn't matter where one finds themselves in this sequence; their own personality, a gift from God, integrates these aspects of their being with the personality of God himself. It takes time, and "everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end." (John Lennon)

C H A P T E R 1 7

The Ascending Pilgrim—The Eternal Adventure



What does “the fascinating struggle of the eternal adventure of attaining God the Father” mean?

First, the struggle: Kick-starting one to recognize “the calling” seems to be the biggest stumbling block in the

world. While many (in fact, all) are called, so few answer—or they fail to hear the call altogether. I think once we graduate from this world, the call will be more clearly heard, even answered.

If there are different levels of this calling, they are reflected in the depth of comprehension and faith that the listener brings to the call. Some won't hear it but will do what they can out of personal moral character. Others will heed the call more or less depending on how they see themselves relative to the world, whether they are “in the world” or “of the world.” Some will search for truth and follow where it leads them, as I did. It led me to *The Urantia Book*. Here I hold my standard and will continue to march forward, perfecting myself as I go. There ain't no stopping me now!



How do our personalities benefit from life's ups and downs?

The vicissitudes of life include grappling with hardships and disappointments, encountering social inequality, being confronted with insecurities and uncertainties, dealing with troublesome situations where there is insufficient information, knowledge, or wisdom to resolve them, uncovering errors and falsehoods when truth is desired, struggling with relative goodness and finding beauty falling short despite our accomplishments, having our mortal minds pushing for recognition and demanding selfish attention, which results in attempts to distance ourselves from taking

responsibility for our actions, and searching for happiness yet finding pain and sorrow instead.

Each of these vicissitudes offers the opportunity for us to see beyond them and then reach for the highest we can be in spite of them or use them as leverage and then take the path that confirms who we really are meant to be: perfect sons of God. And while the door to this path is wide, few are willing to enter and discover the priceless pearls and jewels of the kingdom: courage, altruism, hope, faith, the love of truth, idealism, loyalty, and unselfishness, resulting in the pleasure it is to know and be that son of God.

“As you view the world, remember that the black patches of evil which you see are shown against a white background of ultimate good. You do not view merely white patches of good which show up miserably against a black background of evil.” (UB195:5.12)

In *The Urantia Book*, we are introduced to a new concept of the use of the word “personality.” What we used to think of as personality now needs to be reconsidered as something else. We learn that personality is a gift of God, unchangeable, the permanent quality of who we are that we carry with us throughout our ascendancy to Paradise and beyond.

“Identity” is different but also unique to each of us; like all other life forms, it seems no two are exactly alike. Thus, we have these two unique attributes that form our very foundation. However, there is something else that happens to us that is constantly changing. I call it “character.” It is this character that results from our experience of living in the worlds and continues to change with our ascendancy to

Paradise and beyond. Through experience, we form our prejudices and predilections through contact with the world (being “of the world”?). The environment in which we grow up plays a large role, as does our contact with others and their influences on us: teachers, parents, peers, authority figures, and all the machinations of society that shape our “outlook” on life. All of this is “character building,” for better or worse. What the book tells us is that the goal of all these influences and vicissitudes is to build a mature mortal character, which then overlays our personality and becomes a part of our new personality. Or that is my thinking anyway.

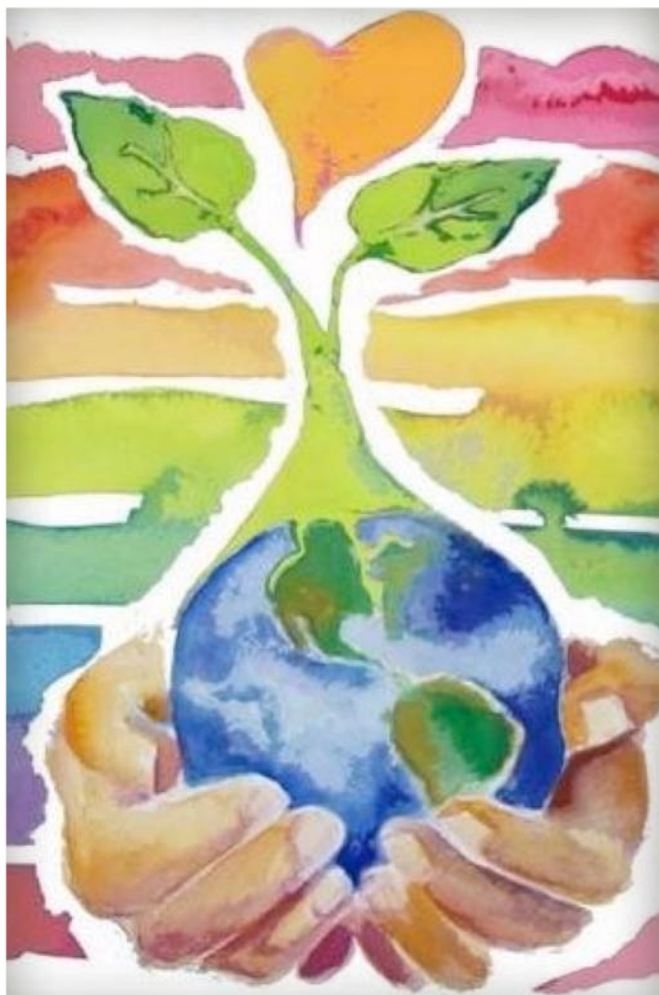
I believe there is a significant difference between morals and ethics. It is up to the individual to define the moral values he holds dear. However, ethics are the responsibility of the community, organization, tribe, nation, or similar entities to define for themselves. For instance, in your list of values such as courage, altruism, hope, faith, idealism, and so on, these are personal values, moral standards as such. There probably “cannot be a group ethic of courage—even in the Marine Corps—as each expression of courage can only come from the individual. There can be an “atmosphere” of courage that permeates or underlies the group, but the group, as such, does not possess a courageous spirit; it holds ritual, tradition, and slogans.

The Revelators lay out the bald truth for us in “...*but such an experience is devoid of survival values...*,” yet I suspect that, in reality, since each mortal gets at least one genuine chance to choose survival, someone who is intent on being mortal, etc., would likely recognize the value of survival and the

essence of what makes a being spiritual, ultimately choosing survival and all its accoutrements.

C H A P T E R 1 8

Let's Talk About God



God Is; I Am



Who (or what) is God?

Is this a trick question? Let's try to answer this another way....

God is.

He is the faith of a mustard seed and a pearl of great price.
He is the goodness that tugs at every heartstring of our most intimate being.

He is the one who offers to serve as he passes by.

He is the laughter of a new-born child.
He is the beauty of an artists gift of insight.
He is the sincerity of a simple thank you.
He is the courage of the medic, the soldier, the suicide bomber.
He is the truth for which a scientist searches and an atheist denies.
He is the selflessness of the servant in the second mile.
He is the wag of a dog's tail and the purr of a kitten.
He is the unconditional love of all creatures.
He is these and so much more.

God is.

From *The Urantia Book* perspective, he is so much more....



The First Source and Center

The *Urantia Book* tells us: "...As the First Source and Center of all things, the Father "unqualifiedly transcends all mind, all matter, and all spirit." (UB1:7.7) What does this mean to me?

To me, it literally means God, as First Source and Center is the ultimate creator, controller, and upholder of the universes, of all things. As stated in the Ten Commandments: "You shall have no other gods before my face." (Exodus 20-1 in the original Hebrew) This does not

mean there are no other gods besides God. It just means he is the top one.

And this means that all creations that exist are under his authority. He is the CEO, the Chairman of the Board. And while he has delegated his prerogatives in the creations of material, mind, and spirit, we and all the universes are under his watchcare.

We know he is not alone in this regard. It appears that “as below, so above” applies to the celestial worlds as well as here in the material world. Just as the evolutionary worlds have a diverse organization of beings, so do the celestial worlds.



“I AM that I AM” - God talking to himself

Here I am. Nothing but me. It is nice here—quiet and peaceful, good and beautiful. Nothing but truth. So why not share it? [POOF!!] A son! What God wills becomes existent. What do you say, son? What do you mean, “is that all there is?” Well, now.... [POOF!!!] There. Is that better? Yes, it was perfect before; now it is more perfect. Meet the Infinite Spirit. You want to form a corporation? We can call it “Trinity, Inc.” or “Trinity, LLC.” Sure, why not? What else can we do? This is a pretty cool place, this isle hanging in the middle of nowhere. How do we keep busy in no time? I know, let’s create some worlds.... [POOF!] There are 21 really neat worlds in three orbits and one billion worlds in seven orbits. Yes, I realize I perhaps overdid it. But I like lots of

stuff. Let's start them spinning around us so we have some variation in our view.

But all of these are so perfect. We could use a little asymmetry. Why not try some worlds that aren't perfect? Wait! No. We will try some that are far from the perfection of this... what do you call this billion-sphere thing? Heaven? Oh, Havona. You say tomato... How about we start out by mixing up the floating star things, gathering some dirt out in the suburbs, and maybe creating some very imperfect life forms, like a slug and tract housing. But first, I have a craving for some Master Spirits; perhaps a little vino to go with the sourdough. I like it leavened.

[Sometime later] Things are moving along nicely. The big universes are really super. We have a good mix of good and evil, and occasionally a rotten apple or two. A snake. A misquote... How did that get in here? Where the devil are those Life Carriers? Now all we need to do is create a couple of cool-looking folks that are made in my image, except someone could actually see them down there. And just to make sure I ultimately get things my way, I am going to insert a God-chip in each one. I think that will take care of it, God willing.

If things don't go according to plan... What? Who's on the circuit? Lucifer who? Tell him I'll get back to him later... If things don't go according to plan, I can always send in the A&E team. Maybe even one of my many sons. He might enjoy it, as long as he doesn't come off as too much of a new-

ager. I hate to see him hung out to dry. Oh, well, that will be his cross to bear.

[Much, much later] Finally, we are shaping the world the way I have always hoped. The era of Light and Life is nearly here, along with the Supreme Being. I am so proud of him, the way he has embraced such a potpourri of personality, values, and meanings... Why, the entire enterprise is beginning to resemble the perfection of Heaven... What? Didn't I say Havona? I thought I did. Well, if it turns out to be just like Havona, we might consider venturing out to the exurbs, you know, that first outer space level, and trying something new. What do you think? We could name it OS100, like that guy Steve Jobs suggested. He's so clever. Did you see the new reflecting device he created? Now folks don't need to gather at the Seas of Glass to watch the news....



What is this thing “God is love”?

Love encompasses truth, beauty, and goodness. As an eternal reality, love is fully forgiving, contingent upon our willingness to forgive others in our lives. It embodies compassion and mercy, balanced by justice. (Without justice, mercy is meaningless.) Infinite truth can only arise from a love of truth, even on Urantia. In our finite worlds, the beauty we create stems from a love of beauty itself.

I always appreciate a person who takes on a statement or issue and tests it against their own experience, intelligence,

and insight. Your approach is thoughtful and made me want to read it carefully. Therefore, my comments below stem from the interest I had in your response to the question. That being said...

Indeed, it is very hard to define love with our limited understanding of what it means to God. However, I don't agree that it is not also a noun. We know that "love" is one of the defining attributes of God. If so, we should examine what constitutes an attribute. Can it be a noun? Sure. One definition is: "a quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something." It is also a verb.

It is very difficult for us to speculate about whether a "God with no love" can or cannot "manifest error and repugnant creation." It is easier to consider whether a God can, first, relinquish virtually all his personal attributes to other beings without being a loving God to begin with. I would think that he would not do so. Without that kind of loving God, would it even be possible for him to bestow a fragment of himself to us, much less be the creator of manifold beings whose only job is to love us and guide us in our journey to Paradise?

For example, a color is an attribute but also a noun. An attribute can also be a verb, as in "regard something as being caused by someone or something." Or, as in "regard a quality or feature as characteristic of or possessed by someone or something." Why can't it be both? It is a both/and world; it is not an either/or world. Whether something is static or dynamic has nothing to do with whether it is a noun or a

verb. The “love of God” and the “love of Christ” from Romans sound like a big bunch of nouns to me.



God's Law and God's Love

The Law of God: The way God does what he does is the most perfect and constant way, “...*simply because that is the best way to do that particular thing in a given circumstance; and the best way is the right way, and therefore does infinite wisdom always order it done in that precise and perfect manner.*” (UB12:7.2) This certainly appears to be one of the “Universal Laws.” This means these laws of God are applied to everyone in the same way.

The Love of God: That which God has for his children, regardless of whether they exist in time and space, meaning he loves both experiential and existential children equally. God IS love, but love is not the entirety of what or who God is.

And while the love of God for his children is always present, his will, as expressed through them, is not always evident, particularly in this initial experience of living. As life progresses and advances in the morontia world, more of God’s will is revealed by his mortal ascending children. Ultimately, both the law of God and the love of God are completely compatible and “ultimately synchronous in reality.

Some believe the Law of God is arbitrary in some way. But if he is acting in the absolute best and perfect way, how can we

claim it is arbitrary? Even if we suppose that he could change his methods because he discovered a new approach, or that conditions might change requiring a different perfect way of doing something, either change would still not be arbitrary. Arbitrariness implies a lack of criteria that might justify a method of doing something. The one reason we can rely on our Father “as a rock” is that he is never arbitrary.



Who’s your daddy?

While revelation can signify many different things revealed to an individual, this discussion is confined to religious or spiritual revelation.

Religious or spiritual revelations can occur in two fundamental ways.

One term is “self-revelation,” where an individual has a “revealing” in his or her mind. This can come about through the subtle efforts of the Thought Adjuster, the Spirit of Truth, our Universe Mother Spirit, or perhaps through some awakening insight from the growth of wisdom. It may even arise from a “gut feeling,” possibly the work of one of the Adjutant Spirits. I believe this happens all the time. We read about the prophets of the Old Testament and the Torah—Amos, Isaiah, Elijah, and even Moses—whose revelations from spiritual sources have become part of our sacred heritage that continues to influence today’s Judaism, Christianity, and, to some extent, Islam.

But some purported self-revelation can be distorted and corrupted through purposeful or unintentional error or misunderstanding. And much of that shows up in the sacred works as well.

Two, “epochal” revelations, as in the nature of Michael of Nebadon coming to our world, where his life and teachings were for a wider audience than our Urantian epoch of time and place. They were, in fact, for the benefit of all his creatures throughout his universe of Nebadon. The UB is the outermost current revelation, and like Jesus’, it continues today. This epochal revelation is the only way that evolutionary religions—our commonplace ideas of what religion is—can progress, grow, and evolve toward what they are intended to become. (Where they end up is another story altogether.)

“Religious revelation is essential to the realization of brotherhood on Urantia.” (UB 52:6.2)

To answer the request to reflect on the fullest meaning of the sentence above and to respond to it begins with the foundational concepts of “fatherhood” and “sonship.” It is through revelation that mankind begins to grasp the idea that we are all part of one brotherhood. We can’t seem to discover that idea on our own—never have. What makes us all brothers and sisters is that our ultimate creator, in fact, the creator of all personalities and other non-personal beings, is our Father, the First Source and Center, God. We are all his children; thus, each of us is each other’s brother or sister.

Religions that disregard these revelations and relationships, or forget them, do not share the same ideas of God as a father and cannot comprehend the concept of brotherhood. Islam is one such religion.

The UB informs us that a true religion—TRUE religion—must contain two basic requisite and fundamental truths: the Fatherhood of God and, from that, the establishment of the Brotherhood of Mankind. If not, ...you decide.

And “Just because you don't understand it doesn't mean it isn't so.” — Lemony Snicket



Separation from God: Is it possible,... really?

Those of us in the “New Thought” realm of religious teachings, as well as certain other theories of spiritual teachings, talk incessantly about the notion of “separation from God.” However, based on our readings this week, we see that this notion is neither correct nor sensible, considering the many spiritual influences we encounter daily, whether we recognize them or not. We have ten spiritual influences (can you name them?) within us, plus countless others that continually seek to assist us through various means. However, we also have a role to play here, which I will not discuss at the moment.

These “New Thought” groups have developed a method for engaging with the teachings of sacred works in a way that modern individuals can better understand. This approach, called “metaphysics,” originated over 100 years ago

and remains active today, aiming to integrate religion into the new realm of modernity known as modern science. A true metaphysician never accepts the Bible at face value; instead, he or she must interpret it in a new way, viewing it as allegory or metaphor—a metaphysical interpretation—of what the Bible signifies rather than what it literally states. However, this metaphysician does not stop there. He or she continues until every name of every person, place, and thing has been assigned new interpretive meanings. For instance, consider the *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, a 700-page tome by Charles Fillmore. (And he tells us, this is HIS version; go do your own version.)

I always believed that the concept of separation was another metaphysical attempt to explain why we are not yet perfect. But why was this considered necessary as a part of mankind’s makeup and relationship to his creator? Could this idea be another consequence of our “fall” from grace? So what is separation? Granted, we are not yet in the presence of God in Paradise, but He has chosen to be in our presence here and now. What separation? Really?

Yes, there is a duality in nature, intended to be exactly what it is. I like this from the UB:

“In every mortal, there exists a dual nature: the inheritance of animal tendencies and the high urge of spirit endowment. During the short life you live on Urantia, these two diverse and opposing urges can seldom be fully reconciled; they can hardly be harmonized and unified. However, throughout your lifetime, the combined Spirit ever ministers to assist you in subjecting the flesh more and more to the leading of the Spirit. Even though you must live your material life through, and even though you cannot escape the body and its necessities, nonetheless, in purpose and ideals, you are increasingly empowered to subject the animal nature to the mastery of the Spirit. There truly exists within you a conspiracy of spiritual forces, a confederation of divine powers, whose exclusive purpose is to effect your final deliverance from material bondage and finite handicaps.”
(UB34:6.9)

In sum: *“Those God-knowing men and women who have been born of the Spirit experience no more conflict with their mortal natures than do the inhabitants of the most normal of worlds, planets which have never been tainted with sin nor touched by rebellion. Faith sons work on intellectual levels and live on spiritual planes far above the conflicts produced by unrestrained or unnatural physical desires. The normal urges of animal beings and the natural appetites and impulses of the physical nature are not in conflict with even the highest spiritual attainment except in the minds of ignorant, mistaught, or unfortunately overconscientious persons.”* (UB34:7.7)

Ah, those metaphysicians! Where have you taken us?



Leading me Godward, one feeling, er, thought at a time

“The divine spirit connects with mortal man, not through feelings or emotions, but in the realm of the highest and most spiritualized thinking. It is your thoughts, not your feelings, that lead you Godward. The divine nature can only be perceived with the eyes of the mind. However, the mind that truly discerns God and hears the indwelling Adjuster is the pure mind. ‘Without holiness no man may see the Lord.’ All such inner and spiritual communion is termed spiritual insight.” (UB101:1.3)

Question: Reflecting upon this passage by a Melchizedek of Nebadon. What does he mean by, "It is your thoughts, not your feelings, that lead you Godward." How is spiritual insight different from theological book learning? How would you now define the meaning of true religion to a friend who asked you what it is?

We are sentient beings. The word "sentient" comes from the Buddhist idea that sentient beings are those that have five aggregates or skandhas: matter, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. However, in our current use of the term, as Wikipedia tells us: “Sentience is the capacity to feel, perceive, or experience subjectively.” Some countries have recognized animals as sentient beings,

specifically New Zealand and Canada. Furthermore, we know animals possess the first five Adjutant Spirits, just as we do.

While sensations and perceptions can lead to feelings, they alone are not the source of Godward-leading impulses; these must originate from the intellect first, it seems. However, this does not imply that feelings lack a role to play. (I like to distinguish “feelings” from “emotions.” I was once told that emotions are feelings that have become thoughts. So, in an emotion, such as being scared in an instant—which is perfectly human and animal-like—when it transforms into a thought, it turns to fear, which can be harmful and disruptive to positive behavior. Hmmm.)

Recall that intelligence (intellect) is sourced through our first five Adjutant Spirits. However, the key difference between animals and us is the two additional Adjutant Spirits of Worship and Wisdom. These two Adjutant Spirits are what lead us to first acknowledge that there is something, or someone, greater than ourselves. Naturally, by the time we possess these last two Adjutant Spirits, we already have our Thought Adjuster. He isn’t called the “Feeling Adjuster,” is he?

All ten of these internal spiritual influences help us recognize the path toward God. Without them, we’d only rely on our gut feelings (er..., oops, that is one of the Adjutant Spirits called Intuition) and perhaps our consciousness, but not our conscious (isn’t that some sort of insect?)—just mere animals, some cute, some not.

To me spiritual insight comes from within. I, of course, did not know it at the time, but that insight was probably that which caused me to resentful and uncomfortable sitting in the Methodist church pew (yes, it was hard wood) as a teenager listing to stuff about being born in sin (I hadn't done anything yet..., or had I?); that we must fear God (and love him at the same time? How does one do that?); and that Jesus was a sacrifice God required of mankind or Jesus (I forget which) to let all the other sinful and sin-filled folks off the hook (who does that make sense to?). Let's not forget turning women into salt, packing all those critters on an ark (why mosquitoes?), or that God dictated the first books of the bible to someone with shorthand no doubt, but he had to use humans for the new stuff.

What is my definition of "true religion"? I would say, humbly and without being condescending, it is what I know in my heart as being true. "What do you mean "know"? Like you have evidence or proof?" No, I would say it is more a sense that pervades my mind, which can come through my intellect but also arises from my spirit self—my soul—and moves through me and radiates from my heart; I can feel it, and it feels good. "How do you know this is true?" How do you know anything is truly true? You must know it. My religion is such that I have faith and absolute confidence in my spirit guidance. "But how do you know it is really true?" How would you know it is not? Now get off my back!



Are we worthy of an audience with Our Father

First, worthiness is not necessary. We, as children of the one Father in Paradise, are already worthy. I believe we are born worthy since we are not born in sin, as some claim. Therefore, meeting with Our Father is similar to meeting with our mortal parents, although I don't think "audience" is the best word choice.

Second, as we continue to develop our moral consciousness, our self-concept becomes more aligned with our personality; that is our true self. I believe that when my moral self-concept aligns with my personality, I will be in the best position to carry out my Father's business much like Jesus did. We are the new apostles. The adventure is ours to seize.

"The call to the adventure of building a new and transformed human society by means of the spiritual rebirth of Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom should thrill all who believe in him as men have not been stirred since the days when they walked about on earth as his companions in the flesh." (UB195:10.6)

The quote above emphasizes another significant point. Regardless of how ready we are to have that audience, we are always prepared to serve. That is the other part of our mandate. It is in serving our fellows in this world and beyond that we gain our OWN feeling of being ready to stand before

God and call Him Father, to stand alongside our brothers and sisters and say to each and every one of them, “I love you”—and mean it. Then we have experienced the truth of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Mankind in earnest.

Ponder this: “The world needs more firsthand religion. Even Christianity — the best of the religions of the twentieth century — is not only a religion about Jesus, but it is so largely one which men experience secondhand. They take their religion wholly as handed down by their accepted religious teachers. What an awakening the world would experience if it could only see Jesus as he really lived on earth and know, firsthand, his life-giving teachings!

Descriptive words of things beautiful cannot thrill like the sight thereof, neither can creedal words inspire men’s souls like the experience of the presence of God. But expectant faith will ever keep the hope-door of man’s soul open for the entrance of the eternal spiritual realities of the divine values of the worlds beyond.” (UB195:9.8)



Then this: *“Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings. If Christianity persists in neglecting its spiritual mission while it continues to busy itself with social and material problems, the spiritual renaissance must await the coming of these new teachers of Jesus’ religion who will be exclusively devoted to the spiritual regeneration of men. And then will these spirit-born souls quickly supply the leadership and inspiration requisite for the social, moral, economic, and political reorganization of the world.”* (UB195:9.6)

Is it for us, those of us that read and study *The Urantia Book*; those of us that take these courses of study; those of us that continue to search for insight, meaning, and value of this most wonderful gift of revelation; and those of us that strive to search for new truth wherever it may be found? If that is who we are, then we are those new leaders. We are the new apostles, the new ambassadors of truth, beauty, and goodness. It is up to each of us to proceed accordingly, interminably led by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, our very own fragment of the living God, our Father in heaven, our Thought Adjuster. And by our gift of personality, that single and powerful link directly to God in Paradise.

Home is where the heart is. If so, I am home now and always have been. In the growing up I did not know it; now I do. Every time I sit in the stillness of meditation I recognize it all over again. I will feel the comforts of home from now on, in faith and into eternity. That is all it takes.

And perhaps 9,765,480,346,132,000,000 of continuing education, maybe more....



The Spirit of God

The Spirit of God is God; God is Spirit. Spirit's, i.e., God's, nature is one of perfection, omnipotence, omnipresence (through the presence of our Thought Adjuster at a minimum), and omniscience. To me, the words Love, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness are all synonymous with Spirit, that is God.

I view the Trinity as a corporate entity whose only stockholders, officers, and directors are God, the Eternal Son, and the Infinite Spirit. While each of the individual personalities within the Trinity has specific roles or functions to fulfill, the Trinity itself has a completely distinct purpose, just as a corporation has different objectives from its stockholders, and so on. However, I believe you are correct when you mention that the Trinity shares the same spirit quality. I would like to think that a corporation embodies the same intent in its functions that each of its stakeholders envisions as goals regarding how they imagine the corporation will operate—its mission statement or objective. Of course, that represents the ideal scenario; we understand that reality—corporate laws and the tax code—is somewhat more complicated.



God's personality

God's personality is one of perfection in all aspects. It is the "pattern" for all bestowed personalities, yet each of those bestowed personalities is unique. My own way to "discern the invisible Maker" is to look around me, within me, and at others as well, to experience what I experience and when I experience it. I know by faith and the evidence of things seen and unseen everywhere that I know him.



What is God the Father's attitude toward his creation?

“The Universal Father is all the time present in all parts and in all hearts of his far-flung creation.” (UB3:1.2) To me, this says it all. Additionally, we, as the sons (or even great grandsons) of God, are heirs to his kingdom and must be equally loved by him and even by his sons. In fact, we are loved by all of his created personalities and non-personal beings. That is not to say that he and they are perfectly happy with our behavior; that is a different issue. However, getting back to his attitude toward us, specifically, he loves us so much that he places a fragment of himself within us and hopes that we will one day stand with him and become co-creators of other adventures with him. That speaks of a powerful love that can be experienced. As for others, his love is so strong that he relinquishes most of his prerogative in creation to his created beings. That is love.

C H A P T E R 1 9

My Father and I are One



My Thought Adjuster

I love this paragraph:

“Can you really realize the true significance of the Adjuster’s indwelling? Do you truly fathom what it means to have an absolute fragment of the absolute and infinite Deity, the

Universal Father, indwelling and fusing with your finite mortal natures? When mortal man fuses with an actual fragment of the existential Cause of the total cosmos, no limit can ever be placed upon the destiny of such an unprecedented and unimaginable partnership.” (UB107:4.7)

At times, I stop and consider the miracle of God indwelling each and every one of us (almost). At least we all have that opportunity equally. I often look around the room where I am and think, “a Thought Adjuster lives in each person I see, just like me.” It is thrilling to contemplate this idea.

The nature of the Thought Adjuster reflects the nature of God. I like to explain the idea of a holographic image, where each tiny piece contains the entire image; in this way, this small fragment of God is a metaphorical reflection of God himself. Each quality of God coexists with us. As for its actual nature, where do we begin?

What does it mean to be indwelt by God? It means this fact is foremost in my mind most of the time. It cannot be helped, can it? It certainly changes how I relate to my friends and family, as well as to all other people, even animals, and our physical world. I cannot help but wonder how this incredible fact got overlooked in our most cherished religious traditions! Just think about that. What if everyone knew that a fragment of God dwelled within them and was helping to create their soul? And in that sense, the idea of eternal life, with no fear of death, becomes very easy.



Mission and Ministry of Thought Adjusters

“*The Mystery Monitors are not thought helpers; they are thought adjusters.*” (UB108:5.5)

What is the difference between 'thought helpers' and 'thought adjusters?' How do Thought Adjusters actually work in the material mind?

Let's start with the dictionary of what an adjuster is: “(noun) *a person or thing that adjusts.*” There we have it.

Adjust: “*to change (something) so that it fits, corresponds, or conforms; adapt; accommodate,*” or “*to put in good working order; regulate; bring to a proper state or position,*” or “*to settle or bring to a satisfactory state, so that parties are agreed on the result,*” or “*to systematize.*”

Now, let's try “helper”: “*someone who helps another person with a job or task.*” Some others: “To give assistance to (someone); make it easier for (someone) to do something;” or “To contribute to the effectiveness or improvement of (something); improve or advance.”

This should not be confused with the following: “Hamburger Helper is a packaged food product branded by General Mills and sold under the Betty Crocker brand, consisting of boxed pasta bundled with packets of powdered sauce and

seasonings.” And I have not seen a product called “Hamburger Adjuster.”

With the exception of food, it seems clear that a “helper” is always related to someone or something. Is the TA a helper in this sense of the definitions above? To me, the clear distinction is that a helper suggests someone or something coming along and doing the work alongside another. The adjuster, on the other hand, is occupied with making adjustments to the efforts of a person. The burden of the effort is always on the individual, while their TA's job is to make corrections, bringing the situation into a satisfactory state with some adjustments toward a better end, provided the person is heedful of the adjustments being undertaken.

But regarding how the Thought Adjusters actually work, it seems they do more than just make “adjustments” to the human mind. The UB tells us, “They labor with the material mind for the purpose of constructing, by adjustment and spiritualization, a new mind for the new worlds... of your future career. Their mission chiefly concerns the future life, not this life.” (UB108:5.5) What exactly the TA does with the human mind is not really known by the author of paper 108.

The author states that the “...*Thought Adjusters would like to change your feelings of fear to convictions of love and confidence; but they cannot mechanically and arbitrarily do such things; that is your task. In executing those decisions which deliver you from the fetters of fear, you literally supply the psychic fulcrum on which the Adjuster*

may subsequently apply a spiritual lever of uplifting and advancing illumination.” (UB108:5.8)

“I do notice that while they are not called “Thought Helpers,” they may be referred to as “heavenly helpers.”

But, when it comes “...to the sharp and well-defined conflicts between the higher and lower tendencies of the races, between what really is right or wrong (not merely what you may call right and wrong), you can depend upon it that the Adjuster will always participate in some definite and active manner in such experiences.” (UB108:5.9)

It becomes exceedingly difficult to discuss the hows of TA fully since the author of this paper doesn't really know it him or herself.



It's not the destination; it's the journey. Or is it both/and?

The Thought Adjuster is the pilot of my ship. The pilot serves as the navigator, equipped with the GPS. I am the captain of my ship, my mortal self-mind, and I give the orders. The pilot must follow my commands. While the pilot can offer guidance, it is the captain who controls the ship's fate.

But the pilot, the Thought Adjuster, begins his work well before my ship departs

from the harbor. He has been making plans, likely hoping I would follow them precisely. But, knowing me, he is out of luck most of the time. After I screw up so often, and my pilot has to readjust his plans for the umpteenth time (“recalculating route...”), I might start paying more attention to him and his suggestions.

Did you notice I left the harbor without him? I had five frantic adjutants running around half-cocked, trying to get me to do things, think about things, and understand things. But then a couple of other senior adjutants came aboard and started making suggestions that seemed more sensible. My pilot climbed aboard around the same time, and I could start to see the channel opening out of the harbor.

(I think I have milked this one as far as I wanted to.)

The Thought Adjuster and the Personality are two gifts from God that work together to help the mind become more spiritualized, uplifting my intellectual and spiritual insights to new levels of understanding. My Adjutant Spirits have also been present to assist me in my intellectual advancement, but they will leave me by the time of my earthly graduation, when I will begin to pay attention to Cosmic Mind. For now, my Thought Adjuster serves as my true connection to my Father (who is in Heaven). He descended from Salvington (that’s pretty close to Paradise) to take up residence in this loaner body. His job is to make suggestions and adjust my

thinking toward spirit, instilling in me a yearning for a connection to something greater than myself. While he cannot overcome my often straying human will, he always knows how to pull me back into the calmer waters of my life's journey. (I must also salute my Spirit of Truth and the Holy Spirit for tackling some of the nitty-gritty of helping me focus more distinctly on what is important.)

My Adjuster's role is never done; I staked my claim on that. As I move on toward greener pastures, I am certain to find those still waters of the next harbor. There my Thought Adjuster will take charge of the best that my mind and its memories can provide and along with my Guardian Seraphim (named Groucho, maybe) who is accompanying my soul, I will reunite with them on some Mansion world, ready to start afresh on a new adventure in faith.

The most significant problems of my Thought Adjuster can be best summarized by this great quote from a guardian seraphim found in our text, as I am certain my TA would concur with this assessment. (UB111:7.5): *“Much of my difficulty was due to the unending conflict between the two natures of my subject: the urge of ambition opposed by animal indolence; the ideals of a superior people crossed by the instincts of an inferior race; the high purposes of a great mind antagonized by the urge of a primitive inheritance; the long-distance view of a far-seeing Monitor counteracted by the nearsightedness of a creature of time; the progressive plans of an ascending being modified by the desires and longings of a material nature; the flashes of universe intelligence cancelled by the chemical-energy*

mandates of the evolving race; the urge of angels opposed by the emotions of an animal; the training of an intellect annulled by the tendencies of instinct; the experience of the individual opposed by the accumulated propensities of the race; the aims of the best overshadowed by the drift of the worst; the flight of genius neutralized by the gravity of mediocrity; the progress of the good retarded by the inertia of the bad; the art of the beautiful besmirched by the presence of evil; the buoyancy of health neutralized by the debility of disease; the fountain of faith polluted by the poisons of fear; the spring of joy embittered by the waters of sorrow; the gladness of anticipation disillusioned by the bitterness of realization; the joys of living ever threatened by the sorrows of death. Such a life on such a planet! And yet, because of the ever-present help and urge of the Thought Adjuster, this soul did achieve a fair degree of happiness and success and has even now ascended to the judgment halls of mansonia.”

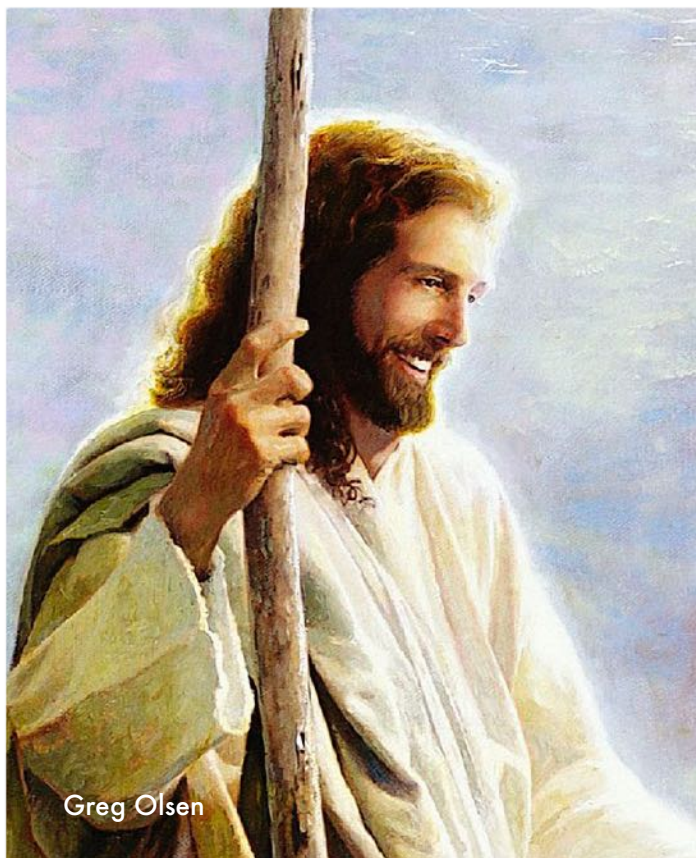
I am so blessed to have made it this far. Tally-Ho!



O Soul Mio

We have learned that the Thought Adjuster is actually God. Yes, a “fragment,” but nevertheless, God. Think of DNA: each strand contains all the components that constitute the entire organism from which it came. The UB states that our TA is God, possessing all of the attributes that God has. The purpose of our TA is twofold, but for our discussion, there are two major ones: first, it leads us to him,

helping us draw closer to him and become like him, even perfect. Second, it allows God to experience our being and our experiences for himself. Other purposes include our



eventual fusion (if we choose survival and qualify!), through which we and our TA become one; we take on the qualities of God, albeit still not perfect ourselves. Additionally, in the fusion process, our TA adopts our personality and is no longer a pre-personal Thought Adjuster.

My recognition of others as possessing in-dwelling TAs must be, at this moment, a conscious act; that is, I must stop and think, “all these folks I see are children of God and my brothers and sisters, and they have an in-dwelling fragment of God within them as well.” I am certain Jesus did not have to go through this process. However, the knowledge that I carry with me that this IS the case has made me a much more patient person, kinder to everyone and everything, more generous, and I hope, more thoughtful towards others.

The soul is the only aspect, along with our personality, that is carried forward in ascension. It brings memories and the essence of spiritual value into morontia life. We help shape our souls through the quality of our thoughts, words, and deeds. This also greatly includes our regard for and service to others, as well as our prayers primarily for others (which serve a dual purpose—for the one we pray for and for ourselves in doing so). Connecting with God through stillness is also important. And let’s not forget to strive to do God’s will as we go along.

When it comes to inhibiting soul growth, there are many ways, but the main factors are being sinful and iniquitous. Evil, as defined by Jesus, is merely ignorance and error; that is, living in a way that lacks understanding and knowledge of one’s actions is not God’s will. This is where I believe most people find themselves in the world today—not so much sinful or iniquitous as simply ignorant: “...they know not what they do.” Even religious fanatics or militants believe

they are acting according to God's will, no matter how iniquitous it may seem to us.

I believe I feel the presence of God within; something is definitely pulling me forward! Last night, while lying in bed, I decided to focus on my TA being there in my mind. At the same time, I focused on Michael and Nebadonia, on seraphim, on midwayers that might be around, on my celestial artisan teacher, and all others, even those undisclosed, who could be nearby. What an incredible vision I conjured in my mind, and it felt so good, more beautiful than anything one could imagine. I thought about how incredible the universe is, yet how few of us are just beginning to understand it. Then I fell asleep.

I like to think my decision-making, exercising my free will, is in line with God's. I know that most of what my daily life is about isn't so much about doing God's will, but I hope that all the material, earthly things I focus on are NOT against God's will. For example, I am starting a new illustration project, and I doubt God really has any thoughts about that work EXCEPT that I do it to the best of my ability, as perfectly as I can. That is my job: to do what I do, in all that I do, as best as I can. If I do this, then in what I do, I am fulfilling God's will in that manner. The rest of the day, it seems, is spent writing multiple paragraphs for UrantiaUniversity courses.

I do ask for guidance from my Thought Adjuster, in guiding my life, in helping me understand, in giving the eyes to see and the ears to hear. One of the little "prayers" I learned

several years ago was something like this: “I request the most benevolent outcome on the [subject of _____] for everyone concerned. Thank you.” I have found it works time and time again, sometimes in surprising ways. And I express my gratitude for all my blessings of life, love, joy, the many treasures of the kingdom that flow to me daily; also blessings of family and friends, special loved ones, my dear pets that never refuse to reflect back to me the love I give to them. And for *The Urantia Book*.

I am absolutely convinced my Thought Adjuster has made life so much easier, more carefree, and less focused on material things and the actions of people or what they think or say. I have a broader perspective now, thanks to the UB, and it’s guiding me into the knowledge of my TA and how I can work with Him and the universal forces that surround us. The BIG picture is important.

If my TA could speak to me right now—and who’s to say he isn’t?—he might say, “keep on truckin’.” At least I hope so. I would not be a happy camper if I couldn’t be here now doing what I love, unless, of course, it was time to graduate and move on. Then it’s “hasta la vista, baby!” Or perhaps “Va con Dios.”



To be perfect, even as our Father in Havona is perfect

“To be perfect” is not the same as “be you perfect” – or is it? Mortals on evolutionary worlds are “perfecting” beings with the potential for perfection. However, we can be relatively perfect in this world and improve a little more on each subsequent world to come until we stand next to God in perfection.

What name of God has become affectionate for me? Why? Does a name have significance in our relationship with God?

The name for God has always been “God” or “Father” to me. The term “Father” comes from the Lord’s Prayer, which I learned very early on, of course. Today, it is God, the First Source and Center in Paradise, and Father (who is in heaven) today (my Thought Adjuster, of course). I take the name of Father very seriously.

I have noticed that the name one uses to refer to God seems to reflect their relationship with Him. Those who struggle to even say the word “God,” as some Unitarian and other institution members do, exhibit a mistrust of Deity today. Similarly, those who have difficulty using the name “Father” also face issues. Sometimes “higher self” is used in place of “God.” I will use “Father” because it embodies the idea of Him being our actual Father (or Great Grandfather, if one wants to trace the line from Michael to the Eternal Son to the

First Source and Center), which reinforces the notion of us being the sons and daughters of God.

A couple of months ago, I read an article about a new UB reader. Her pre-UB story was that she was so confused about who and what God was that she stopped referring to or talking to Him. Eventually, she came around to realizing there was something inside her that was speaking to her. Since she still had her earlier doubts, she began to refer to whatever was moving within her as "Groucho." That worked for her for a while until she felt comfortable referring to him as God again.

We are told many times that to communicate with God, we need not do so with words, whether silently or aloud. (He knows what we are going to say before we say it.) However, we do need to enter into stillness through meditation. Jesus provided us with many lessons on how to speak to God. Since we read that God never talks to us from his home on the Isle of Paradise, his only way to communicate with us and for us to communicate with him is through our Thought Adjuster. When Jesus went off alone to talk with God, it was always to his "Father who is in heaven"—his Thought Adjuster.

The word "Lord" is a peculiar term, I have discovered. Sometimes it refers to "God" and other times to "Jesus." When you look it up on Wikipedia and similar sources, you find numerous ways it is used, primarily in secular and hierarchical contexts. I find it challenging to incorporate it into my spiritual work. Today, we all recognize the "Lord's Prayer." In *The Urantia Book*, it is described as Jesus' own

prayer, the Believer's Prayer, which he learned as a child. Thus, Jesus is the Lord referred to here.

I am not the only one who gets confused. For example, when Moses of the Bible (Exodus 3:1) meets with either the Lord or an angel of the Lord, it's not clear. The author or scribe who wrote or copied it from whatever source got confused about who was speaking to Moses. (Recall that language did not come to the Hebrews until about 900 B.C.; the writings must have originated from oral testimony.) Anyway, this is what is written: "Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** And the **Angel of the Lord** appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. **3** Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."**4** So when the now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn. So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!'"... And moreover he said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham..." and so on.

Who is Moses talking to? God (Lord) or his angel?

[As an aside, to clarify, *The Urantia Book* does not recount the same story of Moses as the Bible. In fact, what the UB suggests is that the entire episode on Mt. Horeb is far from a meeting with the Lord or His angel. There is a compelling story from one of Timothy Wylie's books, *Revelations of the*

Watchers, that addresses this narrative, which I will explore later in this book.]

“Be You Perfect...”



Our Supernal and Divine Perfection

When it comes to perfection, the ultimate is God’s perfection. I doubt there are any dissenters to that comment. Does that mean we will never be as perfect as God? It suggests that to be the case. If so, does that take

away from our eternal goal of being as perfect as God? I propose it does not. After all, God knows that we can never reach his standard of perfection. So why does he command us to attain that level of perfection? Can we come up with a different interpretation for this commandment and still be consistent with the intent? I think so. The answer lies in the text of *The Urantia Book*.

Read this carefully: “The transcendent goal of the children of time is to find the eternal God, to comprehend the divine nature, to recognize the Universal Father. God-knowing creatures have only one supreme ambition, just one consuming desire, and that is to become, as they are in their spheres, like him as he is in his Paradise perfection of personality and in his universal sphere of righteous supremacy. **From the Universal Father who inhabits eternity there has gone forth the supreme mandate, ‘Be you perfect, even as I am perfect.’ In love and mercy the messengers of Paradise have carried this divine exhortation down through the ages and out through the universes, even to such lowly animal-origin creatures as the human races of Urantia.**” (UB1:0.3) [Emphasis mine.] Let’s move on.

“Urantia mortals can hardly hope to be perfect in the infinite sense, but it is entirely possible for human beings, starting out as they do on this planet, to attain the supernal and divine goal which the infinite God has set for mortal man; and when they do achieve this destiny, they will, in all that pertains to self-realization and mind attainment, be just as replete in their sphere of divine perfection as God himself is

in his sphere of infinity and eternity. **Such perfection may not be universal in the material sense, unlimited in intellectual grasp, or final in spiritual experience, but it is final and complete in all finite aspects of divinity of will,** perfection of personality motivation, and God-consciousness.” [Emphasis mine.]

This is the true meaning of that divine command, *“Be you perfect, even as I am perfect,’ which ever urges mortal man onward and beckons him inward in that man onward and beckons him inward in that long and fascinating struggle for the attainment of higher and higher levels of spiritual values and true universe meanings. This sublime search for the God of universes is the supreme adventure of the inhabitants of all the worlds of time and space.”* (UB1:0.6-5)

That is what we are meant to be: simple. How hard can that possibly be, right? The simplicity arises from understanding what is meant by supernal and divine goals. At every step along our ascension path, we each have these supernal and divine goals. As we grow spiritually and intellectually, these goals will be adjusted to help us become more perfect as we progress. Notice that these goals have nothing to do with our material and finite senses, our intellectual grasp, or what happens to be our ultimate spiritual experience. They are a part of our evolving nature as ascending souls and are not expected to be perfect at each step along the way.

But what about Jesus, you ask. Wasn’t he perfect as the Son of God? We tend to think he was perfect, and we are told many stories about his life that may suggest his perfection.... Or do they? I believe that as perfect as he was, relative to us,

part of his bestowal journey was to live his life as a human being, "with warts and all." We know that, as a child, he faced at least one sickness. I suspect that he, as a child, stubbed his toe while going up to the rooftop to play more than once. It would not be unreasonable to suggest he had some "human" imperfections. I also suspect he overcame most of those as he approached his Baptism. In spite of his perfections, he did experience disappointments throughout his life—with his apostles and fickle others, particularly with most of the Jewish religious leaders. Is disappointment a lapse in perfection? Perhaps not. Does this suggest we will continue to experience disappointments as we progress upward and inward? I believe so.

To be perfect in our own realms of existence, wherever we find ourselves, is to be the best we can be in our dealings with others and in our expectations of ourselves. When we ask to do unto others as we would have them do unto ourselves, are we asking are we asking for perfection from others? I think not. No more than we would ask for perfection from our own actions and behavior. We all make misjudgments and errors along the way. Perhaps the best we can do is to be aware of these as we progress, making corrections for these errors and mistakes for ourselves and for others who were impacted by them.

Taking responsibility for one's own actions is a significant part of being the best you can be, a step on the path to perfection. In this world, many can skate along without taking responsibility for themselves, often hurting themselves and others along the way. It is important to

recognize that the skating along stops on Mansonia Number One. Taking responsibility for our own actions—including thoughts, words, and not merely deeds—is one of the first things we will encounter on our continuing ascent in our Paradise journey. Much of our work begins with our intentions. Much of our anguish in this world stems from a lack of clear understanding of what our intentions should be toward ourselves and others.

Having the intention to be as perfect as you can be in what you think and do is one of the most important aspects of what this world is ultimately about. There are other significant things, such as love, kindness, and being of service to others, but those topics can be discussed later.

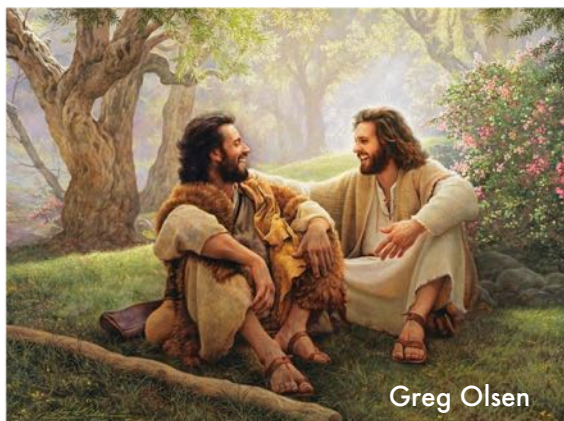


Perfection and good

There is an expression: “Perfect is the enemy of good.”

The source of this phrase appears to be the Italian writer Orlando Pescetti with his statement “Il meglio è nemico del bene,” which translates to “The better is the enemy of the good.” Voltaire made it popular in the eighteenth century, and Shakespeare, in *King Lear*, warned that “striving to better, oft we mar what's well.” This leads us toward the interpretation that attempts to improve may actually worsen situations, and perhaps it is best to “leave well enough alone.”

Yet we are called by our Father to be perfect, just as He is perfect. Are we in conflict here? Can we become so good as to be perfect? God’s perfection is infinite and eternal. How can



Greg Olsen

we match that? Perhaps we should examine these two concepts: the perfect and the good.

When it comes to perfection, the ultimate standard is God's perfection. I doubt there are any dissenters to that statement. Does that mean we will never be as perfect as God? It suggests that to be the case. If so, does that detract from our eternal goal of being as perfect as God? I suggest it does not. After all, God knows that we can never reach His standard of perfection. So why does He command us to be at that level of perfection? Can we come up with a different interpretation for this commandment and still be consistent with its intent? I think so. The answer lies in the text of *The Urantia Book*.

Since pure perfection is not possible, is there another way to look at it? Yes, there is. I see "goodness" as a progression between the two extremes of perfection on one hand, and non-perfection on the other. Non-perfection can also be defined as ignorance, error, falsehood, evil, sin, and iniquity. Even these qualities or attributes can be stretched along a continuum, with plain ignorance at the end closest to perfection and iniquity at the other end. Somewhere between ignorance and iniquity, we will find some or all of those other "sins" of gluttony, self-pride (hubris), sloth, envy, lust (lechery), wrath, greed, and so on, of which the Bible speaks. This likely includes lying, wickedness, bearing false witness, and let's not forget the Ten Commandments.

"Goodness, like truth, is always relative and unfailingly evil-contrasted. It is the perception of these qualities of

goodness and truth that enables the evolving souls of men to make those personal decisions of choice which are essential to eternal survival.” (UB132:2.3)

We see from this that along this bar, which stretches from iniquity at one end to perfection at the other, there are many increasing levels of goodness, and we can choose to participate at any point. It is up to us.

“As you ascend the universe scale of creature development, you will find increasing goodness and diminishing evil in perfect accord with your capacity for goodness-experience and truth-discernment. The ability to entertain error or experience evil will not be fully lost until the ascending human soul achieves final spirit levels.” (UB132:2.6)

As we continue our ascent, we will always have the opportunity to choose evil—not good—or some level of goodness leading to perfection.

“Goodness is living, relative, always progressing, invariably a personal experience, and everlastingly correlated with the discernment of truth and beauty. Goodness is found in the recognition of the positive truth-values of the spiritual level, which must, in human experience, be contrasted with the negative counterpart — the shadows of potential evil. ... Until you attain Paradise levels, goodness will always be more of a quest than a possession, more of a goal than an experience of attainment even as you hunger and thirst for righteousness,

you experience increasing satisfaction in the partial attainment of goodness.” But don’t despair since “... even as you hunger and thirst for righteousness, you experience increasing satisfaction in the partial attainment of goodness.” (UB132:2.7-8)

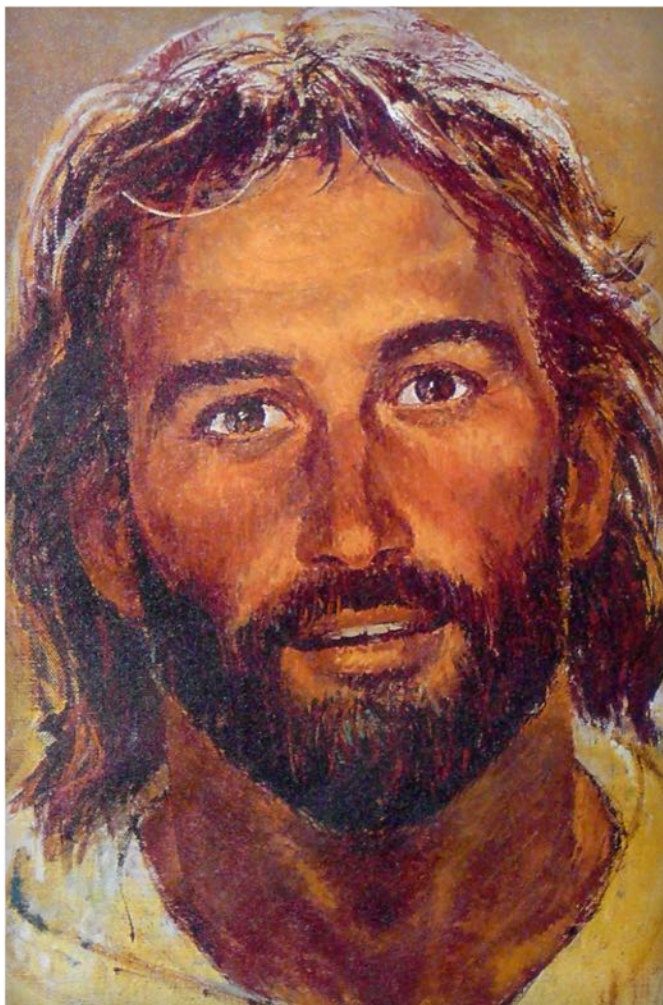
With that in mind, how can the “perfect be the enemy of the good”? They seem almost like next-door neighbors, even relatives. The perfection we are encouraged to pursue is truly the best we can achieve in the situations we encounter. This encompasses a broad spectrum of goodness, for which we can be grateful.

Footnotes:

1. However, please see my paper on the original interpretations of the Ten Commandments, “The Sacred Ten.”

C H A P T E R 20

Jesus the Father





So, who was this Jesus fellow?

“How slow you are to comprehend the truth! When you tell me that it is about the teachings and work of this man that you have your discussions, then may I enlighten you since I am more than familiar with these teachings. Do you not remember that this Jesus always taught that his kingdom was not of this world, and that all men, being the sons of God, should find liberty and freedom in the spiritual joy of the fellowship of the brotherhood of loving service in this new kingdom of the truth of the heavenly Father’s love? Do you not recall how this Son of Man proclaimed the salvation of God for all men, ministering to the sick and afflicted and setting free those who were bound by fear and enslaved by evil? Do you not know that this man of Nazareth told his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, be delivered up to his enemies, who would put him to death, and that he would arise on the third day? Have you not been told all this? And have you never read in the Scriptures concerning this day of salvation for Jew and gentile, where it says that in him shall all the families of the earth be blessed; that he will hear the cry of the needy and save the souls of the poor who seek him; that all nations shall call him blessed? That such a Deliverer shall be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. That he will feed the flock like a true shepherd, gathering the lambs in his arms and tenderly carrying them in his bosom. That he will open the eyes of the spiritually blind and bring the prisoners of despair out into full liberty and light; that all who sit in darkness shall see the great light of eternal salvation. That

he will bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives of sin, and open up the prison to those who are enslaved by fear and bound by evil. That he will comfort those who mourn and bestow upon them the joy of salvation in the place of sorrow and heaviness. That he shall be the desire of all nations and the everlasting joy of those who seek righteousness. That this Son of truth and righteousness shall rise upon the world with healing light and saving power; even that he will save his people from their sins; that he will really seek and save those who are lost. That he will not destroy the weak but minister salvation to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness. That those who believe in him shall have eternal life. That those who believe in him shall have eternal life. That he will pour out his spirit upon all flesh, and that this Spirit of Truth shall be in each believer a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. Did you not understand how great was the gospel of the kingdom which this man delivered to you? Do you not perceive how great a salvation has come upon you?”—Jesus (UB190:5.4)



How was Jesus as a human father a reflection of God’s love for us?

Jesus is also our father and brother.

“All that the Son of Man said or did on earth greatly embellished the doctrines of sonship with God . . . , but these essential relationships of God and men are inherent in the

universe facts of God’s love for his creatures and the innate mercy of the divine Sons.” (UB186:5.5)

As a Son of God, Michael, as Jesus, embraces all the traits of behavior—namely love, compassion, mercy, empathy, and so on—that God, our Father, and his has. Is God a being of “negative” encouragement? His “commandments” of the Old Testament were not even written by Him, but by men, intending them not to be seen negatively, but to encourage positive thought, word, and deed through a method the teacher could best convey to the people of that time: “you shall not....”

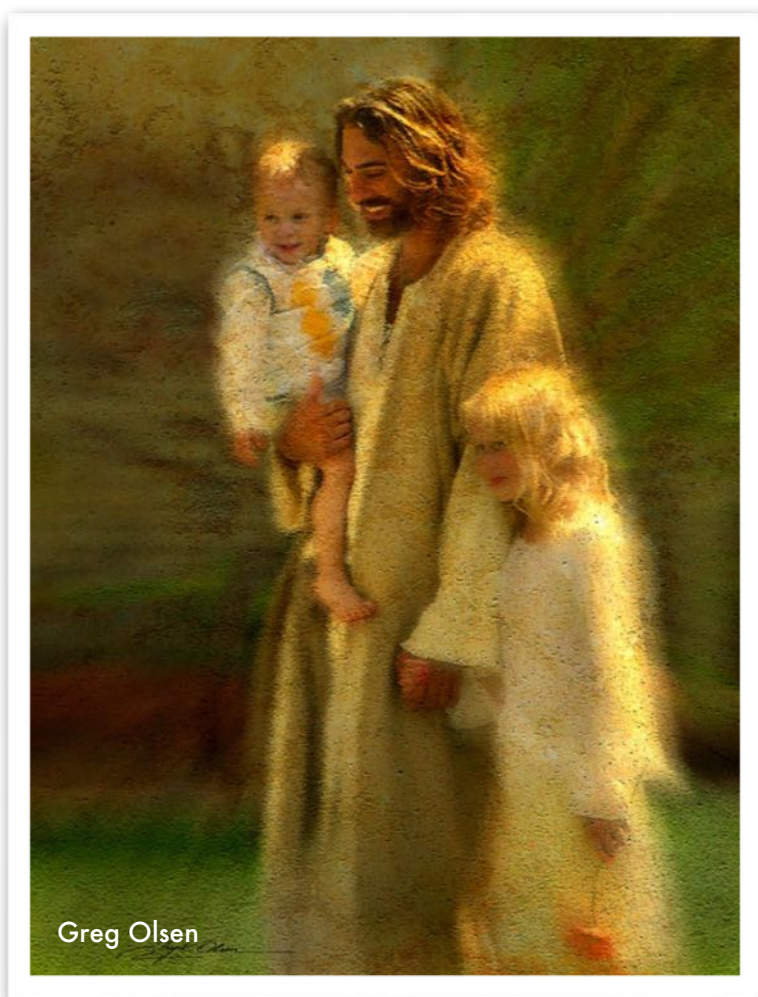
But God’s command to us is positive: “Be ye perfect
“ Jesus would naturally follow suit in his way of being with and teaching his siblings. While he was not their temporal father, he was, after all, their real father (spiritually) and elder brother on earth, just as we all are. His example, once understood, shines forth as a beacon for all parents to comprehend and emulate.



How does studying the life of Jesus reveal the Father’s true nature?

If we examine the Bible itself, specifically the New Testament, we don’t get a very coherent picture of God as the Father; God is a multifaceted figure, but being a father is not high on the list. One place where he is seen as a father is that of Jesus, that of Jesus, that is, “the son of God.” (For a

good discussion of this, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_the_Father.)



The Urantia Book presents a grand concept of God as Father, as explained by Jesus in various passages throughout the book. It is the most compelling to me for many reasons.

First, with God as our Father, we are his children, and we are taken care of by him through our understanding of his ways and through his techniques of loving ministry. Second, we are his heirs. As such, we are given that which is his, as we choose—but we must choose. Third, as he is our Father, we are all siblings of his and therefore brothers and sisters together in this world and universe. This is the strongest argument for achieving peaceful and loving coexistence that there is. This is where Jesus' admonition to love one another as he loves us comes into play.

Michael's bestowal to our world was the fourth epochal revelation, and our text is called the fifth. However, it is so different from all the others, which had actual beings made visible while simultaneously bringing the previous age to an end. With this revelation, though, it doesn't come at the end of an age, does it? Or does it? What would happen then?

I wonder about the "stubborn" aspect of our nature, more specifically about the nature of us to hang onto such belief systems that have not advanced with the rest of our civilization. The stubbornness of institutionalized, authoritative religions and their religious dogmas, which we, as humans, find appealing, plays a significant role and has led us into the turmoil of today.



How did Jesus' approach to discipline reflect God's wise love?

How does one raise a really neat kid?

Jesus approach to the discipline of his younger siblings did, indeed, reflect God's love. To study and understand the elements of Jesus' approach is to understand how best to treat, not only growing children but all mankind, in all of its variations of mental and physical manifestations. As God's one commandment to us: "Be ye perfect...", reflects positive and upward-moving motivation; Jesus' methods of discipline were always of a constructive nature. This is perhaps the most important quality among all the discipline that followed. Here are the other lessons from Jesus himself that I think are important:

1. Begin at an early age by providing all the love possible to create a strong foundation for a child, ensuring it is reciprocated in time. This parental love fosters self-confidence and a sense of security.
2. If penalties are imposed for certain behaviors, a full understanding of "why" must be made as clear as possible so that even the recipient appreciates it. Additionally, the penalty must be proportionate to the wrongdoing. Jesus was so fair with his troubled brother Jude that even Jude agreed with his punishment and the reason for it.
3. Be methodical and systematic, as Jesus was with his Apostles, and as *The Urantia Book* is with us. However,

allow for individuality in adaptation by listening to the child's perhaps different understanding or viewpoint.

4. Always avoid being arbitrary.
5. Encourage all children to feel comfortable confiding in you as a parent.
6. Embrace the innocent joy and boundless happiness of youth. Be a storyteller and encourage play.
7. 7. Be flexible with teaching methods. As children grow older or situations change, new techniques must evolve, and older ones that cease to be effective should be dropped.
8. A continuous emphasis on "family" serves as a guide for us, even indicating which interests, trades, or learned endeavors each child should pursue to learn.
9. When the time is right, allow the child—now a young adult, perhaps—to take on responsibilities suitable for his or her age, skills, intellect, and temperament. (Recall Michael himself was not a full sovereign of his universe until he had the appropriate experience.)
10. Eventually, each child must be "weaned" from childhood-ness to adulthood-ness. "Let loose and let them go." Once weaned, they need to stay that way; even "boom-a-rang" kids should be treated as equal adults with full responsibilities as new partners in the family. That is, refuse to take back parental responsibilities once they are passed on.
11. However, if one of the children (of any age) finds themselves in an unfortunate situation, even one of their own making, do what can be done constructively, with patience and forbearance, to support the child, but without enabling their unfortunate behavior.

12. Be patient. Be wise in your counsel and eloquent in your lives....” (UB128:7.4). This was Jesus’ advice to his family members when Jude was disruptive.
13. Show generosity.

Said Jesus to John Mark: “You have enjoyed that parental love which insures laudable self-confidence and which fosters normal feelings of security. But you have also been fortunate in that your parents possessed wisdom as well as love; and it was wisdom which led them to withhold most forms of indulgence and many luxuries which wealth can buy while they sent you to the synagogue school along with your neighborhood playfellows, and they also encouraged you to learn how to live in this world by permitting you to have original experience. . . . Wise parents, such as yours, see to it that their children do not have to wound love or stifle loyalty in order to develop independence and enjoy invigorating liberty when they have grown up to your age.” (UB177:2.2)



“Follow me” - Following the example of Jesus

What does it mean to follow the example of Jesus? This is how I view it and explain it to my study group.

To follow Jesus involves a couple of things. First, it means doing the will of God. What is that will? As my co-facilitator says, it is to take the path with the most love in it. Does God care whether we have a Starbucks latte? I doubt it. Does anyone? Well, yes. Me, the Starbucks partners, and

stockholders. But God doesn't really care about the majority of our life decisions. However, He does care, as do most of our celestial helpers, about the choices that impact our spiritually developing morontia souls.



The second thing is this line from *The Urantia Book* that startles many people: *“From the Universal Father who inhabits eternity there has gone forth the supreme mandate, ‘Be you perfect, even as I am perfect.’”* How can that be possible, they ask. The answer is given: *“God-knowing creatures have only one supreme ambition, just one consuming desire, and that is to become, as they are in their spheres, like him as he is in his Paradise perfection of*

personality and in his universal sphere of righteous supremacy.” That is, we, in our world, can do the best we can to be good and to try to understand God’s will and Jesus’ teachings and life, so that we, too, can be perfect in our “sphere,” our world. This truism would apply to every world in our ascension career. (UB1:0.3)

When we stand before God in Paradise, will we be perfect? No, because the sphere of God’s domain is always greater than ours. However, we will be perfect in our “sphere” upon Paradise.

Now that isn’t so hard, is it?



“I am the way, the truth and the life”

What does it mean when Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life?”

This is one of those statements that only become clear when one understands the context. The statement, as I see it, can only be correctly understood through *The Urantia Book*. After watching our Unity minister work through a mathematical formula to substantiate the statement Jesus made, it was wonderful to see the true meaning of what Jesus was saying and who he was saying it to.

Let me first explain the math concept. First, Jesus is the “way,” the “truth,” and the “life.” Therefore, Jesus equals

“the way.” He also equates to “the truth” and “the life.” To transition from this world into eternal life, regardless of the religion or faith one professes, involves following this formula: Live as Jesus lived. Live in the “way” he lived, in the “truth” of this way of living, and live as he lived. This can be achieved by anyone, no matter their religious beliefs. That is the math approach, which somewhat works if the statement is taken as having been said by Jesus as Jesus.

Let’s not forget the other part of Jesus’ statement: “...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (KJV: John 14:6) This second part of the statement really causes trouble, as it implies that only through Jesus can one attain eternal life. Once the context is understood, as seen from the UB, that Jesus is not speaking as Jesus the man but as Michael the Creator Son, it becomes clear that he is right.

Many other religions have faced significant challenges with this statement, believing that only through Jesus, the person, can one enter “heaven” (meaning “Paradise”). Unity has a saying—and a bumper sticker—that states, “One God, Many Paths.” This bumper sticker has caused our minister’s wife some trouble while shopping around town, but that is another story.

But now, thanks to the UB, we understand that Jesus was speaking to his Apostles as Michael, our creator son. And since that is who he is, all survivorship does pass through his hands, regardless of religious affiliations or beliefs in Jesus. It is important when reading *The Urantia Book* to keep in mind that Jesus is truly Michael in disguise. And when he

speaks to his Apostles, disciples, and followers, as well as those with ears to hear, he is really addressing us as Michael, our creator of not just our little planet but also the sovereign of his realm. He speaks to us common folk even here and now as our father and brother. He is the highest among us and, at the same time, one of us. And I, for one, take him at his word.

Since I believe Jesus was actually speaking as Michael to his Apostles, he was discussing what happens in the next world beyond ours. This comes into play with the statement, "...no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," which holds true. However, the rest applies to all faiths: the way, the truth, and the life pertain to everyone of faith in every religion. Ultimately, there may be many paths, but there is only one way to walk them; there is only one truth, God's truth, and cosmic reality; and there is only one life, one way to live that truly makes a difference in the world. If someone cannot find their path in this world, they continue in the Mansion Worlds where they left off on Urantia.

If they don't know anything about our Universal Father, it's sad. The question is, did they have a chance to know Him? If not, perhaps they will be somewhat surprised on Monsonia number one. Most folks don't believe in other celestial beings unless they are from the "south" and do believe in angels. According to polls taken in the US, 8 out of 10 US citizens believe in angels. Well, that's a start since angels are celestial beings. I have no idea about the rest of the world, and it doesn't make any difference anyway. Once we get to the Mansion worlds number 1 and number 2, the "remedial"

worlds, we can get set straight from our silly beliefs and focus on what is real.



Two Ministries

A public ministry and a private ministry

The authors of Part IV of *The Urantia Book* use Jesus' teachings to illustrate his “private” ministry as opposed to his “public” ministry, which occurred after his baptism by John in the Jordan River. What is most important about these superb examples of his ministry, and why?

I believe there was a significant difference between his “private” and his “public” ministries. For one, while he was becoming fully aware of his spiritual nature and origin before his baptism, he did not fully integrate it until the baptism. He was continually learning and working with his thought adjuster, gaining deeper understanding and experience with it. It wasn't until the baptism, when his thought adjuster became the personalized TA and “cane grande” of thought adjusters, that he was fully integrated with it. At least that is what I seem to be reading.

For one, to me, just the fact of having a personalized TA likely meant a different approach was being used in dealing with the mission or missions at hand. Even with the completion of the sojourn to Rome and back, the book sums it up: “Thus ended that chapter in the life of the Son of Man which might be termed: The mission of Joshua the teacher.”

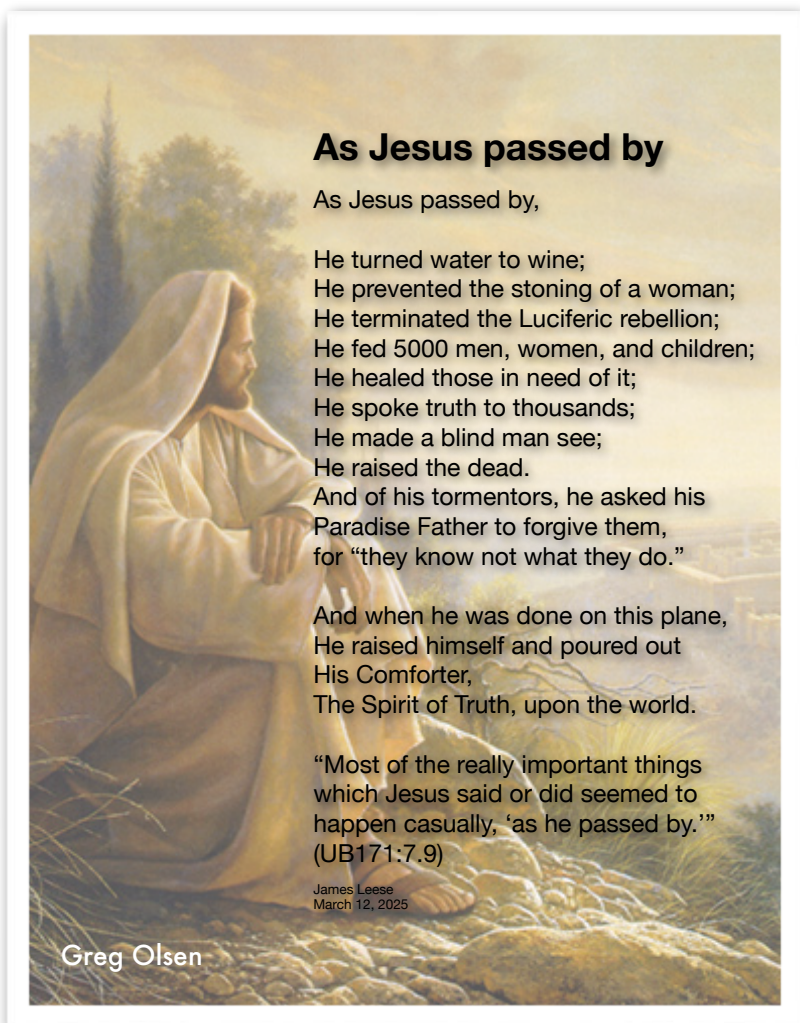
(UB133:9.7) Even the term, Son of Man, was not used until after the baptism, while he was known by many other terms before, for example, the “Scribe of Damascus.”

The result of his “private” ministry: *“He could maintain this confident attitude because of his unswerving trust in God and his unshakable confidence in man. He was always touchingly considerate of all men because he loved them and believed in them. Still, he was always true to his convictions and magnificently firm in his devotion to the doing of his Father’s will.”* (UB100:7.9)

Another difference for me is the considerable time he took to learn the ways of his fellow men and women, not just in Palestine, but in the wider world. In addition to that, he taught us the more “material” aspects of living his mortal life; he showed us how to navigate this world, and after the baptism, he expanded those teachings to include how to prepare for life beyond. This included much more depth in the teaching of “religion’s role in the lives of men” in preparation for the next level of spiritual attainment: the life of the religious man.

After the baptism, he was intent on seeing less of the human being having a religious experience than a spiritual being having a human experience. But in the final analysis, he insisted both were paramount to the fully spiritualized will creature; that is what he was, and still is.

The parable technique of teaching started with his “public” ministry. From that point on he focused the detail of his



teachings on his apostles and disciples but left the rest of the populous with parables. Before the baptism, his teachings were in detail to everyone he talked with, yes, mostly one-on-one.



Central concepts and values highlighted by Jesus' private ministry and which are the most relevant to humankind today

The central concepts, as I see them, are founded on the idea that true spiritual living (not just one hour on a Saturday or Sunday) brings about a total human transformation regarding how one lives a fulfilling life:

1. From mediocrity to a superb personality that reflects the sincere recognition of the “truth, beauty, and goodness” underlain by love for the Father and the Brotherhood of Man;
2. A quality of “balanced unification” among spirit, personality, and life viewpoints;
3. A connection with genuine spiritual forces that act upon us constantly, if we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear;
4. The bearing of spiritual fruits involves serving others in whatever ways the divine calls us.

Relevance? Consider: *“Religion... is an impulse for organizing the soul for dynamic service.”* (UB100:3.1) And *“In the contemplation of values, you must distinguish between that which is value and that which has value. You must recognize the relation between pleasurable activities and their meaningful integration and enhanced realization on ever progressively higher and higher levels of human experience.”* (UB100:3.3)



Comparison of Jesus' description of his “new religion” with the “religions of authority

Jesus described the “religions of authority” as intellectual, yet they still contain aspects of primitive religious beliefs, practices, ceremonies, creeds, and dogmas, requiring only intellectual and passive consent, or habitual consent, as I see some of them being practiced. In contrast, Jesus’ “new religion” was based on a revelation of supernal values, insight into external realities, and a glimpse of the goodness and beauty of the “Father in Heaven.” It is a religion of spirit, demonstrated through the active participation of the mind and soul.

The religions of authority provide an “easy way out” and spurn spiritual struggles or eternal uncertainties. Membership comes with all the crystallized dogmas and creeds one “needs,” handed down by overseeing and controlling leadership, without any openness to truth. In a way, they are religions of bondage as they crave conformity and are rigid in their conception of truth, as long as it aligns with their religion, considering all others “wrong.”

In the “new religion, It is a spiritual quest for truth, wherever the search for it may lead one, and from whatever from whatever source it may come. It is not an easy religion in that it entails effort, struggle, conflict, faith, determination, love, loyalty, and progress.” (By the way, it seems to me that these

same qualities are what it takes to live a good life., We experience life anyway, so what is the big deal?) But, in spite of all those enumerated hardships, Jesus tells us the “... *gospel yoke is easy and the burden of truth is light.*” (UB159:3.8)

Who is he kidding?

In the “new religion,” the chief appeal is to the Father indwelling us. It derives its authority from the fruits of its acceptance that appear in a person’s life and experience. Whereas religions of authority are handed down and tied to the past, the “new religion” has its roots in the soil of revelation and is built up through living experience.



Jesus’ Personality

How do you think Jesus attained personality perfection within a single human lifetime?

Why was Jesus so exquisitely balanced as a personality? Many ministers and other religious individuals have not reached the point where they truly believe Jesus was a “son of God;” that God was genuinely his father. But, wait. Aren’t we all told we, too, are the sons of God? Yes, but—and it is a big but—Jesus is our Creator Son Michael, and along with his consort, the Universe Mother Spirit, Nebadonia, created our local universe—with a little help from his friends.

So I believe he had a significant head start. Although he was born a babe and laid in a manger, etc., etc., etc., he was also an extraordinary human child. My suspicions are that mother Nebadonia ensured he had some truly great adjutant spirits. And, recall, his parents were carefully considered and won the “best parents of Hebrew extraction in Israel that will do the best job of raising a God” award, beating out thousands of others and two other top finalists.

While growing up, Jesus’ parents were very tolerant in giving him ample leeway to experience different things. He also associated with caravan people and traders from around the known world. He became fluent in three languages and understood the scriptures well enough to recognize where the truth in them lay.

When he came of age and his moral character emerged for the first time, he received a great Thought Adjuster too. My, my, yes. It was the same one Machiventa Melchizedek had while he was here for 94 years. Talk about an experienced Thought Adjuster! I suspect Jesus advanced through those seven psychic (cosmic) “circles like they were standing still, so he could converse most freely and often with his Thought Adjuster, his Father who is in Heaven. And all of this before he was baptized too!

The one trait that I admire so much (and envy!) is his ability to instantly talk with his Father who is in Heaven. I truly hope to achieve this one day, but I may have to wait until I am in Morontia-land. (Isn’t this the latest Disney

entertainment venue that Walt has put together on Monsonia Three?)

It is my belief (and I only came to this belief a few months ago; why it took me so long, I haven't a clue—the clues are all around us) that when Jesus went off by himself into the hills or wherever to be alone so he could “commune” with his *“Father who is in Heaven,”* he was NOT talking to God who dwells in Paradise. We know God in Paradise does not talk to us from that location in non-space. No, Jesus kept telling us when he said: “in Heaven.” And where is “Heaven, the Kingdom of”? Within! He was communing with his very own Thought Adjuster, just like we will be doing one of these days. I am working on it, but so far I don't yet have ears to hear.



What Jesus brought to God

“Jesus brought to God, as a man of the realm, the greatest of all offerings: the consecration and dedication of his own will to the majestic service of doing the divine will. Jesus always and consistently interpreted religion wholly in terms of the Father's will. When you study the career of the Master, as concerns prayer or any other feature of the religious life, look not so much for what he taught as for what he did. Jesus never prayed as a religious duty. To him prayer was a sincere expression of spiritual attitude, a declaration of soul loyalty, a recital of personal devotion, an expression of thanksgiving, an avoidance of emotional tension, a prevention of conflict, an exaltation of

intellection, an ennoblement of desire, a vindication of moral decision, an enrichment of thought, an invigoration of higher inclinations, a consecration of impulse, a clarification of viewpoint, a declaration of faith, a transcendental surrender of will, a sublime assertion of confidence, a revelation of courage, the proclamation of discovery, a confession of supreme devotion, the validation of consecration, a technique for the adjustment of difficulties, and the mighty mobilization of the combined soul powers to withstand all human tendencies toward selfishness, evil, and sin. He lived just such a life of prayerful consecration to the doing of his Father's will and ended his life triumphantly with just such a prayer. The secret of his unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship — unbroken communion with God — and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices.” (UB196:0.10)

“To ‘follow Jesus’ means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master's life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.” (UB196:1.3)

Jesus' Teachings



“Deliver us from error....”

In *The Urantia Book* (130:1.5), Jesus explains to Gadiab at Joppa fine distinction between evil, sin, and iniquity. He says: “*Evil is the immature choosing and the unthinking misstep of those who are resistant to goodness, rejectful of beauty, and disloyal to truth. Evil is only the misadaptation of immaturity or the disruptive and distorting influence of ignorance. Evil is the inevitable darkness which follows upon the heels of the unwise rejection of light. Evil is that which is dark and untrue, and which, when consciously embraced and willfully endorsed, becomes sin.*” And, we learn, persistent sin results in iniquity. Very bad.

In the ordination of the twelve, he speaks of evil as opposed to good. He then parallels the just with the unjust, as if JUST = GOOD while UNJUST = EVIL. (See UB 140:3,14,16.)

His orders to his twelve, as ambassadors of the Kingdom, were: “Be willing to suffer injustice rather than to go to law among yourselves.” Turning the other cheek was an Aramaic idiom meaning “do not start an argument.”

Later, he speaks of the good tree bearing good fruit, while the corrupt tree bears evil fruit. Thus GOOD = GOOD and EVIL = CORRUPT. The corrupt tree will be cut down and thrown into the fire. Ouch.

To me, there exists confusion regarding evil on one hand, while sin and iniquity seem quite clear. If evil is error, ignorance, and unknowingly acting against the will of God, then it is also corrupt and is used throughout the book interchangeably with sin, meaning intentional badness. Each time I see the word “evil,” I try to discern its intended meaning: error and ignorance, or bad and sinful.

It's no wonder that today the word "evil" means, to most people, sin and iniquity, along with a sense of wrongdoing felt in the heart or intent. Furthermore, the reality is that what truly exists in someone's heart is impossible to fully understand. We usually only have outward appearances and actions to guide us in trying to judge righteously.

And while all of this poses a problem for us in our daily lives and worldly affairs, the saving grace is this: "... the Father in heaven judges by the intent."

I wonder if the change in the Lord's Prayer from using the word "evil" to using the word "error" is a way of trying to stay true to Jesus' original meaning of the word.

If I had been an apostle, I, too, might be confused about these distinctions. And how does one judge righteously, anyway?



Casting the Pearls Before Swine

The question is then asked: Where should I cast my pearls? Over here with the non-believers or with the fanatical Bible-thumpers? "There must be another way."

My starting point in any discussion is my understanding of where the two diverse concepts of creation originate. At one end of this spectrum is the idea that the Bible is the Word of God, actually written by Him, I suppose by some magical means, perhaps similarly to the origin of the UB. Ha! Now at the other end is the full acceptance of Darwin's "theory of evolution," however misapplied and misunderstood it may be for those folks. While even great scientists fall between the two extremes, the "popular secularists," i.e., atheists, have clung to the evolution end of the stick and won't let go. Even non-atheists who misplace their wholehearted trust in

science, or what their high school science teacher taught them, or what their friends believe, are usually on the same end of the stick. Consequently, the battle lines are drawn: creationism vs evolution!

It occurred to me, even before the UB came into my life, that this is not, and never has been, an “either/or” world; it has always seemed to me to be a “both/and” world. This was the approach Jesus taught as well. He did not tear down anyone’s ideas regarding their religious beliefs but sought to build upon and add to those beliefs. This would be, and is, the approach I would take in guiding “someone who is seriously wondering what the truth is....” For this person, I see the task as already won. For that person, the fact that they are wondering about it is a huge crack in the door. If they come upon me and they have “knocked,” the door is being answered. They are seeking already, and they are asking.

The way is clear.

The concept of a combined creative power-like origin alongside natural, yet guided, evolution should not be difficult for anyone to grasp, even without knowledge of the UB. This is particularly true for those who are as open-minded as the question above seems to suggest.

For those at the ends of the stick, I will not be casting pearls before them to be trampled under.



How are the faith attitudes as described in the Beatitudes essential for Fatherly love?

“From the Sermon on the Mount to the discourse of the Last Supper, Jesus taught his followers to manifest fatherly love rather than brotherly love. Brotherly love would love your neighbor as you love yourself, and that would be adequate fulfillment of the “golden rule.” But fatherly affection would require that you should love your fellow mortals as Jesus loves you.” (UB140:5.1)

But is it rather odd that, since the death of Jesus’ father Joseph, Jesus provided both “fatherly” and “brotherly” love to his siblings? His brotherly love was truly that of a brother, while his “fatherly” love reflected his natural way of interacting with all the fellow men and women he encountered, which stemmed from his role as the creator son and father of our local universe.

In presenting the four faith attitudes to his Apostles, “... *Jesus sought to reveal this new concept of fatherly love as it is related to certain emotional attitudes concerned in making numerous environmental social adjustments.*” (UB140:5.3) He certainly carried those social adjustments into his household, teaching his siblings to be humble regarding the money that came into the family; that happiness did not equal material wealth, but rather spiritual wealth that came from being truth- and spirit-seeking. They were rewarded at that moment with the most loving family imaginable, happy in their lives, I suspect. There were admonitions to seek righteousness and spiritual insight, to

listen to that still, small voice inside, and to be guided to love others as Jesus loved his siblings. (Only with Jude did he have trouble getting him to understand what some of these concepts meant, until the time of his arrest in Jerusalem.)

“Selfless, Jesus was, and he exhibited it in his daily dealings with his siblings. And to see God “. . . by faith—means to acquire true spiritual insight.” (UB140.5.13) “And when you know the Father, you are confirmed in the assurance of divine sonship, and you can increasingly love each of your brothers in the flesh, not only as a brother — with brotherly love — but also as a father — with fatherly affection.” (UB140:5.13)



Turning the other cheek

One of the difficult things Jesus told His followers to do was to turn the other cheek.

Cheek-turning sounds like a great idea... on paper. It's really hard to do in practice. Like many of us, the Englishman Sir Walter Scott had a difficult time wrestling with the concept of cheek-turning.



That was true until the day arrived when Jesus' words took on special meaning.

A stray dog had been pestering him. Having exhausted all other means to get rid of the mongrel, Scott threw a rock at the dog to chase it away. His aim was straighter, and his delivery stronger than he intended. He hit the animal and broke its leg. Instead of running off, the persistent dog hobbled over to him and licked his hand.

Sir Walter never forgot that touching response. He said, "That dog preached the Sermon on the Mount to me as few ministers ever have presented it."

(From the Lutheran Hour Ministries daily devotions, www.lhm.org.)



Love one another

Jesus ultimately tells his Apostles—and us—to love one another even as Jesus has loved us. The traditional commandment, referred to as the “golden rule,” was “do as you would be done by” (from Wikipedia) and is more commonly heard as “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Wikipedia goes on to say, “The ‘Golden Rule’ has been attributed to Jesus of Nazareth: ‘Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them’ (Matthew 7:12, see also Luke 6:31). It also states, ‘Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself’ (Leviticus 19:18), which is also referred to as the second greatest commandment. As nice as this sounds, *The Urantia Book*

points out the philosophical problem areas. One such problem (and I see it all around us) is that certain people assume others will treat them the way they are inclined to treat those others. (A form of “projecting,” as a psychologist might tell us.) For example, a dishonest or unethical person will assume others are like him or her and treat them accordingly.

“Jesus up the ante by telling the apostles that they should ‘love one another, even as I have loved you.’” (180: 1.4). He continues to express that he loves them not only as brothers but as a friend. He clarifies that this is not a master-servant relationship. The last paragraph of this section 1 is beautifully articulated by the narrator:

“Keep in mind: It is loyalty, not sacrifice, that Jesus demands. The consciousness of sacrifice implies the absence of that wholehearted affection which would have made such a loving service a supreme joy. The idea of duty signifies that you are servant-minded and hence are missing the mighty thrill of doing your service as a friend and for a friend. The impulse of friendship transcends all convictions of duty, and the service of a friend for a friend can never be called a sacrifice. The Master has taught the apostles that they are the sons of God. He has called them brethren, and now, before he leaves, he calls them his friends.” (180:1.6).

In addition, he also says they should love him as a son loves his father for that is how he also loves them.



The parable of the vine and the branches

Simply put, the parable points to Michael, expressed as Jesus, being the vine, while the rest of humanity, that is, us, are the “branches” of that vine. Those “branches” that do not “bear fruit” are removed and disposed of. In my interpretation, this means that those of us in humanity who are not willing (willing as in self-willed) or have chosen not to live the spiritual path—living in love for fellow man and in the faith of the eternal (that is, non-believers)—could face some rough times.

The benefits of being the fruitful vine are stated by Jesus: *“Remember: I am the real vine, and you are the living branches. He who lives in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit of the spirit and experience the supreme joy of yielding this spiritual harvest. If you will maintain this living spiritual connection with me, you will bear abundant fruit. If you abide in me and my words live in you, you will be able to commune freely with me, and then can my living spirit so infuse you that you may ask whatsoever my spirit wills and do all this with the assurance that the Father will grant us our petition.”* (UB180:2.1). Those willing to be the fruitful branch of the vine, taking God’s way as the way, the truth, and the life, that *“... such a will-union is effected by and through Jesus even as the life of the vine flows into and through the living branches.”* (UB180:2.4).

Meandering Through The Urantia Book

And elsewhere in *The Urantia Book* we learn what happens to those that are not ultimately fruitful, don't we?

C H A P T E R 2 1

Jesus' Apostles



The ordination of the twelve apostles and the follow-up

“If you would guide them into the Kingdom, you must yourselves walk in the clear light of living truth,” as opposed to the idea of the blind leading the blind. “In all the business of the kingdom I exhort you to show just judgement...” (do not judge by appearances, but by righteous judgement) “...and keen wisdom.”

But words that come next are a surprise to many: *“Present not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample your gems under foot and turn to rend you.”* (UB140:3.18)

Exploring the possible meanings here, which might be the same then as now:

1. Don't waste your time and resources on those who have either no capacity to know or no interest in knowing the truth—whatever that means to anyone, now or then. (I take exception to the reference to “dogs” as I am certain my dogs know the truth—they live it every day!)
2. But if you want to go ahead and try to go after folks who got along quite nicely, thank you, and pound the “truthiness” into them, you must have another intention in mind. Such was the Spanish “conquest” of the Americas in the early sixteenth century—that is “to serve God and grow rich.”

Of course, this is not to discount the efforts of earnest church organizations in sending forth “missionaries” to bring such organized religion to the pagan, infidel, and other-believing masses. Good luck.

Jesus was very specific about how far believers should go to persuade someone of the truth of his message, his gospel. In sum, here is my interpretation:

1. Understand the truth as much as it is true. Our Thought Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth will assist us in this.
2. Don't waste your time on those who have no desire to hear the message or show a lack of interest or hostility toward it.

3. However, be kind and do not fear.
4. Fear not evil, and resist it not; all is well, so walk away from ignorance where it is entrenched.
5. Mind your own business, but also take responsibility for your actions.
6. Avoid using coercive techniques to persuade others.
7. Even for those who show no interest in what you have to say, avoid judging them; you have no understanding of what is in their hearts.
8. A good motto to keep in mind in this world: “One God, Many Paths.”
9. Be a bystander; be in the world but not of it.
10. Never confuse the work of Spirit with the work of the world; render to Caesar that which is Caesar’s and to God that which is God’s.
11. Faith is a great start, but “faith without deeds” ain’t gonna cut it.
12. True religion requires two essential elements: the recognition of the Fatherhood of God coupled with the brotherhood of mankind. The second cannot exist without acknowledgement of the first. Anything less is a philosophy, not a religion.



Why it was important for Jesus to “ordain” his twelve Apostles for their coming work?

“Ordination is the process by which individuals are consecrated, that is, set apart as clergy to perform various religious rites and ceremonies.” (Wikipedia)

“It's the ceremony of bestowing a person with a position of religious authority. The noun ‘ordination’ comes from the Latin word ‘ordinare,’ meaning put in order.” Becoming a religious leader usually requires training in a seminary, “followed by an ordination. On the other hand, the ordination of a monarch is a ceremony in which a King’s or Queen’s divine right to rule the country, which was historically considered a birthright, is asserted and initiated without any seminary courses required.” (vocabulary.com)

Now we know. What? First, if the ordination process in a religious context concludes at the end of training, then the ordination of the Apostles was somehow different. However, I am getting ahead of myself. Let me start by answering the question, assuming its accuracy.

Recall that these twelve men are, first of all, Jewish, and they take their religion seriously. This seriousness can be seen in their reactions to Jesus’ teachings over the three years of his ministry, as well as in what happened to some of them afterward: they fell back into old habits of Jewish thinking and acting.

Second, the subject of the ordination itself can be seen in different parts, each having a unique part to play in the process.

1. The Preliminary Instructions outlined that these twelve were to be ambassadors of the kingdom, an everlasting domain; that “there shall be no end of

this rule of my Father in the hearts of those who desire to do his divine will, kingdom [shall] progress in the world until it shall break down every barrier and bring all men to know my Father and believe in the saving truth” without regard to their racial origins; that “faith alone will pass you through its portals, but you must bring forth the fruits of my Father’s spirit if you would continue to ascend in the progressive life of the divine fellowship;” that their message to the world shall be “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and in finding these, all other things essential to eternal survival shall be secured therewith;” that the kingdom will not come by an outward show of power or “unseemly” demonstration; that each one would become a server of all; that each one will be a son of God; that the “. . . and that these twelve men are the cornerstones of the kingdom in its spreading the gospel of the good news.

2. The Ordination itself consisted of Jesus having each man kneel in a circle around him. “Then the Master placed his hands upon the head of each apostle” After he blessed them, he prayed to his Father, asking for the commitment of the Father’s love and guiding hand, along with wisdom in their labors and in the affairs of the kingdom. That was the ordination itself.
3. The Ordination Sermon (UB140:3) is not the same as the ordination (UB140:2). It is more like an instruction manual, serving as the training required

for enacting the performance that results from being ordained. It is referred to as the “ordination charge.”

4. Six days later was the “day of consecration.” I guess the twelve had 6 days to think about it. It is when Jesus “. . . engaged in the solemn act of the consecration of the “twelve, . . . and gave them into the hands of his heavenly Father in preparation for the day when he would be compelled to leave them alone in the world.” He called them one-by-one to be commissioned to go forth into the world as his representative, with some warnings and this: “. . . fear not; I will be with you, and my spirit shall go before you into all the world. And my Father’s presence will abide with you...”

This ordination process was a six-day long event for it to hopefully sink into the minds of the apostles of the seriousness of the commitment. This was far more serious than the Boy Scout pledge. And so it needed to be. Even so”



And then there were 11....

Let’s go over the week leading up to the Last Supper. Little did the apostles know that this would be their last trip to Jerusalem.

On Saturday, Jesus rebuked Judas for criticizing Mary’s use of valuable oil that could have fed starving children in Africa.

(UB172:1.6) Many were beginning to realize Jesus was not the Messiah they thought he was. (UB172:0.2)

On Sunday, the group starts the trip into Jerusalem on a great white horse... NOT! It was on a little ol' donkey (in fulfillment of the Prophet Zechariah's scripture). Why? "Jesus had long tried by direct teaching to impress upon his apostles and his disciples that his kingdom was not of this world, that it was a purely spiritual matter; but he had not succeeded in this effort. Now, what he had failed to do through plain and personal teaching, he would attempt to accomplish by a symbolic appeal." It was a very triumphal march, with all those crowds throwing leaves, especially palms (as the story goes), at his feet as though handing Jesus the keys to the city of Jerusalem, since the palm represented the nation of Israel, or so I have heard. However, most of those who cheered him on this day would later reject him. *"There really was no deep significance to be attached to this superficial and spontaneous outburst of popular enthusiasm. This welcome, although it was joyous and sincere, did not betoken any real or deep-seated conviction in the hearts of this festive multitude. These same crowds were equally as willing quickly to reject Jesus later on this week when the Sanhedrin once took a firm and decided stand against him, and when they became disillusioned — when they realized that Jesus was not going to establish the kingdom in accordance with their long-cherished expectations."* (UB172:3.15)

Monday: This day included the cleansing of the temple due to Jesus being miffed at the money changers and sacrificial

animal suppliers making a mockery of the holiness of God's house.

Tuesday: Jesus said goodbye to Lazares. Then on this morning Jesus greeted each of the twelve with a personal salutation.

To Andrew he said: *"Be not dismayed by the events just ahead. Keep a firm hold on your brethren and see that they do not find you downcast."*

To Peter he said: *"Put not your trust in the arm of flesh nor in weapons of steel. Establish yourself on the spiritual foundations of the eternal rocks."*

To James he said: *"Falter not because of outward appearances. Remain firm in your faith, and you shall soon know of the reality of that which you believe."*

To John he said: *"Be gentle; love even your enemies; be tolerant. And remember that I have trusted you with many things."*

To Nathaniel he said: *"Judge not by appearances; remain firm in your faith when all appears to vanish; be true to your commission as an ambassador of the kingdom."*

To Philip he said: *"Be unmoved by the events now impending. Remain unshaken, even when you cannot see the way. Be loyal to your oath of consecration."*

To Matthew he said: *“Forget not the mercy that received you into the kingdom. Let no man cheat you of your eternal reward. As you have withstood the inclinations of the mortal nature, be willing to be steadfast.”*

To Thomas he said: *“No matter how difficult it may be, just now you must walk by faith and not by sight. Doubt not that I am able to finish the work I have begun, and that I shall eventually see all of my faithful ambassadors in the kingdom beyond.”*

To the Alpheus twins he said: *“Do not allow the things which you cannot understand to crush you. Be true to the affections of your hearts and put not your trust in either great men or the changing attitude of the people. Stand by your brethren.”* And to Simon Zelotes he said: *“Simon, you may be crushed by disappointment, but your spirit shall rise above all that may come upon you. What you have failed to learn from me, my spirit will teach you. Seek the true realities of the spirit and cease to be attracted by unreal and material shadows.”* And to Judas Iscariot he said: *“Judas, I have loved you and have prayed that you would love your brethren. Be not weary in well doing; and I would warn you to beware the slippery paths of flattery and the poison darts of ridicule.”* (UB174:0.2)

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But at the end of that day, “...the apostles once more were left in confusion and consternation.” (UB175:4.1) To top it off, Jesus informed them about the impending end of Jerusalem. This made the apostles even more worried and upset. Again, he scolded them, saying: “*You ever err since you always try to attach the new teaching to the old; you are determined to misunderstand all my teaching; you insist on interpreting the gospel in accordance with your established beliefs.*” And “*As these thirteen men resumed their journey toward the camp, they were speechless and under great emotional tension.*”

Thank goodness Wednesday is now upon them; the day of rest.

Thursday followed and went along fine, with lessons and all. Then it came time to head over to Mark’s upper room for supper. Immediately, things got out of hand as the apostles jockeyed for position around the table. You could tell Jesus was not very pleased with their behavior. This was followed by the awkward moment when Jesus stooped to wash the

feet of Peter. And again, Peter's exuberance got the best of him.

Now, this brings us up to the final admonitions and instructions.

But the question remains: What were the emotional states of the twelve? Er, perhaps I should say eleven? No, twelve.

Andrew: "... *was thoroughly bewildered, well-nigh confused,*" and "...*was busy watching some of his associates who he feared might be led away by their emotions during the excitement*" Throughout these passed days, "... Andrew was troubled with serious doubts, but he never expressed any of these misgivings to his apostolic associates. He was concerned about the attitude of some of the twelve who he knew were armed with swords"

ment" Throughout these passed days, "... *Andrew was troubled with serious doubts, but he never expressed any of these misgivings to his apostolic associates. He was concerned about the attitude of some of the twelve who he knew were armed with swords*"

Simon Peter: At the approach into Jerusalem just five days before he was "... almost swept off his feet by this popular manifestation of enthusiasm; but he was considerably sobered by the time they returned to Bethany that night." He could not figure out what Jesus was up to. And he was disappointed that "... *Jesus did not follow up this wave of popular favor with some kind of a pronouncement.*"

Nor why Jesus why Jesus did not address the crowds when they arrived at the temple.

James Z: Since that Sunday a few days ago, the days were of “... perplexity and profound confusion; he could not grasp the purport of what was going on; he could not comprehend the Master’s purpose in permitting this wild acclaim and then in refusing to say a word to the people when they arrived at the temple.” As they moved from the Mount of Olives to the temple, “... *James was cruelly torn by his conflicting emotions of elation and gratification at what he saw and by his profound feeling of fear as to what would happen when they reached the temple. And then was he downcast and overcome by disappointment when Jesus climbed off the donkey and proceeded to walk leisurely about the temple courts. James could not understand the reason for throwing away such a magnificent opportunity to proclaim the kingdom. By night, his mind was held firmly in the grip of a distressing and dreadful uncertainty.*”

John Z: John at least understood the symbolic reasons for Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the donkey. This helped him considerably; he had “... *type of mind which naturally tended to think and feel in symbols.*”

Phillip: The sudden and spontaneous events of that Sunday unsettled Phillip. At last, Jesus did not ask him to feed the multitude! But as a result of the rest of that day and what followed, he started to have doubts about the idea of the Kingdom. He did not understand what any of it meant.

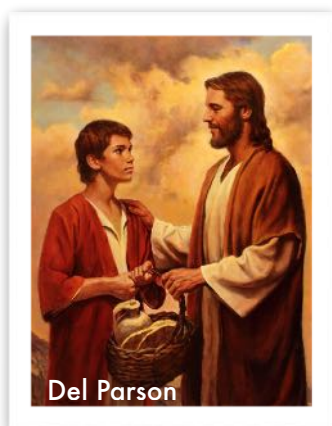
Nathaniel: This apostle figured out that, without the crowds leading the way that Sunday, Jesus might have been arrested. He, of all the apostles, had. “... *great confidence in Jesus’ understanding of men as well as in his sagacity and cleverness in handling difficult situations.*”

And these were likely the general emotional states of the twelve up until that evening of the supper on that Thursday evening. Added to that the other events of the next few days and the discussions about the Master about to be put to death (and just what was this third day thing? Rising? Are we talking about leavened bread?), and the fact that they still did not understand him, we can imagine the emotional states of the twelve—okay, eleven— by that time.



The youngest apostle

Who was Mark, this writer of the second telling of the gospel of the New Testament? Where did he come from? We know he is not listed as one of Jesus’ apostles. So how did he come to know so much about the life of Jesus, at least as purported to be in his named work? And how is his work seen by many scholars as preceding even those of Matthew and John, both of whom were among Jesus’ apostles?



Biblical scholarship tells us, in addition to his work within the New Testament itself, he “. . . is mentioned some eight times in the New Testament. He is the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). When the Apostle Paul writes his letter to the Colossians from his prison in Rome, he mentions that Mark is there with him (Col. 4:10). He also mentions in his letter to Philemon that Mark is one of his fellow workers (Philemon 24). Peter addressed him as "my son Mark" (1 Peter 5:13).

It is very likely that Peter was the one who brought Mark to conversion and raised him up in the faith. Mark was an associate of Peter and likely wrote his gospel in Rome where Peter was based. Mark wrote it in Greek. It was likely written for Gentile readers in general, and for the Christians at Rome in particular. The gospel is usually dated between 65 and 75 AD, sometime shortly after Peter's martyrdom in Rome in 64 AD.” (<http://www.rc.net/wcc/readings/mark.htm>)

The same source goes on to tell us:

The earliest church father, after the Apostles, to write about Mark was Papias (c. 60-130), the bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia. *"Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him, but afterward, as I said, he was in company with Peter, who used to offer teaching as necessity demanded, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error in thus writing*

some single points as he remembered them. For upon one thing he fixed his attention: to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them."

(Fragments of Papias, from Eusebius CH 3.39)

Notice the statement that Mark had never heard Jesus or accompanied him.

Today, we know more and we know him better.

John Mark, the young lad who was with Jesus and his apostolic corps during the last year of Jesus' life. Although he likely was with Jesus and his apostles for a while, he was first mentioned in the episode of the "feeding the five thousand," which occurred on Wednesday, March 30, 29 AD.

You see, he was the errand boy, *"the boy of all chores" mentioned by Peter and others. As such, he experienced much that went on within the Apostolic corps on a daily basis during last thirteen to sixteen months. The "fly on the wall,"* so to speak.

It must have been an exciting life at that time, to be with those rugged fishermen and the others, to hear what Jesus said to them, to be with them constantly, to meet the needs of the group. Is it any wonder that he, too, after some time after the resurrection, would sit down to write his story, The Gospel of Jesus According to Mark. We do know he had a significant role to play, along with his parents, in helping Jesus and his apostles, both before the crucifixion and afterward.

But there is more.

John Mark must have had a special place in Jesus' heart. On two occasions, he was the focus of Jesus' attention, and in such a way that surprised, possibly upset, some of the apostles. The first event was the Wednesday before the Last Supper, which was to be held in John Mark's parents' home, known as the Upper Room. It was the usual Wednesday of rest, but, of course, was anyone really resting that week?

Jesus was to take his usual walk alone into the hills to talk with his Father who is in Heaven, but clever John Mark finagled his way into spending the entire day with Jesus. We don't know completely what they talked about because Jesus, in his customary way, told John Mark not to speak of it to the others. However, the next section in the book provides some insight into that conversation. I suspect there was much more to it. I took some pleasure in speculating about what they may have discussed and created a video that explored some of the ideas I would have liked to think they discussed.

The other significant event was after the resurrection, on Friday morning, about 6 AM on April 21st, 30 AD, a couple of weeks after Jesus' first appearance after the tomb. The ten apostles had been fishing and, with Jesus' advice, they had a boatload of fish to contend with. To my mind, Jesus and John Mark must have had a special time in the hills that Wednesday before Jesus' arrest, as witnessed by what happened next.

“By this time John Mark was up and, seeing the apostles coming ashore with the heavy-laden net, ran down the beach to greet them; and when he saw eleven men instead of ten, he surmised that the unrecognized one was the risen Jesus, and as the astonished ten stood by in silence, the youth rushed up to the Master and, kneeling at his feet, said, ‘My Lord and my Master.’ And then Jesus spoke, not as he had in Jerusalem, when he greeted them with ‘Peace be upon you,’ but in commonplace tones he addressed John Mark: ‘Well, John, I am glad to see you again and in carefree Galilee, where we can have a good visit. Stay with us, John, and have breakfast.’”

“As Jesus talked with the young man, the ten were so astonished and surprised that they neglected to haul the net of fish in upon the beach. Now spoke Jesus: ‘Bring in your fish and prepare some for breakfast. Already we have the fire and much bread.’”

Then....

“Jesus spoke to them, saying: ‘Come now, all of you, to breakfast. Even the twins should sit down while I visit with you; John Mark will dress the fish.’ John Mark brought seven good-sized fish, which the Master put on the fire, and when they were cooked, the lad served them to the ten. Then Jesus broke the bread and handed it to John, who in turn served it to the hungry apostles. When they had all been served, Jesus bade John Mark sit down while he himself served the fish and the bread to the lad.”

Wow. “. . . *he who would be great in my Father’s kingdom must first become server of all.*”

One could argue that this was Jesus, after all, and he would treat anyone the same way. But, the reactions of the apostle belied that idea. There is something else here.

I suspect John Mark and Jesus shared other remarkable moments during their time together, moments that remain undocumented except in the celestial records. Perhaps one day, in a world far, far away, we will learn what they were.

What else do we know? We know his writings were the earliest record of Jesus’ life, except the notes of Andrew that were destroyed early on. His gospel is essentially the gospel according to the teachings of Peter and the oral tradition of the church in Rome, and was completed soon after Peter’s death, near the end of 68 AD. We also know his work has been considerably changed, and the latter one-fifth of the original work was lost before the first manuscript was ever copied. And as he was writing at the request of the church in Rome, he felt obligated to prepare a statement that would represent Peter’s way of telling the story of Jesus and his teachings. He is credited with founding the Christian church in Alexandria. According to the story, his body was transferred from Egypt to Venice in 832 AD, where it now lies beneath the altar in St. Mark’s Cathedral. (Sadler, *The Urantia Book Bible Study* (Workbook Series-volume VI))

I would have loved to have been that lad. To be the fly on the wall when our Creator came to visit us, and stay a while.

Think “what I would have learned. I like to think I, like John Mark, would come, without prejudice, without pre-conceived notions of religious authority, without the stigma of “a chosen people” to hear and perhaps understand a little, but enough to declare to all our Father in Heaven, our brotherhood of oneness. And perhaps, sooner than we think, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.”



Self-control, Self-conquest, and Self-Mastery

In 28:6.20 of the UB it states that the manifestation of greatness on a world like Urantia is the exhibition of self-control.

A significant amount of ascendancy education involves developing increased self-control and self-mastery.

“Trust is the crucial test of will creatures. Trustworthiness is the true measure of self-mastery, character.” (UB28:6.13)

In Paper 143, Section 2 is the Lesson on Self-Mastery. *“The Master [Jesus] was a perfected specimen of human self-control.”* Jesus tells us, *“... I say to you, he who rules his own self is greater than he who captures a city. Self-mastery is the measure of man’s moral nature and the indicator of his spiritual development.”* (UB143:2.1-2) In the paper on Seraphic Guardians of Destiny, we are told: *“In the ministry*

[of seraphic guardians to us mortals] ... *seraphic assignments are made in accordance with the human attainment of the circles of intellectuality and spirituality. You start out in your mind of mortal investment in the seventh circle and journey inward in the task of self-understanding, self-conquest, and self-mastery....*" (UB113:1.6) This to me is a suggestion of a process of our reaching self-control.

From Paper 28, we learn that the Superuniverse administrators (and educators) in the form of the Tertiary Seconaphim are divided into seven groups of advancing educational levels. This ongoing effort is one of the last in the superuniverse classrooms before ascenders transition to Havona. The goal is to prepare us to be of the greatest benefit we can be to universe service. One very important aspect of this is "trust." *"Trust is the crucial test of will creatures. Trustworthiness is the true measure of self-mastery, character. These seconaphim accomplish a double purpose in the economy of the superuniverses: They portray to all will creatures the sense of the obligation, sacredness, and solemnity of trust. At the same time, they unerringly reflect to the governing authorities the exact trustworthiness of any candidate for confideance or trust."* (UB28:6.13) From the sanctity of trust comes the privilege of service. However, the final two groups (of the seven mentioned above) embrace the "Secret of Greatness" and the "Soul of Goodness." Greatness is synonymous with divinity, as is goodness. Neither can be divorced from the other.

And “... *the manifestation of greatness on a world like Urantia is the exhibition of self-control. The great man is not he who ‘takes a city’ or ‘overthrows a nation,’ but rather he who subdues his own tongue.*” (UB28:6.20)

That is, “manifestation of greatness” is an exhibition of someone who knows when to hold his thoughts and words, recognizing that selflessness in the sanctity of service surpasses what his humble character can offer until he is ready. There is still much ground to cover.

Then, there is self-conquest.

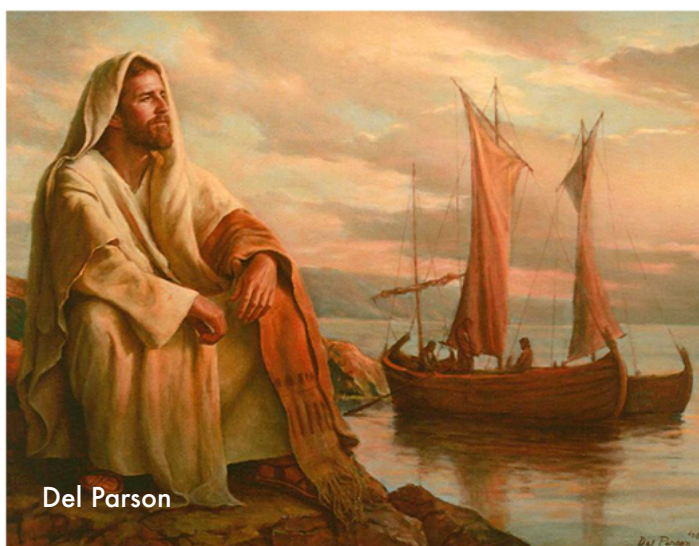
What do I suppose is the difference between self-conquest and self-mastery? How about this: self-conquest is beating yourself into submission, while self-mastery is refusing to do so.

“In the ministry to so-called normal beings, seraphic assignments are made in accordance with the human attainment of the circles of intellectuality and spirituality. You start out in your mind of mortal investment in the seventh circle and journey inward in the task of self-understanding, self-conquest, and self-mastery; and circle by circle you advance until (if natural death does not terminate your career and transfer your struggles to the mansion worlds) you reach the first or inner circle of relative contact and communion with the indwelling Adjuster.” (UB113:1.6)

Self-conquest is one of the steps, or tasks, toward self-mastery and follows the task of self-understanding, all this in

the progress through the seven circles of cosmic enlightenment. The quote above is the only place in the entire book where the word "self-conquest" is found.

Jesus' 40 Days of Morontia Appearances



Final Appearances of Jesus to his Apostles

In the forty days (a “number of completion”) since Jesus’ resurrection, he appeared to one or more of the apostles six times. In addition, he appeared to Mary Magellan three times; Jesus’ brother James once; David, the brother of

James and John Zebedee and the director of the apostles' messenger service, one time; Abner and Lazares in Philadelphia one time; and Rodan in Alexandria one time. He also appeared to others on 6 different occasions. Altogether over a thousand souls witnessed his appearances during those total of 19 occasions.

All together over a thousand souls witnessed his appearances during a total of 19 occasions.

On April 21, 30 AD, during his 13th morontia appearance, Jesus had final words to convey to each of the apostles. Read these words and see how our lives fit in. (UB192:2) This is my charge to myself; perhaps it is your charge as well.

To John Zebedee and Simon Peter both he asked, “... *do you love me?*” Then to John he said, “... *give up your intolerance and learn to love men as I have loved you. Devote your life to proving that love is the greatest thing in the world. It is the love of God that impels men to seek salvation. Love is the ancestor of all spiritual goodness, the essence of the true and the beautiful.*”

To Simon Peter he said, “*If you love me, Peter, feed my lambs. Do not neglect to minister to the weak, the poor, and the young. Preach the gospel without fear or favor; remember always that God is no respecter of persons. Serve your fellow men even as I have served you; forgive your fellow mortals even as I have forgiven you. Let experience teach you the value of meditation and the power of intelligent reflection.*” ... “... *take good care of my sheep. Be a*

good and a true shepherd to the flock. Betray not their confidence in you. Be not taken by surprise at the enemy's hand. Be on guard at all times — watch and pray.” And “Feed my sheep. Do not forsake the flock. Be an example and an inspiration to all your fellow shepherds. Love the flock as I have loved you and devote yourself to their welfare even as I have devoted my life to your welfare. And follow after me even to the end.”

Appearing Peter had not understood what was being said to him, Jesus said, “... *Be not concerned about what your brethren shall do. If I will that John should tarry after you are gone, even until I come back, what is that to you? Only make sure that you follow me.*”

Next, he spoke to Andrew and James Zebedee, saying, “... *Do you trust me?*” Then to Andrew he said, “... *if you trust me, trust your brethren more — even Peter. I once trusted you with the leadership of your brethren. Now must you trust others as I leave you to go to the Father. When your brethren begin to scatter abroad because of bitter persecutions, be a considerate and wise counselor to James my brother in the flesh when they put heavy burdens upon him which he is not qualified by experience to bear. And then go on trusting, for I will not fail you. When you are through on earth, you shall come to me.*”

And to James he said, “... *If you trust me more, you will be less impatient with your brethren. If you will trust me, it will help you to be kind to the brotherhood of believers. Learn to weigh the consequences of your sayings and your doings. Remember that the reaping is in accordance with*

the sowing. Pray for tranquillity of spirit and cultivate patience. These graces, with living faith, shall sustain you when the hour comes to drink the cup of sacrifice. But never be dismayed; when you are through on earth, you shall also come to be with me."

Next, he went to Thomas and Nathaniel, asking of them both, "... Do you serve me?" Then to Thomas he said, "*If you would serve me, serve my brethren in the flesh even as I have served you. And be not weary in this well-doing but persevere as one who has been ordained by God for this service of love. When you have finished your service with me on earth, you shall serve with me in glory. Thomas, you must cease doubting; you must grow in faith and the knowledge of truth. Believe in God like a child but cease to act so childishly. Have courage; be strong in faith and mighty in the kingdom of God.*"

And to Nathaniel, "*If, therefore, you serve me with a whole heart, make sure that you are devoted to the welfare of my brethren on earth with tireless affection. Admix friendship with your counsel and add love to your philosophy. Serve your fellow men even as I have served you. Be faithful to men as I have watched over you. Be less critical; expect less of some men and thereby lessen the extent of your disappointment. And when the work down here "is over, you shall serve with me on high."*

After this he spoke to Matthew and Phillip, asking them, "... Do you obey me?" Then Jesus said to Phillip, "*If you would obey me, go then into the lands of the gentiles and*

proclaim this gospel. The prophets have told you that to obey is better than to sacrifice. By faith have you become a God-knowing kingdom son. There is but one law to obey — that is the command to go forth proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. Cease to fear men; be unafraid to preach the good news of eternal life to your fellows who languish in darkness and hunger for the light of truth. No more, Philip, shall you busy yourself with money and goods. You now are free to preach the glad tidings just as are your brethren. And I will go before you and be with you even to the end.”

To James Alpheus and brother Judas Alpheas he asked, “... do you believe in me?” Then he told both of them, “You believe in me — you are my apostles, and you always will be. Go on believing and remembering your association with me, when I am gone, and after you have, perchance, returned to the work you used to do before you came to live with me. Never allow a change in your outward work to influence your allegiance. Have faith in God to the end of your days on earth. Never forget that, when you are a faith son of God, all upright work of the realm is sacred. Nothing which a son of God does can be common. Do your work, therefore, from this time on, as for God. And when you are through on this world, I have other and better worlds where you shall likewise work for me. And in all of this work, on this world and on other worlds, I will work with you, and my spirit shall dwell within you.”

But human hearts and mortal minds differ. It is not what is said but what is heard that can disrupt the most profound message, even transform it into something else entirely.

By Thursday night, April 29th, *“already had begun the first steps of changing the gospel of the kingdom — sonship with God and brotherhood with man — into the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus. Nathaniel opposed this shift in the burden of their public message, but he could not withstand Peter’s eloquence, neither could he overcome the enthusiasm of the disciples, especially the women believers.”*

“And so, under the vigorous leadership of Peter and ere the Master ascended to the Father, his well-meaning representatives began that subtle process of gradually and certainly changing the religion of Jesus into a new and modified form of religion about Jesus.”

And soon after the Pentecost *“... the twins returned to their homes in Galilee. Simon Zelotes was in retirement for some time before he went forth preaching the gospel. Thomas worried for a shorter period and then resumed his teaching. Nathaniel differed increasingly with Peter regarding preaching about Jesus in the place of proclaiming the former gospel of the kingdom. This disagreement became so acute by the middle of the following month that Nathaniel withdrew, going to Philadelphia to visit Abner and Lazarus; and after tarrying there for more than a year, he went on into the lands beyond Mesopotamia preaching the gospel as he understood it.”*

Now there were six to take charge of the *“... early proclamation of the gospel in Jerusalem: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, and Matthew.”*

Forty days after Jesus raised himself, he left them for the final time in his morontia form. That same evening, his “comforter,” the Spirit of Truth, descended upon all mankind of all evolutionary worlds. But in that moment of *“... spiritual ecstasy and personal triumph, the best tidings, the greatest news, these men could think of was the fact of the risen Master. And so they went forth, endowed with power from on high, preaching glad tidings to the people — even salvation through Jesus — but they unintentionally stumbled into the error of substituting some of the facts associated with the gospel for the gospel message itself. Peter unwittingly led off in this mistake, and others followed after him on down to Paul, who created a new religion out of the new version of the good news.”*

“It is not strange that these spirit-infused men should have seized upon this opportunity to express their feelings of triumph over the forces which had sought to destroy their Master and end the influence of his teachings. At such a time as this it was easier to remember their personal association with Jesus and to be thrilled with the assurance that the Master still lived, that their friendship had not ended, and that the spirit had indeed come upon them even as he had promised.”

“And when all of this is taken into consideration, it is not difficult to understand how these men came to preach a new gospel about Jesus in the place of their former message of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men.”

But the “gospel is the kingdom is: the fact of the fatherhood of God, coupled with the resultant truth of the sonship-brotherhood of men. Christianity, as it developed from that day, is: the fact of God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, in association with the experience of believer-fellowship with the risen and glorified Christ.”

If it weren't for this most important book ever published, *The Urantia Book*, we likely would still be in the dark about the truth of Jesus and his apostles, as well as the many others who lived with him, talked to him, believed in him and his message, and embraced his way of living: the women apostolic corps and other disciples that followed him; his family; those whose lives he touched and who, today, touch us still; individuals such as Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus, John Mark, Nicodemus, Abner, Rodan, Joseph of Arimathea, and David Zebedee; or the woman, Nalda, at Jacob's well, the centurion at the cross, Ganid and his father, and Simon from Cyrene who lifted the cross from Jesus that first “good” Friday.

But now we have the truth, and it's good to keep reminding ourselves of the lessons Jesus taught and lived. One of the most significant ones is what constitutes the **“fruits of the spirit.”** These are, as Jesus tells us, **“... loving service, unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, sincere fairness, enlightened honesty, undying hope, confiding trust, merciful ministry, unfailing goodness, forgiving tolerance, and enduring peace.”**

Meandering Through The Urantia Book

The preceding is from Paper 192, *Appearances on Galilee*, section 2, *Visiting with the Apostles Two and Two*.



C H A P T E R 22

What About Angels?



Angels and Celestial Helpers of All Kinds

Angels are here to help. They do so not so much in the mind, as they are not present in the way Thought Adjusters and Adjutant Spirits are, but rather as interfaces between the personality of the mortal and the pre- and non-

personal “...*spirit influences which indwell, surround, and impinge upon the mind and soul of the evolving material creature.*” They also coordinate the agencies of the Infinite Spirit (Physical Controllers, Adjutant Spirits, and the Holy Spirit) and the influences of the Spirit of Truth and the Thought Adjuster.

After a mortal leaves this world, Seraphim serve as custodians of mind patterns, memory formulas, and the soul's morontia resurrection for individuals seeking to transition into the morontia world. While the Thought Adjuster embodies man's eternal essence, the Seraphim act as teachers of man's evolving nature—both mortal and morontial.

But the Seraphic Guardians' primary duty is to protect us. They cannot override our free will any more than a fragment of God can, but they can continue to influence us through various intellectual and spiritual means. They possess some powers over the physical environment, as they can connect and collaborate with Physical Controllers and Midwayers. They don't pay attention to our appeals and prayers. They understand their job and they stick to it. A part of their job is to set some things in motion in our physical and intellectual environment that will increase our connections to these other influences. The idea is to help us in our psychic (cosmic) circle advancement.

Seraphic mandates originate from the Seraphic Government on Urantia and the Board of Planetary Supervisors. When examining the various functional seraphic corps operating

on Urantia, it's evident why we may not perceive substantial progress in our potentially advancing civilization. It seems they could occasionally be working at cross purposes, much like Congress.

I know I have a pair of Seraphim Guardians (I have been told), but I really don't know their names. To the best of my knowledge, they haven't made contact with me in any way that I can understand. However, I believe they do; it's just that I can't tell. There's one occasion when I think I might have been saved from an accident by some force or entity, but who knows? Angel or Midwayer or both? Someday I will ask one.





Primary Supernaphin on duty

It seems to me that, while we have a set of Primary Supernaphim on duty here, it is unclear to what extent they assist us as lowly human beings. They must be collaborating with the other local orders of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Sanobim, who presumably are helping us by guiding our actions to the extent that they can reach out and influence our minds.

“Primary supernaphim are also placed in command of the seraphic hosts ministering on worlds isolated because of rebellion. When a Paradise Son is bestowed upon such a world, completes his mission, ascends to the Universal Father, is accepted, and returns as the accredited deliverer of this isolated world, a primary supernaphim is always designated by the chiefs of assignment to assume command of the ministering spirits on duty in the newly reclaimed sphere.” (UB27:0.2)

This suggests that in a “normal” world, Primary Supernaphim don’t even bother to show up. However, on Urantia, they remain in command of the Seraphim. If that’s the case, I would think the chance to start offering greater assistance to our world’s other seraphic beings would be highly desired, especially since the circuits that were once cut off due to the rebellion are coming back online. So come on, ...”come on people now, smile on your brother; everybody get together. Try to love one another right now.” *

Footnote:

* Writer/s: MICH HANSEN, JONAS JAYBERG, PHILLIP JACKSON,
Publisher: Warner/Chappell Music, Inc., Universal Music Publishing
Group



I love those Tertiary Seconaphim

I think I would like to spend some time with the Tertiary Seconaphim grouped as “Import of Time.” *“Time is the one universal endowment of all will creatures; it is the ‘one talent’ intrusted to all intelligent beings. You all have time in which to insure your survival; and time is fatally squandered only when it is buried in neglect when you fail so to utilize it as to make certain the survival of your soul. Failure to improve one’s time to the fullest extent possible does not impose fatal penalties; it merely retards the pilgrim of time in his journey of ascent. If survival is gained, all other losses can be retrieved.”* (UB28:6.9) And *“In the assignment of trusts the counsel of the Imports of Time is invaluable. Time is a vital factor in everything this side of Havona and Paradise. In the final judgment before the Ancients of Days, time is an element of evidence. The Imports of Time must always afford testimony to show that every defendant has had ample time for making decisions, achieving choice.”* (UB28:6.10)

I am learning that time is not linear, as we tend to understand it on Urantia. It is actually cyclical, or more like a



spiral, in how it truly plays out over the long haul. I read recently that time is also a gift from God to his evolutionary children, which suggests that time for immortal beings has a whole different meaning for them. I would like to understand more about time. I would also like to think there may be ways for us, as mortals, to help others become more conscious of this gift instead of squandering it by sitting on porches all day long, standing in line for “Its a Small World,” or attending interminable government meetings with so little to show for it.

Then, too, *“These time evaluators are also the secret of prophecy; they portray the element of time which will be required in the completion of any undertaking The Gods foresee, hence foreknow; but the ascendant authorities of the universes of time must consult the Imports of Time to be able to forecast events of the future.”* (UB28:6.11)

And that is just plain fascinating.



The living newspapers: The Supernaphim

The living newspapers of Havona are described as sympathetic promoters of fraternal association. How can a fraternal association among different personalities be achieved through news reporting? How can it be applied to our current news reporting techniques?

First, imagine the types of news being broadcast on Havona as opposed to here on Urantia. Pretty amazing, huh? Our news primarily focuses on self-serving, evil (meaning ignorance and sinful, sometimes iniquitous), blaming, often violent confrontations, and horrid situations that pass for entertainment on most of our broadcast systems: nightly news, 24-hour news channels, internet news, and today, largely negative content on Facebook and Twitter (I heard this on NPR one day).

None of the above contributes to a desire for fraternal association. Quite the opposite. They do, however, contribute to the networks' bottom line. Yeah!

Second, if we could radically reorient our understanding of what constitutes worthy news to include more stories that highlight kindness toward others, even animals, or showcase unique talents that we can admire (e.g., Britain's Got Talent), as well as movies and television shows that tell beautiful, heartfelt stories of heroism in both disaster and non-disaster

situations (that might work too) and convey positive messages. Additionally, we could consider “flash mob” performances and great music videos, along with a resurgence of operatic performances (though that likely indicates a renewed interest in classical music; never mind). But wait, there is more....

There are many significant news events that we never see. While a few important pieces do emerge that we should be aware of, most information out there may not be necessary for us to see or hear. Meanwhile, truly important news stories are often overlooked—stories that can influence how a country supports its citizens in developing moral consciousness. Take, for example, the current corruption within the stock market system, which no longer acts in the individual's best interest but rather serves the interests of the big banks and stockbroker system itself. If this sounds like another conspiracy theory, think of “The Big Short” and the economic collapse of the world economic system in 2008. However, the good news is that action is being taken by a small group of people. This is the real story—the everyday heroes who can enrich our lives significantly.

There are real issues out there that require significant attention, but our focus on financial gain, protecting the powerful, and entertaining our fears seems to take precedence so far.

I read recently that Amazon has found more people are buying books—yes, physical books that they hold in their hands—than they are purchasing Kindle versions. How is this

relevant to the discussion? Let me start from the beginning: While reading your response, this idea came to me.

Over the past few years, I have read several books on cultural traditions that differ from my own. One was “I am Malala.” Reading about the life of this young girl who was gunned down on her school bus, including her development before the shooting and what happened afterward, makes me feel like I know her, and my heart goes out to her. There is an empathy that builds within me, calling for love and compassion.

I loved two books by Michael Lewis, author of “The Big Short.” (I love all of his works.) They are titled “The Undoing Project” and “Flash Boys.” The first is about two Israeli psychologists and their lifelong work together, what brought them together, the work they did, and what eventually drove them apart. Their explorations of human behavior have resulted in new ways of thinking about decision-making, with studies that have since had worldwide consequences, even in geopolitical areas. It is a beautiful story about the love they had for each other, although they might never have recognized it that way. The conclusion brought tears to my eyes, and it still does. It’s a beautiful true story, told in such a clear, endearing manner that is characteristic of Michael Lewis. I really felt like I knew them both.

The other book, “Flash Boys,” tells of a group of stockbrokers that uncovered on-going larceny and theft within the New York Stock Exchange and others and the big banks violation of their fiduciary duties to their customer. How they

discovered it and what they decided to do about it to stop it, or at least make it visible to others. It is a story that can make one quite angry in reading it but nothing compared to investors losing pared to investors losing billions of dollars annually due to this theft, so insidious that even our government can't figure out how to stop it, which results in it being "ignored." This group of very smart brokers then started their own stock exchange to ensure that those who were cheating the other exchanges could not do so with theirs. After I finished the book, I googled their exchange and found it along with a great video about their new exchange, called IEX, for Investors Exchange.

The idea of getting to know someone vicariously through the thousands of books out there as a means to connect with people and develop more understanding and compassion for them is one that I find enriching and fun.



As above, so below

The question is asked: As above, so below. After reading Paper 27, *Ministry of the Primary Supernaphim*, how can we better bring the practices from above into the realm below, here and now on Urantia? For example, how can we improve our management of rest? How can we interpret our ethics? Live our conduct? Or even experience the spirit of worship?

In this world, as we understand it, “ethics” refers to rules established by an external source, typically by society or a part of society.

Morality, on the other hand, is a personal attribute; it is inherent in our personality or in the development of our intelligence as a result of the Seven Adjutant Spirits. (I am not certain which of this makes sense.) While what is morally right or wrong can be taught, our personal morality is essentially a reaction to our “truth compass” within. (One reason it can be taught is that there are also two systems of personal morality related to ways of making a living. But that is not what I am discussing here.)

Since one of the groups of Supernaphim is termed “Interpreters of Ethics,” it seems that ethics is one of the most important aspects of the ascending life. But that certainly comes as no surprise. It suggests that we may be very much behind the eight ball when it comes to appreciating ethics, much less living up to a code of ethics in our social lives. I wonder if we all had the same concept of personal morality—which it seems we would if it weren’t for all the different belief systems out there—then the issue of group or mankind ethics would be much easier to address. Unfortunately, many of our personal belief systems do not align with our personal senses of morality. Thus, the idea of group ethics becomes a societal issue and then a government issue, often enforced by harsh penalties or death (which I refer to as “graduation”). Now, thanks to *The Urantia Book*, this sticky issue of ethics remains a continuing concern even up through Havona! At least at this level, the authors inform

us that the ethics of Paradise relationships are “... neither meaningless formalities nor the dictations of artificial castes but rather the inherent proprieties ... in the usages of the perfect conduct of the high beings who sojourn on the central Isle of Light and Life.” Whew! I’m just sayin’.



I was reading in one of the Fellowship Herald magazines (a publication by the Urantia Fellowship) from a few years ago. An article on “patterns” discussed how the patterns of Paradise, then Havona, and extrapolated from there down to us, all initiated by the Infinite Spirit, led the way for our awakening to the reality of God’s request for us to be as he is, perfect. So my conclusion is that those offspring of the Infinite Spirit, including the Supernaphim, are helping us to become what we need to be, but our job is to experience this life and beyond as we grow more aware of that which is calling us. However, *The Urantia Book* defines ethics or

morality; these qualities must start within us. And by our fruits, we can spread these same qualities into our other institutions.

Our poor little orb is not like typical inhabited planets. It's easy to forget that. We have experienced (1) a system sovereign-initiated rebellion that resulted in our being cut off from the other six hundred or so worlds in our system of Satania; (2) the default of Adam and Eve, thanks to our then-deposed planetary prince; (3) an emergency bestowal of a Machiventa son; (4) and our evolutionary ages are out of sequence! On the other hand, we had Michael. What's next? My point is that the Father's plan is known and not a puzzle for most of his ascending creatures. And now that we have the UB, it is no longer unknown to us either. Hooray!

While the “as above, so below” is a universal law, it is challenging to understand and relate to in this world. The “law of attraction” is often dismissed by humanity as merely new age mumbo jumbo, primarily because it is not comprehended in its proper context (nor can it be proved by the god “SCIENCE”). By the way, I also like “as within, so without.” This refers to our Thought Adjuster and Jesus telling us that the kingdom of heaven is within -- “*...your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*”

It is often a puzzle, but it becomes less of a puzzle the higher we ascend. By the way, I love the whole concept of “patterns” and the role they play in the UB text and in the Universe. I think I have circled the word each time it appears (you should see my book!). As an architect and urban designer,

pattern languages – that is, historical forms and symbols used as the foundation of building and city design – are indispensable to sound design. Unfortunately, most architects and planners don't have a clue what I'm talking about. ¹

I think both concepts of “as above, so below” as well as “as within, so without” are difficult of understanding because, for most folks, the focus is almost entirely on the exterior manifestations of the world and being pre-occupied, occupied, and post-occupied with earning a living, making money, gathering facts and knowledge (mostly without meaning and value), paying tribute to science and to what can be proved. “As above,” etc., is too “woo-woo” and new age-y. Many “new thought” folks can sort of understand the laws of the universe (the law of attraction, for example), but if they aren't in WestLaw, what good are they in “reality,” is the position that is taken. Many of these individuals are familiar with the concepts, but they often fail to apply them to their everyday lives.

I believe the patterns in the paper are fundamental to understanding the manifestation of reality's aspects, not just here, but in the worlds to come. As mentioned earlier, when understood, they serve as solid foundations for progressing in all aspects of life, both here and beyond.

Footnote:

1. See Jane Jacobs, *Systems of Survival: A Dialogue on the Moral Foundations of Commerce and Politics*



Those Solitary Messengers are really something

One odd fact is that the Solitary Messengers must work alone, as they cannot recharge the necessary energies while in the presence of others of their kind. They are among the very few beings, whether created or evolved, that thrive better alone than with companions. Additionally, since they traverse space at velocities of 4500 times the speed of light (or 841,621,642,000 miles per second), they are the only non-enseraphimed beings capable of achieving almost instant movement from place to place. (The limit for most other non-enseraphimed beings is three times the speed of light.) No other beings travel between the velocities of “instant” and seraphim. Furthermore, they are gradually being diminished due to accompanying a child of time and eternity” (a “creature-trinitized son”) as its guardian-companion, as both will depart for Vicegerington, the Messenger never to return among the numbers of the Solitary Messengers at work in the universes. What will happen next? Are they not indispensable for other duties? And what happens to the future creature-trinitized sons when all the Solitary Messengers are all used up?

The Solitary Messengers must be viewed by other celestial beings with some degree of envy, not that perfect beings are ever envious. But imagine being able to traverse space at such a rate that allows you to be the very first to witness new creations being born in far, far outer space, and more locally,

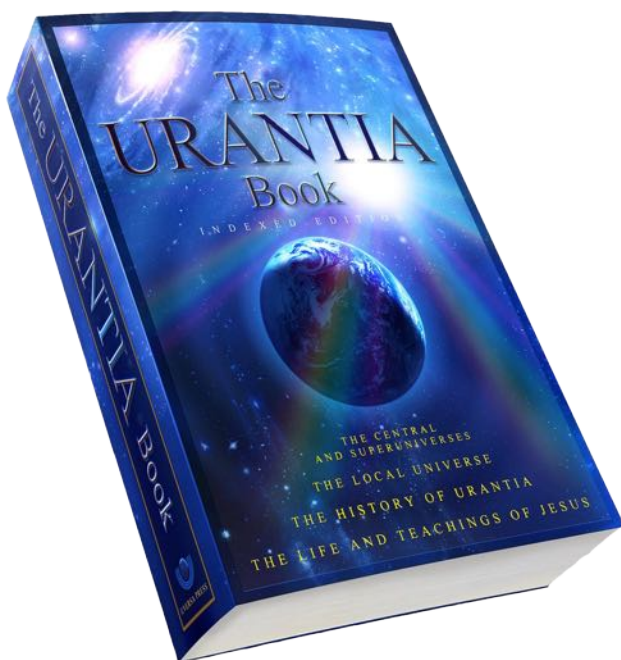
to observe curious or troubling phenomena to report back to HQ. If I had a choice now, I would choose the path of perfection. The other experiences I understand; perfection I do not. I think I might prefer it. I suppose I had better, for that is my goal, isn't it?

The Solitary Messengers consider the task of revealing truth to be the utmost trust of their order. What about our role in spreading the news of the revelations of truth in *The Urantia Book*?

Our role, first, as those who have discovered *The Urantia Book*, is to become studiers (those who study) of it. To me, that means diving deep into its facts, meanings, and values to reach for a connection with the Cosmic Mind and gain increasing spiritual insight. It means to embrace its advice wholeheartedly, to engage in meditation, worship, and prayer; to be of service to others, even as I pass by; to strive to love everyone, regardless of who they are or what they have done. We are all children of our Father; our job is to act like it. This means to live the spirit of the book to the best of our ability in all that we do. While obstacles may arise from my own and others' ignorance, I can address mine. And I can exemplify what all this means by my actions. The act is mine; the consequences are God's.

C H A P T E R 2 3

The Urantia Book



The Urantia Book as Solution

The Urantia Book is a solution manual; it provides answers to an incredible—dare I say infinite?—array of issues. I won't call them problems because few believe that what is in *The Urantia Book* results from a problem as most people perceive it. However, the essence of *The Urantia*

Book, from its inception and throughout its development as a revelation to us, to its publication and distribution, is a vast collection of solutions to the even more significant challenges that the world faces today.

Or, if we want to resort to seminar-speak, we can call problems "opportunities" rather than problems. But this may be jumping way ahead of the game. The opportunities that the UB presents to mankind far exceed any notion of the problems we find today—problems that have been with us for centuries, but we have failed to recognize them. Our worldly problems are so thick around us that we hardly even think of them as such. We walk around believing that this is just the way it is.

For example, the role of religion today is quite peculiar in many respects. Is it a belief system? If so, what value does that hold given the variety of belief systems that exist? Is any one religion as valid as another? Which one is correct? Or is it a social organization that has little relevance to life in general? Or perhaps it is a way of life that embodies one's ideals of ethical and moral behavior? At least this last way of looking at religion starts to get at the notion of a solution to something. But what?

But why are religious institutions, along with their dogmas and beliefs, so archaic when we consider the rest of our culture to be one of advanced thinking and technological wonders? Perhaps we aren't as advanced as we think we are.

The idea that there is a solution implies that there was a problem needing one. Considering *The Urantia Book* as a source of solutions to humanity's many issues oversimplifies the challenge of identifying or even contemplating them. Concentrating on the problems can leave one stuck in the mire of an infinite array of impossibly complex demands across various aspects of life: science and truth, politics and influence, economics and monetary policy, justice and corruption, medicine and health, environment and public policy, family values and personal freedoms, internal turmoil and international conflict, religious ideology and faith.



What is left for interpretation?

In my experience, the more I read and explore the words the revelators have given us, the more I come to understand the subtle undercurrents of meanings they have placed within our grasp. I agree that over-intellectualization can be dangerous in some quarters, but I am not certain about the UB. It may not be possible to over-intellectualize material that is so very complete (as far as “primers” go) and that is mostly beyond the intellectual capacity of the average Urantian. If so, I suspect it becomes “metaphysics” instead.

The UB is a complete package of revelation designed for our times, intellect, and faith. Understanding its depth of meaning requires an overall grasp of what it offers us, then using our intellect—through which spirit reveals itself—as the doorway to heartfelt guidance from the Spirit of Truth.

The Urantia study groups also facilitate this process. Faith comes from the fearlessness of accepting what the book presents, examining it, and allowing it to soak into our souls.

The UB is not without its interpretations, as anyone in a study group knows. The key is to keep in mind the overall pattern of cosmic organization, its meanings and values, and to maintain perspective on what is real and what is not. I don't think over-intellectualization is a major concern with the book; the revelators have intellectualized, spiritualized, and faith-ized the text far beyond our current understanding. Confusion about much of the book is lessened with each reading. However, confusion stemming from not taking it seriously due to an inadequate grasp of language or a lack of intellectual understanding is more likely, as is not being curious enough about their own lives and fortunes, which is where most folks falter today.



Time and awareness

In reading *The Urantia Book*, we encounter discussions about the remarkable phenomenon of time. The Revelators will tell us if some event lasted for a certain duration in our time, that is, Urantia time, or in some other time dimension, such as “standard universe” time or “Nebadon” time. Often, they will translate these other time dimensions into our time durations. For example,

"Chronology is reckoned, computed, and rectified by a special group of beings on Salvington. The standard day of Nebadon is equal to eighteen days and six hours of Urantia time, plus two and one-half minutes. The Nebadon year consists of a segment of the time of universe swing in relation to the Uversa circuit and is equal to one hundred days of standard universe time, about five years of Urantia time." (UB33:6.7)

And,

"The day in Satania, as reckoned on Jerusem, is a little less (1 hour, 4 minutes, 15 seconds) than three days of Urantia time. These times are generally known as Salvington or universe time, and Satania or system time. Standard time is universe time." (UB33:6.9)

Recall when we had heard the phrase, "... one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:8) Or, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." (Psalm 90:4) According to the website Divinecoders, this is their interpretation:

According to the word of God recorded in the Holy Bible, there are stark differences in how Heaven and Earth perceive time. We know this because two passages in the Holy Bible provide the same information about these differences. These are cited above. Then they go on, "So, we see that one day in Heaven is proportional to 1000 years on Earth." Their website continues to discuss and attempts to perform

some mathematical analysis but ultimately states their conclusion that,

"To know God well is to know but a fraction of His might. Therefore, we may not understand all of the mysteries of God and His creation, but it is certainly worth the effort to try."

It seems we are back where we started."

We read that most celestial beings are eternal! But we must wonder what time means to them; it cannot mean the same as it does to us. Being stuck for now on our time-space orb, most of us struggle to relate to a time longer than our own lifespan, much less 2000 years when Jesus was teaching or 250,000 or 500,000 years ago. So how do these celestials understand time? Recall that it is only in the superuniverses that we have time at all. As celestials can traverse from a superuniverse to Havona or Paradise, they flit in and out of time.

One clue may be found the the UB in Paper 130:7.8:

"The time-space concept of a mind of material origin is destined to undergo successive enlargements as the conscious and conceiving personality ascends the levels of the universes. When man attains the mind intervening between the material and the spiritual planes of existence, his ideas of time-space will be enormously expanded both as to quality of perception and quantity of experience. The enlarging cosmic conceptions of an advancing spirit personality are due to augmentations of both depth of insight

and scope of consciousness. And as personality passes on, upward and inward, to the transcendental levels of Deity-likeness, the time-space concept will increasingly approximate the timeless and spaceless concepts of the Absolutes. Relatively, and in accordance with transcendental attainment, these concepts of the absolute level are to be envisioned by the children of ultimate destiny.”

While the paragraph above discusses our changing and expanding experiences of time as we advance on our ascension path, surely the time experiences of celestials must already reflect an expansive understanding of experience and perception. It seems, at least to me, that the perception and experience of celestials are often limited by the space and time of their relative positions in the Superuniverses. However, while they may be constrained by time and space, they also appear to possess other prerogatives simultaneously, so to speak.

In this, I am reminded of Jesus’ Personalized Thought Adjuster, who, while constrained by space and being a part of Jesus, was not limited by time, as he was a fragment of God. With this attribute, he could summon multitudes of other celestial beings to also circumvent the constraints of time in the turning of water into wine at the Cana wedding feast, the feeding of the five thousand, and the dissolution of Jesus’ mortal body during the time of the tomb. Additionally, the numerous healings that Jesus performed were also abridgments of time.

Natural, physical healing takes time. However, in some of Jesus' healing work, the duration was shortened by a combination of Jesus' compassion, the will of the Father, and the faith of the person being healed. Thus, healing became a significant part of Jesus' and his apostles' ministry.

As an aside, I believe these same qualifications result in healing today as they have for hundreds of years. And while the UB refuses to call them—except for a select few —"miracles," they certainly seem miraculous to our basic understanding of spirit and mind within this human mortal existence.

To summarize, our limited concepts of time are constrained by our situation in this world. As we ascend, we will experience multiple understandings and perceptions of time. Does this also imply a contraction of time experience wherein a thousand years will seem like a watch in the night? That seems likely. With each step in our ascension journey, we will experience and perceive time differently. Our "depth of insight" and our "scope of consciousness" continuously expand as our emerging spirit selves, our morontia souls, and our mortal notions of time become aware of the certainty of eternity.



The very important new information that *The Urantia Book* gives us

Here is a brief list of some new information regarding religious teachings:

1. A fragment of God dwells within us.
2. God doesn't stop speaking to us; it may be that still, small voice....
3. Revelations can come from any source, but we must be discerning, and our Spirit of Truth will guide us. Channeled truth is still truth.
4. The Spirit of Truth is not the Holy Spirit, as most Christian religions teach.
5. Humankind's sacred books, with one exception, are artifacts of human thought and reflect the authors' prejudices, biases, knowledge, and wishful thinking to a certain extent. Sometimes a prophet got it right, but mostly they are simply books filled with numerous mistakes. Sacredness, in that sense, signifies fetishes.
6. Being "*born of the spirit*" reflects Jesus' ideas about the baptism of the spirit, rather than John the Baptist's water baptism (which is still observed by most traditional Christian churches; Unity performs a spiritual baptism for new members).
7. We are told to follow are truth where spirit lead us and "*... cease looking in only old books.*"
8. Do not be compelled to subscribe to beliefs, practices, or rituals that we find repugnant or untruthful.

9. And shame on false teachers that drag us back to the dim past and leave us there.
10. A religion of authority can never achieve unification. (And I don't think they ever intend to, regardless of what they preach; world peace is a game to them to be played for how many converts they can win versus some other "faith" and to keep our bodies, minds, and souls focused elsewhere.)

But the most significant new information is the revelation of the entire *Urantia Book*, including what it contains, how it came about, the various entities and creations, the gifts of the Father and of Jesus, and the incredible lessons of Jesus regarding life, eternity, free will, personality, Fatherhood, and Brotherhood. It could go on and on.

Our new motto: Viva El Libro de Urantia!



Some secrets to understanding the UB

Here are a few secrets for understanding the UB and fully absorbing it into your mind, body, and soul:

Read it repeatedly. Take notes. Listen to it. Write about it. Teach it to others in a study group. Review Sadler's workbooks. Explore the many UB websites, each offering its own treasures. Enroll in all the courses you can find time for. Make time for more of them. Also, take all the online courses from UrantiaUniversity Institute. Write down your thoughts in response to every course question. If a question feels

challenging, start writing anyway. Read the book again, and meditate. Enter the stillness and talk to your Father in heaven. He is always listening. One day, you will hear his still, small voice.

I do all of the above. I am on my 5th to 6th reading of it since I found it in 2008. Now, I am taking notes on each paragraph that stands out as significantly more important than the others. I started over on January 1, 2017. I have filled eight notebooks so far. I may not have to, but I make time. You can too. One hour a day is all you need. I bet you can find it. Become the shining light in the study group. I guarantee that the moment you start to teach it, you will begin learning even more than ever. And, for Heaven's sake, don't worry; we have all the time in the world and eternity.

Breathe. Talk to your TA before you go to sleep each night. Tell it good morning upon awakening. Ask it questions to answer the questions you want to know. Chat with your seraphic guardians; you don't want them bored, right? And talk to Nebadonia, our Universe Mother Spirit. Recall she is everywhere all the time. Ask Jesus, through his Spirit of Truth, to bring you to the truth. Perhaps you will learn how to “command” the armies of Seraphim waiting for you to recognize them, to call them to action. If your request lines up with God’s will, you are almost there.

Now, doesn't the third psychic circle feel good?



Metaphysics and *The Urantia Book*

In much of *The Urantia Book*, the term metaphysics, in the religious or spiritual context, appears frequently, often in a derogatory sense. In this context, metaphysics essentially means “beyond or above” the physical. For some New Thought churches, such as Unity and Religious Science, the use of “metaphysical” interpretations of scripture removes the literalness from the words in the Bible and constructs or implies an entirely different meaning that is generally more uplifting than the literal wording, as you said, “... to understand that which is not understandable.”

The Urantia Book discusses metaphysics as an attempt to philosophically bridge the commonly understood meanings of words and the “higher,” more spiritual meanings behind those words. The issue, according to our text, is that these new interpretations are often no clearer than the original meanings and can sometimes lead someone down a completely wrong path. At other times, they are simply nonsensical. For example, here is one I recently heard in church: “God is not a being; he is beingness.” Duh! Or that God is not omnipresent, but he is omnipresence. They can be very silly.

The co-founder of the Unity Church, Charles Fillmore, even wrote a book that contains over 700 pages of detailed metaphysical definitions for virtually every word in the Bible—every town, place, name, person, feature of nature,

and so on. It serves as a great tool if you want to understand what the author believes something means in his mind. However, the author does state that these are his ideas, as if we need to seek out our own interpretations. As you said, "...relying on 'self' to understand that which is not understandable." While metaphysics attempts to clarify the obscure meanings of words written or translated hundreds of years ago into something applicable today, it can also lead one into a trap.

The Urantia Book describes our flawed metaphysical philosophy as something that appears to guide us toward the core of the morontia worlds. Yet, it falls significantly short, leaving us uncertain about what the scripture intended to convey. It is akin to the Apostles trying to interpret in detail what the "Parable of the Sower" meant, but they became bewildered by the many possible interpretations that came to mind.

"What metaphysics fails utterly in doing, and what even philosophy fails partially in doing, revelation does; that is, affirms that this First Cause of science and religion's God of salvation are one and the same Deity." (UB101:2.7) Our arrival of our understanding of "true metaphysics" takes place upon our arrival on the third Mansion world. *"Surviving mortals now gain practical insight into true metaphysics. This is the real introduction to the intelligent comprehension of cosmic meanings and universe interrelationships."* In the meantime, our book, this epochal revelation, will have to do.

Here are some samples from the Metaphysical Bible Dictionary: The metaphysical definition of “Salem”:
“A consciousness of spiritual peace, wholeness, and perfection.”
Here is the one for Melchizedek: “... refers to the Christ mind or superconsciousness, that which when ruling in man’s consciousness establishes and maintains right doing, perfect adjustment, peace, and perfection.” The word Angel:
“Thought of the Lord; our angels are our spiritual perceptive faculties, whichever dwell in the presence of the Father.”

C H A P T E R 23

Our Local Universe Nebadon



Gary Tonge

Our Michael of Nebadon



What is the primary purpose and mission of a Creator Son?

As an aspect of God the Sevenfold, the missions of the Creator Son mark the beginning of experiential creation and existence in the worlds of time and space. The Creator Sons represent the first departure from existential reality, moving into the realms of evolution, allowing the Father to experience all that is to be experienced throughout eternal time.

The Creator Son's mission (along with that of his co-creator) is to direct the organization of all life forms that will inhabit the evolving worlds and the architectural (read management) worlds of the local universe of his creation. This includes all

mind energies (from the Mother Spirit), spiritual energy circuits, and much more. In our case, we benefit from the creation of the healing spirit of Jesus circulating in our world.

The roles of the Creator Sons extend throughout the creation of the superuniverses until all of them superuniverses are settled in light and life. What a Creator Son does next, I don't know, but I bet it will be good.



Does new information from *The Urantia Book* about Jesus as a Michael Son somehow diminish Jesus' Christian status as the Second Person of the Trinity?

I think it is quite the opposite. Several reasons come to mind. First, the obvious one is that he is far more important to us as created beings, in that he is, as Michael, the co-creator (along with Nebadonia) of our local universe, as well as the direct creation of the second person of the Trinity.

Second, the notion of him being the second person of the Trinity has been and always will be a fabrication, an error (even an "evil" as Jesus defines it) in our past theological beliefs. We have many of those, don't we? Yet, since "we" Urantians had a chance to hear it from the horse's mouth, so to speak, almost 2000 years ago, we still blew it. (I wonder

what the other “rebellion-impacted” planets have in their theology regarding this issue; I suspect all the “non-rebellion” planets don’t have this problem.)

Third, the truth is always better than falsehood. It is what it is, not what it isn’t.

In examining the UB, I have not found anywhere in the book that Jesus taught about the Trinity. If, in fact, he did not, then where did it originate? It certainly is a significant part of our Christian heritage—so much so that the evolving religion of Islam could not grasp it and ultimately rejected it. Clearly, it must have existed in some form. If I remember correctly, the book mentions that the Hebrews faced the same issue. It's possible that Jesus did discuss it, but it's simply not included in our book.

I never had a problem with the idea of the Trinity, but I never really questioned the traditional concept. If you don't understand something, or it doesn’t create a logical connection in your brain, it’s sort of sidestepped until something happens that makes it make more sense (assuming it ever does happen). When I first read the UB, the Trinity concept came alive for me, and it made a lot more sense. The fact that we still, as traditional Christians do, have a God, a Holy Spirit, and a Son in Jesus is okay too. As above, so below. I don't think Christians lose much in their continuing beliefs in a localized Trinity idea. I mean, if it’s that big a deal, a lot of folks are in trouble!



Why are the 'self-imposed limitations' of a Michael Son significant? What does it tell us about God? What does it tell us about his Creator Sons?

Regarding God first.... It is said the “universe was created by love.” This philosophy explains the nature of all created beings and creative acts. A significant aspect of that love is the idea of free will, that is, the ability for any created being or personality to have the will to do that which he or she thinks is the way to go, for good or “bad.” “Bad” meaning “evil” (ignorance or non-understanding), “sin” (purposefully going against the Father’s will), and “iniquity” (persistently going against the Father’s will). Specifically, when looking at the Creator Sons, although they have the same free will as anyone, none have ever gone against the Father’s will. Now, this could be seen as a self-imposed limitation, but I think it goes well beyond that.

Recall the reasons for the seven bestowals of a Creator Son into the likeness and being of his created will creatures. Let’s say the final seventh bestowal is like getting a driver’s license. What must happen first? Many experiences must be understood through driving schools, exams, and classes before one can take the final driving exam. Driving before one is ready can lead to some unfortunate situations (though they may still occur). And imagine the insurance premiums! A Creator Son, after much pre-bestowal learning, must then

go forth into his newly created universe and live the life of each type of his created will beings. Imagine the experience gained. Here we are on Earth, and look at what we are learning and experiencing. Upon “graduation” from the seventh bestowal and making his way to the Isle of Paradise and the “right hand” of the Father, he is now the top dog of his universe, possessing supreme local universe sovereignty: he has earned it. If only our earthly leaders had this much integrity and relative experience before we turned them loose upon us!

Also notice that if the Creator Son tries to take a shortcut, it seems he loses a significant amount of direct support from others associated with him. “If, prior to passing through the creature bestowals, he assumed an unearned supreme sovereignty, the Paradise personalities resident in his local universe would withdraw.” (UB21:3.2) Holy crap! What does this mean? This alone would make a Creator Son think pretty hard about taking the shortcut to sovereignty.

I don't like the word "discipline" yet. That is to say, I may grow to like it, but I have a problem with it because it always seems to be something coercive, either from the outside or from within. Here is what I prefer: Think of something that is really fun to do and at which you excel. How much discipline does it take to do it?

None. Sure, there can be a distraction, as with anything, but you come back to it when the time is right. Not coerced by anything; you are not PUSHED along. You are drawn to it in joy and freedom.

Our Universe Mother Spirit



The most engaging order of celestial
personality

All orders are magnificent! But our Universal Mother Spirit, as consort of Michael of Nebadon, does some really heavy lifting. Here are the facts, as told to us by the UB: After the physical organization of the universe was completed, she began to function as a person and co-create

with Michael in planning and managing the affairs of our local universe.

1. She possesses all the physical control attributes of the Infinite Spirit, as embodied in one of the Seven Master Spirits, including anti-gravity and complete control of mind gravity (specifically, the Seventh Master Spirit in Urantia).
2. She shares responsibility for creating the beings of the world—celestial entities and mortal creatures.
3. She is independent of space but not of time, and she must deal with it.
4. She does not have a personal presence at constellation or systems headquarters. However, she is equally present throughout the entire local system.
5. Her circuits: (a) the spirit circuit, commonly referred to in this world as the Holy Spirit, and (b) the intelligence-ministry circuits, including the seven adjutant mind spirits which are considered non-spiritual mind. That is, she is the source of all intelligent life that operates through the mind.
6. She is also responsible for creating the four directional control creators that ensure all living creatures possess bodily units sensitive and responsive to the directional currents (UB34:4.13)

In making initial contact with our Universe Mother Spirit, her influences seem to be more automatic than those of the Thought Adjuster or the Spirit of Truth, and are primarily conveyed through the seven adjutant spirits.

1. All animals possess the first five adjutant mind spirits.
2. It requires a mortal decision for mind spirits numbers six and seven to arrive or become active in a will creature (that would be us), signaling the arrival of the Thought Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth.
3. However, recognizing the presence of the Holy Spirit depends on us, just as it does with the Spirit of Truth and the Thought Adjuster.
4. However, we do not possess an entity of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of Truth as we do with the Thought Adjuster. Nevertheless, they all work together in everything they do.

Since reading the UB, I am more likely to “let go and let God” about many things. I am also more inclined to trust my “gut feelings” (the adjuster of intuition) and any innate understanding of certain matters (which gives me some latitude in writing these exercises) and suspend my judgments to allow the Spirit of Truth to show the way. Imagine! I envision that without the coordination of the workings of all the Master Intelligences of mind and spirit, the universe would be completely different. There would be no Master Spirits, for instance. I believe it would be as if all growth in the universes ceased with the completion of Havona, purely existential and limited to experiential opportunities. This implies that we will have no Deities of potential appearing, I think.



What do I know of our local universe Mother Spirit?

I know her quite well. We met a few years ago in earnest at that time. Until then, I had only a passing acquaintance with her, having referred to her as the Holy Spirit. Now she is much more of a mother to me, not just a spirit, but a real motherly presence in my life. She is a powerful lady whom everyone truly admires, at least those who know her. I also became acquainted with her offspring, the seven adjutant spirits: Intuition, Understanding, Courage, Knowledge, Council, Worship, and Wisdom. It is through her and her very intelligent offspring, with considerable help from Michael and certain Life Carriers, that we have life at all, including that of all other animals as well.”

How did she originate?

She had a mother, the Infinite Spirit, and with the skilled assistance of the Seven Master Spirits, she came into existence at the same moment that Michael did.

What is her nature, and how does she function? How does she influence life on our planet and throughout the local universe?

She is the most caring mother anyone could ask for or experience. Of course, I haven’t known her for that long, so I am relying on some faith here. She operates through her own

self and her spirit ministry, the Holy Spirit, as well as her seven adjutant spirits, through which she helps our minds avoid becoming too muddled. Externally, she uses her control over her mind circuits to assist us through life. As the creator of seraphic creatures—what most of us call angels—she helps our world navigate its spiritual and intellectual wanderings. Her Guardian Angels—the ones in red berets, I think, maybe; maybe not—aid individuals in avoiding premature misdirection.

What is my relationship with her?

It is pretty strong. I have never quite gotten a good look at her, but I can tell she is a powerful and brilliant personality and strategist.

This just in: A message from our Universal Mother Spirit.

“The love in my mother's heart reaches out to all my children to let them know that they are not cosmic orphans; there is a Celestial Mother inviting them for a little chat and some nurturing. This is why my name, among many others, is the Comforting Spirit. Come to me also, as you would to your Father. We are both equally concerned about your welfare.

“My motherly love runs very deep throughout this universe of both our making. The more often you come to me with your ‘bruised knees’ or other hurts, know that I am listening and ready to comfort you. Feel blessed in getting to know me better. I long for your recognition of me.

“My created daughters — the angels — are watching over all of you, and ever faithful, they tell me how you are faring in your daily lives. You simply never lack for celestial over-care.

“We truly desire that you keep this in mind. We are all-loving and very interested in how you are all doing.

“My relationship with you could truly stand some improvement on your part, and whilst you think I am far away, let it be known that I carry you all in my heart, and there is always room for more. Michael and I have never turned away any of our children, and we never will. It is up to you to do your part and show some interest in our existence.

“Just remember that you always have access to a heavenly Mother’s Love. You do not ever need to feel bereft.”

Our Universe of Nebadon



A streetcar named Desire

We know the revelators struggled to accept the limitations of our language and the languages they are used to explaining things. Therefore, they had to create new names to discuss concepts for which we have no words, let alone understand relationships and similar ideas.

We have labeled everything that we understand, or that we can “see” in one way or another, as “our universe.” Recently, some have floated the idea of a “multi-universe.” However, our comprehension of our universe, as average Urantians, is confined to one life-bearing planet, which we know about, along with nine other planets we acknowledge, and a vast amount of outer space phenomena that we don’t fully grasp

or understand how it is organized. Thanks to some scientists, we possess concepts of quarks and black holes and wormholes (WTF?) and stuff that, well, we don't know what it really is. Maybe the scientist does, but I would bet he is speculating, a wild-ass guess (WAG).

To help with the naming convention, I see a similarity between the organization of a transit system and the organization of the universes as presented in *The Urantia Book*. Long, long ago, in a place far, far away from our neighborhood, there was a bus. It would come and go, but to our neighborhood, it was OUR bus. It took us to other places in the city. It was called, not “the bus,” but rather “the local bus.” If it had actually been LOCAL, it would have stayed right in our neighborhood, true? It was not the block bus after all. Just the local bus. As such it ran from our neighborhood through many others as it wound its way toward downtown. There were even more neighborhoods further out from ours, so the term “local” must have meant something quite large.

The same applies to the use of the term “local” universe. That word local means it is far bigger than my immediate universe, but it is mine nevertheless. It is MY local universe. So far, we think of our world's universe sort of like the bus that belongs to my block or neighborhood only. But it doesn't.

To carry this analogy further, (Oh, please God, let's not!) in the transportation system, a local bus represents just one bus, while many, perhaps hundreds, of local buses travel at

any given time, serving their respective neighborhoods. We call this a bus system. This would be akin to the “local system” in UB vernacular. Then there is a multimodal system that coordinates various types of transit with each other, such as light rail, trolleys, bike paths, and taxi services. We might refer to this network as the “constellations,” consisting of many UB local systems. Additionally, there are intra-modal systems, like commuter (heavy) rail, which carries people from one city to the suburbs or another town. We could call this the UB “local universe.”

Thus, within the local universe system, all the transit systems serve a local metropolitan area. However, if we consider air terminals that transport people from one metropolitan area to another across the country, we might refer to this as the UB minor sector. Going from one country to another would be akin to the UB major sector. Transitioning from this world into our poorly conceived universe would resemble entering the UB superuniverse. Whew.



Thoughts on our local universe

What are the common elements found in each local universe?

There are many physical elements of local universes that are the same. These include the number of constellations and systems, as well as the maximum number of evolutionary planets within each system; the evolutionary nature of

worlds like ours; and the physical creation of matter and energy patterns. On a creator level, there exists the same creative plan for all inhabitants, along with a timing according to the plan for the creation of subordinate personalities and identities; there is a consistent government structure and relationship to the Father, the First Source and Center; and all will creatures start out the same and progress in the same way.



Gary Tonge

What are the unique or unusual elements of our local universe?

There are unique aspects of our local universe, but some of these are also specific to each local universe. Two of these that are unique to each local universe are that (1) the Creator Son, Michael of Nebadon, is distinctive to this universe. “Our local universe Son is a unique blending and an indissoluble unification of Paradise divinity, planetary humanity, and every stage and level in between.” Each Michael is as unique as ours. Since Michael is at this peak of universe sovereignty, there can be no further rebellions in our universe. This may not necessarily apply to other local universes.

And the creations of Michaels and his consort, the Universe Mother Spirit, are unique to this local universe, just as all other local universes are unique in their creations.

Regarding the unique elements of our local universe, I suspect ours is not the only one that has experienced a devastating rebellion. The other two Nebadon experiences were effectively quelled with much fanfare by Michael during two of his earlier six bestowals. But as Anna Karenina tells us, “Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” This is likely true of rebellions within a local universe. While the absence of rebellion within a local universe allows planets to evolve relatively “normally,” those with rebellions undergo planetary upheavals that impact each individual’s life, and this resulting unhappiness can persist for millennia.

What is essential for any local universe?

We understand that perfecting a local universe requires two fundamental achievements: physical stability and spiritual loyalty.

First, the stars and planets of a local universe must achieve equilibrium; the period of immediate stellar metamorphosis must be complete. Second, there must exist a state of universal spiritual loyalty to the Sovereign Master Son of God who presides over such a universe. A state of harmonious cooperation must have developed between all the individual planets, systems, and constellations of the entire local universe.

While we may have experienced relative stability in the physical realm, we have lacked the same loyalty in the spiritual.

On a positive note, however, one unique thing we had in our local universe was the experience of Michael coming to us as Jesus, leaving behind teachings and a perfect example of how to live a life we all hope to embody one day.



Now why do you suppose that is?

Why don't the Creator Sons and Creative Spirits start from scratch? The place they start is a prepared and energized space site, so they must create within pre-arranged limitations with limited space and energy. Why is this so?

I believe this suggests the need for ultimate equalization of space, force, and matter energies. One would not want a greedy Michaelson to consume more than his fair share of territory.

Why do the Architects of the Master universe allow for so many universes in a superuniverse instead of some other number? First, this is in accordance with the divine purpose and creative plans of superiors. Second, since some of the “descending sons,” such as Melchizedek, are all created at the same time in a “single millennial period of standard time,” it requires 100,000 local universes to keep them fully employed! Third, there are inhabited planets NOT revealed to us that the Melchizedeks have assignments on. Do these also count in the number of planets in a system? It has not been revealed to me.

As I understand it, one concept of a parallel universe is that it runs parallel to ours. Understand? This means that everything happening in both universes—ours and the parallel one—would be identical. Another concept is that other universes thrive alongside ours but exist in different dimensions of space. An example is the work of C. S. Lewis in “The Chronicles of Narnia.” Additionally, there is the hyperspace theory of a parallel universe in science fiction, which allows for faster-than-light travel and serves as a shortcut for interstellar travel. Or how about a technique used in fiction for alternative futures?

The concept has existed since Plato and ancient Hindu mythology; it is even present in the Persian tale of “One

Thousand and One Nights.” H. G. Wells introduced the idea of 4th-dimensional reality in his book, “The Time Machine,” where the concept of parallel universes alters the course of history from one to another.

One of my early favorite books was “Flatland.” Here is what Wikipedia has to say, which perhaps comes closer to understanding dimensions beyond ours: “In 1884, Edwin A. Abbott wrote the seminal novel exploring this concept called Flatland: “A Romance of Many Dimensions. It describes a world of two dimensions inhabited by living squares, triangles, and circles, called Flatland, as well as Pointland (0 dimensions), Lineland (1 dimension), and Spaceland (three dimensions) and finally posits the possibilities of even greater dimensions. Isaac Asimov . . . described Flatland as ‘The best introduction one can find into the manner of perceiving dimensions.’”

Wikipedia has a lot to say about parallel universes in [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallel_universe_\(fiction\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parallel_universe_(fiction)). None of those I looked at align with the concept of multiple local universes, each of which is unique in itself and created by unique Michaels and Mother Spirits.



What does it mean to be a cosmic citizen?

Besides the obvious qualification of having been a graduate of the morontia worlds, including Jerusem. Thus one is a cosmic citizen from the time of moving out from Jerusem into the constellation worlds and beyond.

“To recognize Deity omnipotence is to enjoy security in your experience of cosmic citizenship, to possess assurance of safety in the long journey to Paradise.” (UB118:6.8)

“1. Choosing to respond to divine leading; sincerely basing the human life on the highest consciousness of truth, beauty, and goodness, and then co-ordinating these qualities of divinity through wisdom, worship, faith, and love.

“2. Loving God and desiring to be like him — genuine recognition of the divine fatherhood and loving worship of the heavenly Parent.

“3. Loving man and sincerely desiring to serve him — wholehearted recognition of the brotherhood of man coupled with an intelligent and wise affection for each of your fellow mortals.

*“4. Joyful acceptance of cosmic citizenship — honest recognition of your progressive obligations to the Supreme Being, awareness of the interdependence of evolutionary man and evolving Deity. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty.”
(UB110:3.7-10)*

“The seraphic interpreters of cosmic citizenship guide the new citizens of the system capitals and quicken their appreciation of the responsibilities of universe government. These seraphim are also closely associated with the Material Sons in the system administration, while they portray the responsibility and morality of cosmic

citizenship to the material mortals on the inhabited worlds.”
(UB39:4.9)

The dignity of cosmic citizenship enables an ascendant personality to recognize the three basic mind realities of the cosmos:

“1. The mathematical or logical recognition of the uniformity of physical causation.

“2. The reasoned recognition of the obligation of moral conduct.

“3. The faith-grasp of the fellowship worship of Deity, associated with the loving service of humanity.”
(UB16:8.16-18)



One thousand system planets, along with all of the system's light, life plants, and architectural spheres? That seems like a lot to me.

Each local system in our local universe can have up to 1000 evolutionary, inhabited planets. I assume they are numbered from 1 to 1000; Urantia is number 606. At the time of the Lucifer Rebellion, there were 619 planets registered in our system of Satania. Since then, we have learned that a few more have been added; we don't know how many there are today. We also read that once a planet enters the era of Light and Life, it is no longer on this

registry, or at least, it is no longer counted as part of the 1000.

Here's the first thing that came to mind: silly me. If a planet transitions into Light and Life and then comes off the 1000 mark, it creates space for a brand new planet to arrive and take its place. Wow. Cool, right? Wrong.

If that were the case, no system would ever go into Light and Life as a system, because there would always be new planets coming online, so to speak.

The class of 509,998,985,549,246

This world is our prekindergarten world. After you undertake your life lessons here, you graduate with magna cum laude, or perhaps only cum laude, and move on to the next school (the first morontia world) or higher if you graduated summa cum laude. You continue your life education experiences where you left off, working and playing your way through the mansion worlds, and so it goes until you graduate at a very high level, summa, summa cum laude, no doubt. This is perhaps as far as I would go before the person to whom I was speaking told me I was an idiot.

“Where did you get this #@&*& stuff?” he would ask. From a big blue book, I replied. “Who wrote it?” Well, never mind, I said; besides judging a book by its cover, authorship is the second silliest way to determine whether a book contains

truth or not. If we ever got past this point, he might ask if I really believed anyone talks to us from “beyond” (his word, not mine). Why not? It happens all the time.

Why even Jesus told his Apostles, “Our Father did indeed speak through Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea, but he did not cease to minister words of truth to the world when these prophets of old made an end of their utterances. My Father is no respecter of races or generations in that the word of truth is vouchsafed one age and withheld from another. Commit not the folly of calling that divine which is wholly human, and fail not to discern the words of truth which come not through the traditional oracles of supposed inspiration.” (UB155:6.1) I have been looking for this quote for weeks. I finally found it by listening to Pato Banton’s The Words of Christ CD, where you can find it. (On disk 1, track 7)

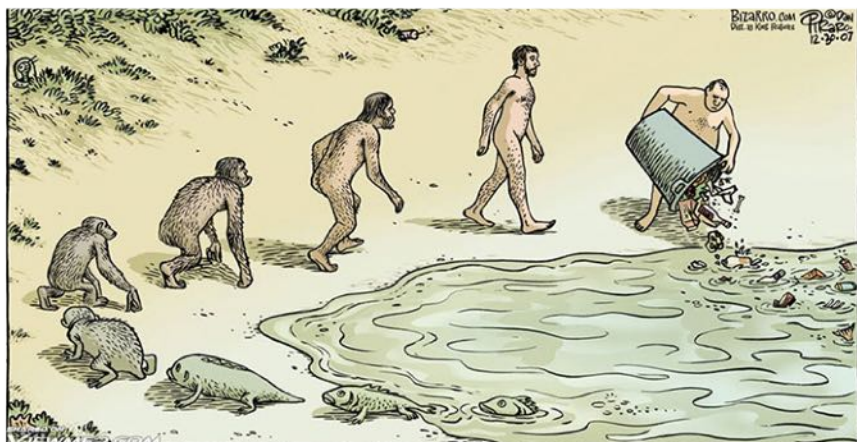
Around this time, he walks away. I forgot he was a Jehovah’s Witness.

C H A P T E R 2 4

Our Planet, Urantia



Evolution



Life Carriers, Physical Controllers, and Adjutant Spirits working together for good

Life Carriers and Physical Controllers and Adjutant Spirits, each contributes interactively with each other for the initiation of life on a planet that has been physically made ready for it. Each as a role to play: Physical Controllers role is to ensure the physical and energy attributes are in place for life to evolve on the planet; Life Carriers provides the initial implantation of life seeds as well as the continuing manipulation (with the Physical Controllers) of the physical environment to best suit the newly evolving life form (up to a point, which time they must cease and become advisors only;

the Adjutant Spirits are the circuit-like entities that are the spark of intelligence in evolving animal life.

“There are, then, three distinct levels of life production and evolution:

“1. The physical-energy domain — mind-capacity production.

“2. The mind ministry of the adjutant spirits — impinging upon spirit capacity.

“3. The spirit endowment of mortal mind — culminating in Thought Adjuster bestowal.

“The mechanical-nonteachable levels of organismal environmental response are the domains of the physical controllers. The adjutant mind-spirits activate and regulate the adaptative or nonmechanical-teachable types of mind — those response mechanisms of organisms capable of learning from experience. And as the spirit adjutants thus manipulate mind potentials, so do the Life Carriers exercise considerable discretionary control over the environmental aspects of evolutionary processes right up to the time of the appearance of human will — the ability to know God and the power of choosing to worship him.

“It is the integrated functioning of the Life Carriers, the physical controllers, and the spirit adjutants that conditions the course of organic evolution on the inhabited worlds. And this is why evolution — on Urantia or elsewhere — is always purposeful and never accidental.” (UB65:0.2-7)



The striving for perfection ... under the circumstances

It appears to me that this “insatiable craving for the attainment of ever-increasing perfection of environmental adjustment...” and so forth operates in all life forms on the planet. From the tiniest microbes and bacteria to plants and animals, each, in their respective life cycles, strives for what they innately seek. Whether through biological imperatives, intuition, or thoughtful action, they do what they can to achieve optimal perfection given their circumstances. This applies as much to the Islamic terrorist as it does to the poorest homeless person on the street, to the wealthiest member of the Koch family, and to the most strident student of *The Urantia Book*.

An example from my world: the land developer who wants to clear the vegetated parcel of land to build hundreds of tract houses is doing it his way, given his circumstances. His planner and architect are doing what they can to assist him, but the idea that they are contributing to another step in architectural perfection, or at least their own checkbooks’ perfection, is based on their circumstances.

The circumstances set the context for the relative perfection achievable through their efforts, including money, knowledge, wisdom, skill, and any artistic abilities they can employ to realize the overall vision of the endeavor.

And while moving on to the mansion worlds may seem like an opportunity to further explore that perfection attainment, remember we pick up at Mansion World number one where we left off here: there is still much to learn.



Into the light, back to the dark, into the light....

It seems there were several differences between these two early humans and even their immediate ancestors. First, they were always upright and moved by walking and running constantly; they climbed trees like bears, unlike apes. Their living space increased threefold compared to their relatives. They had appreciation and admiration for other objects and beings, as well as considerable vanity.

Of the second order,

“... [T]he most remarkable advance in emotional development was the sudden appearance of a new group of real human feelings, the worshipful group, embracing awe, reverence, humility, and even a primitive form of gratitude. Fear, joined with ignorance of natural phenomena, is about to give birth to primitive religion.” (UB62:5.4)

And with these new feelings came the most significant difference, which was the initiation of the sixth, followed by the seventh, adjutant spirits of worship and wisdom. At some point, before they left their families to strike out on their

own, they made a decision (it must have been a moral one, although the book is silent on that point) that was the factor of causation for the coming of the last two adjutant spirits.

“When about nine years of age, they journeyed off down the river one bright day and held a momentous conference. . . . On this eventful day they arrived at an understanding to live with and for each other, and this was the first of a series of such agreements which finally culminated in the decision to flee from their inferior animal associates and to journey northward, little knowing that they were thus to found the human race.” (UB62:5.8)

The joinder of adjutant spirits is the one event alone that distinguishes human beings from all previous versions of pre-human animals. This event was the catalyst for the coming of their Thought Adjusters. And within a short time, Urantia was finally recognized as an inhabited world. (Notice, a planet is not recognized as such until the first true human beings have arrived, so to speak. All of the other inhabitants don’t count apparently.)

Today, I suspect we are quite different from what Anton and Fonda were in those days. There are likely some advanced cerebral and muscular developments today compared to then, and we have continued to evolve as needed (think teeth and appendix). Additionally, we have improved in mental acuity. While we think of our culture as the main driver of advancements, we must remember that our culture isn’t something we automatically enjoy. It is purely social, and

each person born into this world must learn about it through instruction and experience. (Soapbox time!)”

“Civilization is a racial acquirement; it is not biologically inherent; hence must all children be reared in an environment of culture, while each succeeding generation of youth must receive anew its education. The superior qualities of civilization — scientific, philosophic, and religious — are not transmitted from one generation to another by direct inheritance. These cultural achievements are preserved only by the enlightened conservation of social inheritance.” (UB68:o.2)

In 2004, Jane Jacobs, one of the great “prophets” of our time, wrote a small but significant book, *Dark Age Ahead*. She begins by discussing culture, any culture. As *The Urantia Book* noted above, culture can be a fragile thing. We lose aspects of our culture daily and replace them with others. Once these lost aspects are gone, they can be permanently erased from memory as well as daily experience. We believe we have culture because we have the internet, television, movies, and now video games and iPhones—all of which we think give permanence to our culture. However, culture is not defined by these things. A dynamic, living culture is one that is experienced daily and passed on to succeeding generations through word of mouth and example. It is for this reason that Ms. Jacobs sees our society moving into a “dark age,” similar to others that our civilization has encountered over the last 2000 years. Once it is gone, it can never be reconstructed.

(In this regard, I am reminded by the UB that a biologist can never reconstruct life by examining a dissected frog or piecing together strands of DNA.)

To make her point, Ms. Jacobs emphasizes what she calls the failure of our six pillars of culture: communities and families rigged to fail; higher education versus credentialing, where the degree is more important than the learning; the abandonment of science (what global warming?); the dumbing down of taxes and governmental powers, which are no longer in touch with reality; and the lack of self-policing in the learned professions. As with all of Jane Jacobs' books, this being her last, they are all worth reading.

As for our long-term future, I believe we will navigate through these dark ages and progress into the eras of Light and Life. I think it is quite a ways off, but not 100,000 years. I have every confidence that we can achieve it. However, we need to be more thoughtful and wiser, which means being more educated in our culture as well as in our schools, more considerate and compassionate, more accepting and less materialistic, more like Jesus and less like Congress. We need humor—much more humor. I doubt it will take 100,000 years for us to transition into Light and Life. By that time, we should at least be in the sixth stage of Light and Life. Therefore, I suspect we would not recognize our world. So much will be lost, both the good and the bad, and we will have many good things to replace what is lost.



What's this about an acid trip?

So where did the amino acids originally come from? What gave them life? If they originated from some other place, that is, “created” on some other world, why not here?

As the evolution of our universe began with a “big bang,” the only prevalent theory to explain the unexplainable—a moment of massive creation—so too does the evolution of life begin with a similar creation at its source—creationism at work and play.

So why not here? But if that's the case, what was the first cause? (I'm sort of implying the first cause was the successful implantation of life on the planet, but my friend doesn't need to know that yet.)

See, by the time you consider this perspective, you might as well begin with creation first. Then, based on all that is needed to make it successful, why not consider creation from a divine source rather than mere accident? (Then evolution takes over, but not so much the Charles Darwin version, more like the ideas of that other guy, Alfred Wallace. PS, I love the many “suddenly a new species” or such comes about in the UB.)

I mentioned this question to our UB study group yesterday, and one member, David Jennings, offered this analogy: it's sort of like monkeys writing the complete works of

Shakespeare. Those who believe that life comes into being and evolves by chance might suggest that a massive windstorm—note: this is NOT the breath of God we’re discussing, but perhaps a hurricane—blows through a vast junkyard, picking up pieces and parts here and there. After much swirling activity, maybe for millions of years, a completed 747 jetliner stands tall.

Would you prefer to take a flight on that one or the one made by Boeing? (Well, maybe not Boeing....)

Now we may be ready to move on to what really happened, you think?”

Rebellion!





Why me? Oh, why me?

We hear a lot from Urantia Book readers about today's troubles being the result of the Caligastia betrayal: greed, envy—well, all the seven sins perhaps and then some. We have been told in *The Urantia Book* what life is like on another planet (one not impacted by the Lucifer Rebellion); we can compare our world today with that other world. We can also imagine what our world would be like if we had NOT experienced the Caligastia betrayal. (Just don't count on Hollywood's imagination, where Armageddon sells the most tickets.)

But is this realistic? Even on a non-betrayal planet, there is still evolutionary ignorance, evil, sin, and iniquity to confront. They might be on a smaller scale, but perhaps not—just different.

I don't believe many of today's wills would be missing. We would still face corruption and greed, as some feel they must get ahead of others; there would be crime and disease, poverty and inequality; and environmental disasters to deal with, whether natural or man-made.

Absent a Caligastia betrayal, we would still not yet be perfect; we have our ignorances, our stupidities, and we lack knowledge and wisdom in many areas. Yes, we might still have our original Planetary Prince, and Adam and Eve would continue to be with us (unless....). But we did have and do

have Jesus/Michael as our current Planetary Prince. Won't he do?

“Yes, I am personally affected. Great, isn't it?

Should our local river rulers have intervened sooner to stop the Lucifer rebellion and Prince Caligastia? It is what it is. Speculation would be pointless.

Viewed from another perspective, it would be akin to having our leaders intervene and resolve the chaos we face today. We understand that this is NOT how the universe was intended to operate. Time and again, we are reminded that our celestial partners and others are here to assist us, but it is our responsibility to take on the work that must be accomplished.

As I was reading about the Melchizedeks, I came across this:

“Recent rulings handed down from the Most Highs of Edentia, and later confirmed by the Ancients of Days of Uversa, strongly suggest that this bestowal Melchizedek is destined to take the place of the fallen Planetary Prince, Caligastia. If our conjectures in this respect are correct, it is possible that Machiventa Melchizedek may again appear in person on Urantia and, in some modified manner, resume the role of the dethroned Planetary Prince, or else appear on Earth to function as vicegerent Planetary Prince representing Christ Michael, who now actually holds the title of Planetary Prince of Urantia. While it is far from clear to us what Machiventa's destiny may be, events that have recently taken

place strongly suggest that the foregoing conjectures are probably not far from the truth.

“...is there a possibility that an unexpected and unprecedented event is to take place, the sometime return to the planet of Adam and Eve or certain of their progeny as representatives of Michael with the titles vicegerents of the second Adam of Urantia?

“And all these speculations associated with the certainty of future appearances of both Magisterial and Trinity Teacher Sons, in conjunction with the explicit promise of the Creator Son to return sometime, make Urantia a planet of future uncertainty and render it one of the most interesting and intriguing spheres in all the universe of Nebadon.”
(UB93:10.6-8)

It had not occurred to me before, while reading this paper, that there are or may be other opportunities for celestial guidance in a more hands-on approach that may be forthcoming, as the authors speculate. I interpret these words as representing future potentials. If nothing else, Melchizedek seems to promise us an interesting time on our little world. We can observe the Sea of Glass Jumbotron.



How long will you wait?

“How long will you wait before you take what belongs to you? ... Many among you walk the path of spirituality in

a tentative and dubious way. It is time for you to jump with both feet into the adventure of being the best you can aspire to be. ... So few among you dedicate [your] lives to the pursuit of perfection that it has become normal to doubt this is a valuable enterprise in a human life. ... How can you take the kingdom of heaven by spiritual assault, as the Master proposed long ago? Get rid of once and for all those reservations you hold in your mind.” – a Thought Adjuster.

The above is in line from the fourth illustration of human philosophy found in Section 7 (*Morontia Mota*) in Paper 48: “Few mortals ever dare to draw anything like the sum of personality credits established by the combined ministries of nature and grace. The majority of impoverished souls are truly rich, but they refuse to believe it.” But it also applies to the second one as well: “Few persons live up to the faith which they really have. Unreasoned fear is a master intellectual fraud practiced upon the evolving mortal soul.”

Next, reference number 14: “*Whet the appetites of your associates for truth; give advice only when it is asked for.*” It is one thing to drop fragments of UB truthiness into conversations, but quite another to wait for “*when it is asked for.*” The prevailing theme—more of a requirement, really—is to “**ask.**” Asking seems to be one of the fundamental laws of the cosmos. Jesus repeatedly told us to ask, to seek, to knock. Without doing so, one cannot be answered, find, or have it opened unto us. I always look out for when the UB speaks of asking; it occurs quite frequently. When we can remember to ask our spiritual parents, we are moving in the right direction. Perhaps we can remember to ask our brothers and

sisters in ways that uplift them. Don't expect an answer; you are merely planting a seed—"whetting their appetites."

A few years ago, I had another thought that I added to the lists on mortal philosophy: "Don't let your mind be confused by your thoughts."



What to do? Oh, what to do?

If we examine the situation of our world today from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, we would find it necessary to categorize our present civilizations into at least three or more groups. One group we might label as the modern world (or First World countries), which emerged from Western Civilization alongside other cultures that evolved concurrently under similar influences. This group encompasses all contemporary cultures in the western hemisphere, historic and modern western and eastern European cultures, traditional and modern Far Eastern cultures, most historical Middle Eastern cultures, a few contemporary African cultures, and all the various transplants from these cultures. What remains outside this classification is referred to as "Third World countries," which represents the second category of civilizations. The third category includes some areas of the world that do not quite meet Third World standards, including regions in Africa and beyond.

But when examining the different epochs listed in paper 50, we can see that First and Third World countries have completed the “nutrition epoch,” while those out outside of those cultures are still in the midst of it. As for the “security age,” First World countries have passed through that stage, but others, including many Third World countries, are still in it. Regarding the third age, the “material-comfort era,” First World nations are right in the middle of it. I believe there is a split in the “First World” perspectives; some aspects of society have progressed into the fourth, or ‘quest for knowledge and wisdom,” and the fifth, the “epoch of philosophy and brotherhood,” while most of the rest of society has not. Our technological and scientific pursuits have led many into these new eras of life. With the exception of a small number of people on the planet who embrace every epoch, age, and era, few, it seems, show any evidence of interest in genuine spiritual striving.

Where do we find ourselves in the continuum of planetary mortal epochs? While the UB says that the “primitive man” stage is usually around 100,000 years long, ours seems to be five times that. Hmmm. And while we like to think we are beyond this epoch—speaking as a whole—we still carry a lot of primitive superstitions with us; when you examine them closely, it's quite a bit. But my question is, do all fandors go extinct in this epoch?

Now, regarding the second epoch, “Post-Planetary Prince epoch,” something went awry. If “post” means “after,” then we should be well into other epochs by now, but we were short-circuited twice. If the first 300,000 years of our

planetary-prince epoch went smoothly—and I suspect it did not, considering what happened next—then with the rebellion and betrayal of our Planetary Prince, our world was pushed back almost to the beginning. By the end of this epoch, we should have had a lot of positive advancements under our belts, such as sex equality and the weeding out of degenerate and defective strains, like my nephew Bubba Bob, and so on.

The third epoch arrives with the successful arrival and implementation of the Material Sons, the “Post-Material Son epoch.” Now, the arrival of Adam and Eve was not supposed to happen before we, as beings, had completed our biological course. But had we? And, due to default, again!, we are far short of the uplifting biological material that those violet race folks were to have given us. As a result, there are not a lot of “brotherhood of man” feelings circulating. The truth regarding our place, as a world and a people, in the universe administration did not survive. World peace, not yet. All of it suggests there was not, yet, a time for the next big event, the arrival of the Magisterial Son Man, so we could move into the next epoch, the “Post-Magisterial Son Man.” So he didn’t show up.

Instead, we had a guest appearance: Machiventa Melchizedek. His role was to prepare the way for the next event, the arrival of Michael of Nebadon as Joshua ben Joseph. This event marked the beginning of the next epoch, the “Post-Bestowal Son Man.” By this time, our world should have achieved the “highest intellectual development and ethical attainment;” still, we don’t today. The highest educational culture? Spiritually-trained race? Worldwide

pursuit of moral, cultural, and spiritual truth? No more wars? Nope, nope, nope, and nope. We should be ready to assimilate the teachings of the Bestowal Son and appreciate the revelations up to the Superuniverse levels. Ah, now we are getting somewhere.



What to do, oh, what to do? I believe it is being done. Whether we know it or not, the game is afoot. This UB was not given to us merely to read and intellectually enjoy. It is, to me, the textbook — and a very sacred one — that as we review it over and over, we begin to understand how this

universe works. We may not currently know what is happening right under our noses, but I can bet there is a lot. It cannot have all stopped with the publication of the UB. This was just the beginning! Or perhaps the beginning occurred long before the book was published. Yes, the game is afoot, and each and every one of us has a role to play. No one gets left out.

What should we do? Consider this: take each item mentioned in section 6, paragraphs 3 through 7, and apply them to yourselves. By taking this action, the world becomes transformed. However, remember, we are in this world but NOT of it. That is our intent, isn't it?

“The destiny of eternity is determined moment by by the achievements of the day by day living. The acts of today are the destiny of tomorrow.”

And *“The act is ours; the consequences God’s.”*



You ain't seen nothin' yet

I am extremely optimistic about the nature of our world, blah, blah. While it does have its share of issues that will need to be dealt with over time, we certainly have all the power of the universe behind us to do so. And *The Urantia Book*, like Michael's sojourn on our planet, was one of the first steps toward straightening out this mess. But it is only a beginning step. You ain't seen nothin' yet.

I believe there are forces at work, hidden from most of us, to help us get our house in order. We do see some results of these efforts in the increasing spiritual openness among many individuals and groups; greater exposure of corruption in government (surprise!) and corporate entities; and rising unrest in parts of the world where slavery, rigid customs, and the treatment of women are being challenged. Forces for change are afoot.

All in all, I think we are living in an exciting time, and it will get better. Perhaps not without great upheaval first, but that may need to happen before we can truly move ahead toward Light and Life.



Life on a Planet in the First Stage of Light and Life

First, what do those folks look like? (Why do we always jump to the “cover of the book” theory of judgment?) Well, they resemble us quite a bit. Humanoid, with all the attributes of such. They seem to be in better shape than we are—no obesity or other visible deformities. They appear fairly tall and statuesque, mostly handsome. There are still a lot of cultural varieties of beautiful people, just as we have here and now. The middle-aged ones are really over 100 years old, as life expectancy is higher than ours. And there does not seem to be much evidence of disease. (I have seen

this guy, a Dr. McCoy, use a pencil-shaped object to cure all manner of illnesses.)

The population has remained stable for many centuries. They once learned this lesson the hard way, as we will one of these days.

How do they behave? They all appear well-intentioned, kind, and courteous; also loving and devoted to the highest good. They hug often as well. They understand that their focus on the highest good for their society and world reflects back to them many-fold.

Whatever cultural differences there are—and there are many of them, they, too, had many nations that grew up together—they respect and enjoy the many cultural heritages, including music, dance, painting, and other art forms. Even architecture has carried its unique cultural forms over into the mainstream. Though their primary—what we might call “official”—language is standardized, other languages are still respected.

What does a day, a year, or even a life look like? Education is viewed as a lifelong adventure, rather than how we typically experience it here. It is accessible to all: classical and technical learning go hand-in-hand with life studies of the cosmos. Most vocational education has disappeared due to advancements in computerized robotics. However, work, or what we typically consider work, requires very little time during the day, which is primarily filled with more learning,

leisure, contemplation, and stillness meditation; not to mention spending time with family and friends.

A significant amount of time is spent in nature, visiting museums and galleries, and observing what is occurring in other worlds, since these individuals were never disconnected from the rest of the cosmos by rebellion. Naturally, the ability to observe these events reinforces the entire concept and reality of God our Father being active in their lives, along with the Spirit of Truth and the universe's Mother Spirit. The occasional supercharged and pyrotechnic displays from the Material Sons and Daughters, and sometimes from those of the Planetary Prince, offer additional contact with the cosmos and insights into the fathomless depths of the universes. Many citizens openly commune with their thought adjusters numerous times a day.

Sure, there still exists TV of a sort, although it is far more advanced than what we have here, as it is truly multidimensional, incorporating smell, feeling, and taste. The iPhone became very popular once Apple acquired the rights to distribute it in this part of the local universe. However, now the iPhone is not even a device as we know it; it is incredibly tiny and connects directly to the mind. Additionally, much time is spent traveling to various parts of the world for pleasure; business trips are unnecessary. While each country has its own borders, there are no restrictions on travelers coming and going, similar to traveling from one town to another.

However, shopping is still seen as a pleasurable experience, as all shops, offices, residences, and other facilities are just a short stroll away.

I mentioned nature, where a lot of time is spent. I should say first that this world no longer has pollution. It did have some, but not like Urantia. One of the first things that got cleaned up was the land use policies. Once land use policies become sensible, the need for massive utilities, power stations, and roadways is greatly reduced. Plus, they have discovered a source of energy that we have yet to find.

Now, most citizens live in mixed-use cities and towns with higher densities, small blocks, and numerous pathways (known on Urantia as streets, walks, mews, alleys, and so on), encompassing a range of building ages, as history is also significant, even the history of a building. The advantages are substantial in that everyone walks or bikes everywhere, or, if necessary, hops on the free trolley, light rail buses, or one of the many readily available AGPPs (anti-gravity pods, personal).

As a result, most people know each other. The funny thing is, each block has a sort of "mayor"—a shopkeeper who observes and understands everything happening in the neighborhood. With all the mixed uses, the floors above the shops accommodate most of the residences. Talk about having “eyes on the street.” Sure, some kids still relish the idea of taking a joyride on someone else’s tricycle, but, hey, they’re just kids; they have the same issue with undeveloped frontal lobes.

What once were suburbs, as we know them, were eventually cleared out, and the land returned to nature. Estuaries increased, and fisheries thrived. Many people are vegetarians, but most are still omnivores. The meat consumed comes from the remarkable farms they call “Poly Farms,” which can grow all manner of free-range and grass-fed livestock, as well as the vegetables that sustain the food industry and feed the livestock. Animals are no longer raised for slaughter; they, too, can enjoy a high quality of life before returning to the cosmic life-force energy streams. We have only a few of these “poly farms” on Urantia, but more are on the way.

All sea mammals are protected and abundant. The fandors have been reintroduced to the planet, just as black bears and elephants have been from our world. In fact, this planet is home to many of our mammalian, avian, and other creatures. It may seem odd that they allow “exotics” – that is, non-native species – to thrive on their world, but they are not so concerned about the mixing of different life forms on other planets, as they learned long ago that, like humans, diversity can be enriching.

How about religion? Most people follow the teachings of the Melchizedeks. (You’d be surprised at how much of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* and Jesus they already comprehend; or perhaps you would not be surprised.) Some customary, ritualized religious services are ongoing, but they do not detract from the main ideas. These practices are

remnants of earlier, more primitive religions, but they are so beautiful to witness that they continue to be performed.

Economically, there is full employment due to a balanced population. Most people work in the service industries and enjoy serving others. Commerce and trade are free and unrestricted across the globe. There is a single currency worldwide, which no longer needs to be asset-based because the planet shares all resources equally and ensures they are sustainable. International disputes are settled by international courts.

Governments are small and involve the grassroots level. Most people exhibit self-control, indicating there is little need for the vast number of laws we have on Urantia. However, where laws are necessary, law enforcement officials of the highest integrity will be present, as are all government officials. Leaders are chosen from the most intelligent yet sensible individuals the planet has produced, each possessing high integrity and the motivation to serve the best interests of all.

In the early days, lobbyists were taken out and shot. Just kidding. Maybe.

The Default



I forgot. My bad. I'm sorry.

Regarding the default of Adam and Eve, do I think Adam and Eve committed evil? Consider the nature of their oath, the reasons for their actions, and the consequences of their actions. What do you think of their punishment? Was it fair? What does their treatment tell you about the mercy and forgiveness of our Creator Son and his universe government?

As evil is defined in *The Urantia Book*, it is either ignorance (“I didn’t know or understand—even though I should have

known or failed to remember") or error ("Holy crap! I screwed up this time!"), they certainly did commit evil. The type of evil could fall into either the ignorance or error category, but we don't know exactly what they knew or when they knew it. We were told that they had been warned by Solonia, that pesky "voice in the garden," a couple of times about what the program was, and that any deviation from it would be considered a default of their mission. Even with their good intentions (you know, the road to hell is paved with them) and the fact that Eve was really misled and likely lied to (not unlike "you can keep your own doctor"), it was still a default—they had "... *transgressed the Garden covenant; that they had disobeyed the instructions of the Melchizedeks; that they had defaulted in the execution of their oaths of trust to the sovereign of the universe.*" (UB75:4.2)

And it gets worse: "*Eve had consented to participate in the practice of good and evil. Good is the carrying out of the divine plans; sin is a deliberate transgression of the divine will; evil is the misadaptation of plans and the maladjustment of techniques resulting in universal disharmony and planetary confusion.*"

"*Every time the Garden pair had partaken of the fruit of the tree of life, they had been warned by the archangel custodian to refrain from yielding to the suggestions of Caligastia to combine good and evil. They had been thus admonished: 'In the day that you commingle good and evil, you shall surely become as the mortals of the realm; you shall surely die.'*"

“Eve had told Cano of this oft-repeated warning on the fateful occasion of their secret meeting, but Cano, not knowing the import or significance of such admonitions...” (“No biggie. What are they going to do, kill you?”), *“...had assured her that men and women with good motives and true intentions could do no evil; that she should surely not die but rather live anew in the person of their offspring, who would grow up to bless and stabilize the world.*

“Even though this project of modifying the divine plan had been conceived and executed with entire sincerity and with only the highest motives concerning the welfare of the world, it constituted evil because it represented the wrong way to achieve righteous ends, because it departed from the right way, the divine plan.” (UB75:4.3-8)

So we see this was not just some simple, “oops, I forgot” kind of affair. It was, perhaps, the biggest affair the planet has ever experienced!

Their “punishment” was foretold. Did they think the powers that be were just kidding around? And, as usual, the kids bear the brunt of the punishment. Whatever will become of those youngsters sitting around Edentia?

But alas, mercy prevailed. *“When all is summed up, Adam and Eve made a mighty contribution to the speedy civilization and accelerated biologic progress of the human race. They left a great culture on earth, but it was not possible for such an advanced civilization to survive in the*

face of the early dilution and the eventual submergence of the Adamic inheritance. It is the people who make a civilization; civilization does not make the people.”

(UB76:6.4) They now sit in Satania on the council of the four and twenty elders.

“All’s well that ends well.”



The Third Epochal Revelation - Machiventa Melchizedek: the Sage of Salem

“*It was 1,973 years before the birth of Jesus that Machiventa was bestowed upon the human races of Urantia. ... He was first observed by mortal man on that eventful day when he entered the tent of Amdon, a Chaldean herder of Sumerian extraction. And the proclamation of his mission was embodied in the simple statement which he made to this shepherd, 'I am Melchizedek, priest of El Elyon, the Most High, the one and only God.'***”**
(UB93:2.1)



Machiventa Melchizedek is part of an order of sonships created by Michael and Nebadonia. This order is typically viewed as an “emergency” order, responsible for taking urgent action on troubled planets—specifically, those experiencing spiritual rather than physical or material issues. Additionally, they manage most, if not all, of the teaching programs in our universe.

The combined teaching and emergency corps focus makes them the ideal candidates for visiting troubled planets and helping to set the course of spiritual uplifting back on track.

This “Sage of Salem,” aka the “priest of El Elyon,” aka the “sheik,” or “king” of Salem” was Machiventa Melchizedek himself. He and his 11 cohorts, the light of spirit seemed to be dimming on this dim-bulb planet. After some missteps, Machiventa Melchizedek decided to volunteer to come down and help the planet. He arrived—like “poof”—in 1980 BC.

After a 94-year run, he managed to establish and spread the Salem school of priesthood, which was patterned after the Sethite priesthood schools of the second garden and subsequently traveled around the world, impacting and uplifting existing religious thought. He created the “Salem Oath” for the people, which included seven commandments—curiously very similar to Moses’ ten commandments.

Hmmm. Maybe it’s not such a coincidence after all.

Melchizedek lived with the Katro family for over thirty years; later, a descendant of that family brought forth Moses. We saw the movie.

Melchizedek convinced Abram to change his ways and stop beating up on the neighbors. Melchizedek set up a deal between Abram and God that “...whereby God agrees to do everything; man only agrees to believe God’s promises and follow his instructions. Heretofore it had been believed that salvation could be secured only by works — sacrifices and offerings; now, Melchizedek again brought to Urantia the good news that salvation, favor with God, is to be had by faith.” (UB93:6.4) But even this was too much for the people of those times—not unlike today, it seems. With the covenant in place, Abram rebranded himself as Abraham and, in the process, made circumcision a religious ritual. For God’s sake, why? Today, Abraham is seen as the father of the three religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, while Melchizedek appears as little more than a couple of footnotes in the Bible.

Melchizedek discouraged sacrifices and replaced them with bread and wine as the sacrament. Today, it consists of crackers and some type of fruit juice.

In 1906 BC, Machiventa Melchizedek left the building, never to be seen on our planet again. But just wait.



Summarizing the core teachings of Melchizedek

The foundational teachings of Melchizedek can be summarized as follows:

1. Eternal salvation can be achieved by faith alone;
2. The “One God” concept, but Melchizedek could not take the idea all the way to the Universal Father and instead stopped at the notion of El Elyon, the Most High, as the God of worship at that time;
3. To some of his more intelligent students, additional teachings were provided (similar to how Jesus approached his teaching of the Apostles versus the disciples and other followers). Melchizedek patterned his teachings after the earlier Sethite priests of the second garden.

The teachings of Melchizedek, as carried forth by the Salem missionaries in spreading the good news of the truth of their existence, faced many of the same obstacles that this truth encounters even today among most of the Christian world and in many other religions as well. And that truth is: Faith alone is sufficient to win eternal salvation. The masses of religious believers—and still most today—believe that something else must be done to win God’s favor: ceremonies and rituals, sacrifices and suffering, accompanied by a plethora of priesthood hierarchy. “They could not grasp the idea of getting something for nothing.” (UB93:4.5) (On the

other hand, this is drilled into us still, and not just in religion!)

Most people believed they were committed to the idea that they are born under “forfeiture to the gods” and must be redeemed through some form of sacrifice—circumcision being a significant one. Today, in our Christian faith, we are also taught that we are born in sin and must be redeemed through “baptism by water”—unless you belong to one of the “new thought” religious schools where “baptism by spirit” prevails.

Isn't it interesting how little we have evolved with religion compared to science, technology, and concerns for the rights of others? We're stuck not only with a 1,600-year-old notion of what constitutes a sacred book but also with a 3800—no, even older—concept of what we still believe God is. Who does that make sense to?

Why are we so afraid of change? As children, we welcomed change constantly. Otherwise, we would still be crawling. Even crawling was an advancement from what came before: rolling over! As adults, we understand that we must adapt to the times. If nothing else, our aging demands it. Anyone with a business knows that change is linked to survival; to refuse change is to risk extinction. Perhaps this resistance to change arises from the belief that the government should leave us alone and not alter anything. I suppose the only people who disagree with that are those in government; otherwise, why would Congress enact 40,000 new laws? Maybe this fear of change is tied to the fear of death. Somehow, we've gotten it

all backwards. Resurrection is a form of change, and all life cycles through this process. Why can't we recognize how it relates to our own lives?

Footnote: 40,000 new laws enacted in 2014 is from CNN. And yet it was "... the least productive year for Congress in history...."



Techniques used by the Salem teachers for spreading the Melchizedek teachings.

The Melchizedek teachings spread throughout the Orient by the missionaries of his gospel, who took it across the lands, attempting to teach many of the tribes and their leaders as they went. This process was very similar to the Dalamantia and Edenic approaches—and let's not forget Jesus sending out the Apostles, sometimes with disciples, two-by-two—to reach the more intelligent and leadership of the various tribes they encountered. It was hoped that it would be through these tribal leaders that the teaching would continue to spread.

Another technique used by the Salem teachers was having a believer commit to memory (or mark on a clay tablet rolls of the church) three rules: the believer's belief in El Elyon, the only Universal Father and Creator of all things; the acceptance of the Melchizedek covenant with the Most High, which would bestow the favor of God on the believer's faith without sacrifices or offerings; and the believer's promise to

obey the seven commandments of Melchizedek and to spread this “good news” of the covenant to everyone.

The seven commandments closely resembled those from the days of Dalamantia and the two gardens. These were negative commandments, unlike Jesus’s approach, and began with “you shall not.” The “shall nots” included: serving any God but the Most High, doubting that faith is the only requirement for eternal salvation, bearing false witness, killing, stealing, committing adultery, and showing disrespect for parents and elders. (UB93:4.10)

I hesitate to call all of the seven commandments “truth.” While they are very profound statements of human—even cosmic—concepts of morals and ethical behavior, even these concepts are probably subject to partiality of truth. For example, I read in some version of commentary that “you shall not kill” was originally written as “you shall not murder.” Whether this is true or not, it has an element of truthiness in it. There is certainly a large distinction between killing and murder, and it causes one to pause and consider its ramifications. For instance, is this commandment—as well as the others—aimed at individuals or whole societal constructs? Even Jesus, while telling us to judge not as individuals, did go on to say that a society has every right to promulgate its own laws for the safeguarding of its citizens. Killing for the sake of self-defense or protection of a nation has been the custom for thousands of years, just as it is today. While stealing, for instance, and some of the other commandments are more clear-cut to our minds, I wonder

what they might have meant to the minds of earlier times.
Just pondering....



As modern-day missionaries, how can we best utilize this knowledge (about the successes and mishaps of the Salem missionaries)?

Few people want to have any religious viewpoints trust upon them. I don't know if that has always been true but it seems to be so today. And those that do the thirsting are often made fun of. A familiar example includes Jehovah Witnesses; others I am certain but cannot think of them at this time. Maybe some help here?

This is not the day of the Salem missionaries; this is the day of the Facebook and Twitter missionaries. Perhaps there is another angle to explore. Let's take a look at a recent resurgent interest in a contemporary religion.

The musical The Book of Mormon, which has received positive reviews from both non-Mormons and Mormons, is based on the premise of a story about missionary zeal. In this case, though, the concept of a musical centered on the Mormon religious missionary efforts in Africa, while satirical and containing some obscenities, has garnered mostly supportive reactions from the Mormon church membership. Why? Because it reflects an idea of what the church

represents, and that idea is now spreading across much of the world, including Africa, due to the storytelling approach. In this case, there can be no such thing as bad publicity! Parts of the world that were once unwelcoming to Mormon missions are now much more receptive to them as a result of the show. Amazing, isn't it?

Does this suggest an possible scenario for...—get ready for it!— Ta-da! *The Urantia Book—The Musical?* Or *The Book of Urantia—The Musical*. Perhaps. Just think about it. The entire book could be presented in such a way that would be entertaining—it's a musical, right?—and at the same time introduce folks to the mostly new concepts that underlie *The Urantia Book's* basis as a worthy work of theologic, philosophic, and scientific theory—or at least speculation—that could result in all kinds of interest being given it, and touching millions of lives that it might never touch in this day and age. I don't believe it would take much consideration by newly interested readers to start to capture the attention of huge numbers to pick it up and give it a shot. And for those that still don't want to take it as it is given, it can still be great science fiction for them. The seed will have been planted.

I think this could be done without doing damage to the basic underpinnings of Bible fundamentals as advocated by its evangelist. Nor damage to the much scientific evidence that embraces our world's secular beliefs. After all, so much of *The Urantia Book* embraces “creationism” theory as well as evolutionary theory—it is a both/and world, is it not? And while our current religious belief systems seem to be stuck in

a many thousands year old dogma and our science seems to want to change its mind every few decades, there can be room for expansion of both. This new musical could be the catalyst for opening up discussions in both arenas, thus prompting new explorations by both sides about what is the true nature of religion and science and their roles in today's society.

Urantia Today



“I fairly sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm.”

— Charles Fillmore

We agondoters are named such because we live in faith of knowing God as our Father and is ever-present. Not only ever-present but actually within us, as a part of us, IF we accept it, this idea. It is up to us to know, to ask, to knock, to seek, and accept to the extent that we can, this knowledge

of who and what we are. And furthermore, that we are indwelt with not only a fragment of God, our Thought Adjuster, but also the Spirit of Truth, the seven adjutant spirits of the Mother Spirit, and her spirit presence well call the Holy Spirit. This does not mention the existent others that surround us daily and are available to assist us: midwayers, angels, and other celestial beings (revealed in the UB and unrevealed!). Now with all that assist, how can we fail?

Now, how much faith does it take to accept any one of these incredible things? After all, in our daily lives we accept, on faith, all kinds of things that we cannot see: the real value of our money, the integrity of our leadership, that “natural” products are natural, that cancer will be cured within our lifetimes, that we live in a democracy, that the Federal Reserve was a good idea, that knocking on wood is a really good idea; that red meat, imitation sugars, carbohydrates, food colorings, preservatives, milk, are good for you, until they weren’t. Or are they again?

In fact, it seems to me that believing, in faith, the very things Jesus believed is the only sensible choice and the “smart” one. Perhaps this idea wouldn’t be in my mind if it weren’t for the UB. But then again, I came to the UB because of all the other stuff that didn’t make sense. In the UB, I found the most reasonable and emotional, the most ethical and morally perfect truth that I have accepted as my scripture, my sacred book. It has indeed changed the way I live my life. I can see it in a much greater context, knowing all is well on earth as it is in heaven.

And when I reflect on what it means to live in faith as we are, as Jesus did, I, too, experience the tremendous thrill of living, knowing I am in His very presence. Not only is He within me, but so is the very Kingdom of Heaven. “I fairly sizzle with zeal and enthusiasm” in my understanding and faith of what lies ahead.



“OMG! The sky is falling, the sky is falling”

– *Chicken Little*

Yes, our current civilization faces threats from various missteps taken by humanity due to ignorance and folly. This doesn't diminish the remarkable progress that today's civilization has achieved over the last several hundred, if not thousands, of years. However, we now find ourselves at a juncture where much is at risk. Our civilization – and I mean the pinnacle of our civilization; not including the more moderate cultures of third-world countries that currently still “struggle to climb onto the higher and envied levels with the benefits of advanced civilization” – is currently endangered, in the worst-case scenario, by potential species extinction (though some Urantia readers assert that once a mortal race manifests on a world, it will always be saved, somehow), overpopulation, the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, and the precarious state of environmental degradation, to name a few. But let's not delve into that today.

However, there are also sinister dangers lurking in our culture that could lead to the destruction of our current civilization. A civilization is made up of culture, and culture is not an automatic condition of any age. For instance, it never develops under conditions of poverty. This alone portends a time of cultural upheaval and reversal as the inequities within the population grow wider, resulting in increased poverty and near-poverty for most of the planet's inhabitants.

To understand how fragile culture is, recall that our history of occupying this world goes back 500,000 years. During that time, incredible civilizations and cultures grew, flourished, and then declined. Yet what evidence do we have of any of them besides the few that archeologists have identified, which go back no further than a few thousand years? I am reminded of many great cities in the holy lands, places such as Caesarea Philippi, a huge, thriving metropolis from less than 2000 years ago where Jesus spent much time. Today, all that remains are a few mostly hidden and buried ruins and caves in that beautiful setting at the source of the Jordan River. Lost cultures! The losses stem not so much from failing buildings due to earthquakes or inadequate water for crops, but from lapses in the more intangible cultural treasures that constitute a civilization. Not so much the treasure of the Kingdom of Heaven as the treasures of the home and heart.

Even in North America, "...we live in a graveyard of lost aboriginal cultures, many of which were decisively finished

off by mass amnesia in which even the memory of what was lost was also lost.” (Jane Jacobs)

In *Dark Ages Ahead*, her last book published in 2004, Jane Jacobs (remember her?) sees signs of us “rushing headlong into a Dark Age.” In her insightful way, she examined the five areas she considered the most vulnerable aspects of our culture, which she called the “five pillars of culture.” These included the deterioration of the family unit, both biological and economic; “credentialing” instead of education; the abandonment of science; the dumbing down of taxes; and the subversion of self-policing in our institutions.

She notes that writing, printing, and the Internet all “...give us a false sense of security about the permanence of culture.” But “most of the million details of a complex, living culture are transmitted neither in writing nor pictorially. Instead, cultures live through word of mouth and example. That is why we have cooking classes and cooking demonstrations, as well as cookbooks. That is why we have apprenticeships, internships, student tours, and on-the-job training, along with manuals and textbooks. Every culture takes pains to educate its young so that they, in their turn, can practice and transmit it completely.” That is why we have Urantia Book study groups and hands-on classes such as this one. And why we must be examples of what we learn from our text.

Jesus did not write anything down. But we are instructed to observe how he lived, how he acted, how he treated others, and how he loved everyone. (Of course, it is hard to grasp much of that without our text, isn't it?) The book is merely a

plan for us to act upon, not something to read quietly and place on a shelf when we are finished. As a guidebook for living truth, we must take it out of the realm of written information and into the reality of life. Live it. Experience it. Teach it to others.

I have always believed that one of the first dangers to a civilization's decline is evident in how it uses its resources, with land being a key factor. Throughout history, the city has been the catalyst for most of a civilization's and a culture's growth. A city must be lively, thriving, and safe. A dense, diverse city, with its numerous streets and paths and its many buildings of different ages, is one built upon the experiences of time and history. Such a city provides everything needed to be lively and thriving—economically, socially, educationally—and it is safe. Everyone observes everything that goes on in the streets and alleys; every block acts as a “major” that knows everyone who lives there, yet strangers are welcome because they serve as a catalyst for economic success through trading.

Since WWII, this country has abandoned the idea that cities hold much value and has put efforts into creating sprawl, a massive tangle of infrastructure to handle it (but not maintain it), leading to the neglect of many of our greatest physical assets.

“Not TV or illegal drugs but the automobile has been the chief destroyer of American communities.” The point is, what has happened to our values regarding the importance

of our cities and land has contributed to many of the dangers that lead to a “dark age ahead.”

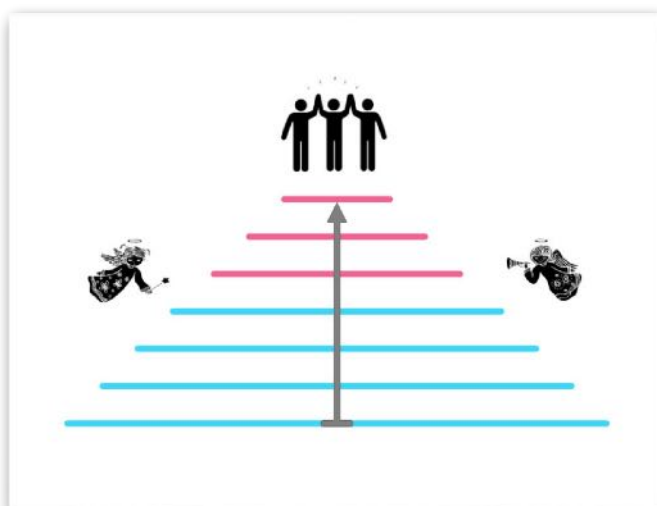
Ms. Jacobs also mentions the “dumbing down of science” as another movement toward the abyss. The rise of partisan “think tanks” that buy the scientific findings they want is an example of this. Additionally, there is the targeting of research institutions whose studies might disagree with the prevailing administration in Washington. Our text tells us, “The material aspects of civilization must always await the accumulation of scientific data.” (UB81:6.8) But if the accumulation of “scientific data” is phony and not based on fact, what then?

What replaces this civilization, this culture that we have now? It is not perfect, but it is becoming even less so today. It is the one we have worked very hard to achieve. “... *And this civilization must be maintained and fostered, for there exist today no new sources of culture....*” (UB81:6.1)

C H A P T E R 2 5

The Ascending Path

The Psychic Circles



The Seven Psychic Circles - Where, oh where, am I?

***T**he sum total of personality realization on a material world is contained within the successive conquest of the seven psychic circles of mortal potentiality.” (UB110:6.1)*
The seven psychic circles (or levels and sometimes referred to as the cosmic circles or levels) represent the advancement

of a total personality realization advancement toward higher spiritual and intellectual attainment. We all start out at the seventh circle when we received our Thought Adjuster. As we grow intellectually, emotionally, morontially and spiritually we are continually working toward achieving “*comparative mortal maturity*” and “*... progress to the status of supremacy and self-activity quite independent of the active co-operation of the mortal mind.*” “*The successful traversal of these levels demands the harmonious functioning of the entire personality....*”

Every decision you make either impedes or facilitates the function of the Adjuster; likewise do these very decisions determine your advancement in the circles of human achievement.” “The conquest of these levels of cosmic evolution is reflected in three ways:

1. Adjuster attunement. The spiritizing mind nears the Adjuster presence proportional to circle attainment.
2. Soul evolution. The emergence of the morontia soul indicates the extent and depth of circle mastery.
3. Personality reality. The degree of selfhood reality is directly determined by circle conquest. “*Persons become more real as they ascend from the seventh to the first level of mortal existence.*” (UB110:6...)

We humans are not generally aware of our progress along this physic circle path, but we can be certain we are doing well when we start hearing more clearly our Thought Adjuster speaking to us.



Divine Plan of Perfection



A Divine Plan of Perfection has been established as the overall path for our ascension to Paradise. It consists of three plans, each of which is the responsibility of one of the three Paradise Deities.

The three aspects of the Divine Plan of Perfection are:

The Plan of Progressive Attainment. This is the Father's plan for evolutionary ascension. It is the scheme whereby evolutionary mortals have a path to eternal survival if we choose it. The Eternal Son also accepted the plan, thank God. It is the old proposal of *"Let us make mortal creatures in our own image."* This provision for upstepping the creatures of time involves the Father's bestowal of the Thought

Adjusters and the endowing of material creatures with the prerogatives of personality.” (UB7:4.4)

alongside its revelations of truth that each of us has an opportunity to grasp. This plan consists of the Father’s “... *bestowal of the Sons of God upon the evolutionary creations, there to personalize and factualize, to incarnate and make real, the love of the Father and the mercy of the Son to the creatures of all universes.*” (UB7:4.5) The command from on high is thus: “*Be you perfect, even as I am perfect.*” It is incumbent upon each of us to be as perfect in our sphere of life as we can be as we move upward and inward in ascension.

The Plan of Mercy Ministry. Once the other two plans are in place, this plan is the sole work of the Infinite Spirit to bring the mercy of the Father to the evolutionary creatures, as reflected in Michael through his bestowal as Jesus in our world. This plan, in its execution, is “... *essential to the practical and effective operation of both the attainment and the bestowal undertakings.*” (UB7:4.6)

Morontia Land



One God, Many Bodies

One of the most significant changes is being divested of all mortal—that is, animal—vestiges to become a full-fledged morontia being with all that it entails. However, the

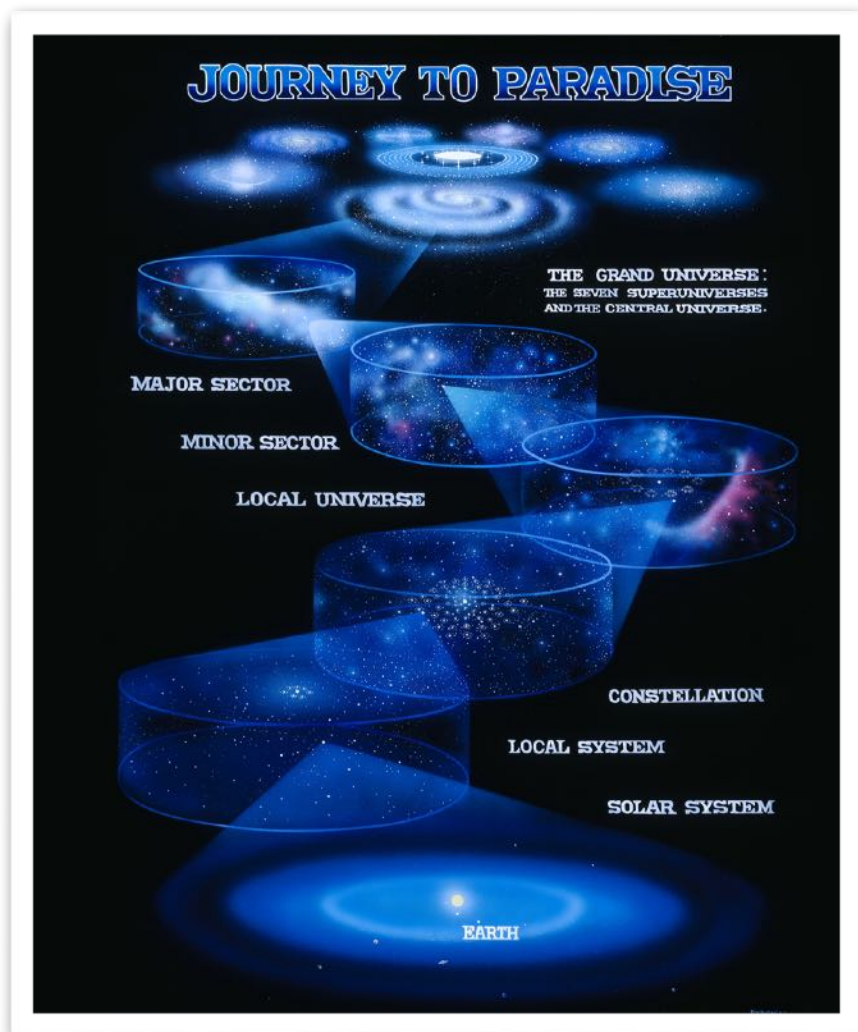
most significant change comes with the fusion with my Thought Adjuster.

Major intellectual growth occurs through the recognition of morontia mota, but not until we have been cured of our earth-acquired experimental mental deficiencies. This intellectual training begins on Mansion World Number One, starting where I left off on the Earth plane at the time of my graduation. On Mansion World Number Two, I will rectify any intellectual conflicts and mental disharmonies that may exist and begin studying morontia mota. On mansion world number three, I am fully engaged in mota studies, which encompass insights into cosmic meanings and universal relationships. On Mansion World number four, I will achieve significant social and intellectual advancement, and on Mansion World number five, I will progress to higher-level morontia training, including the acquisition of new language skills. Intellectual growth continues throughout eternity, so this must also be incorporated in mansion worlds six and seven, not to mention the other Morontia worlds and Jerusem. Boy, will I be one smart cookie!

The Bestowal Plan. This refers to the “Father-revelation enterprise of the Eternal Son and his coordinate sons.” Herein lies the connection between the Creator Sons of the local universes and the Eternal Son to Universe Father.

It appears most the morontia worlds and their satellites we will be making progress in social and cultural areas while being among and living and traveling with others of our same station. In addition, we will be meeting all kinds of

other beings that are there for our guidance and instruction. While residing on each mansion world, we will have an opportunity to visit the other cultural spheres of angels, mansion world teachers, and others. On mansion world number seven, we form classes for graduation to Jerusem.



One of the things that struck me in this process is the idea of being able to choose our own path to Havona. In Unity, we have a saying—and a bumper sticker which gets our minister’s wife into trouble with other traditional believers—“One God; Many Paths.” Sure enough!

Soul Growing



Why is personality so essential to spiritual growth?

***T**he Urantia Book says, “Divinity is creature comprehensible as truth, beauty, and goodness; correlated in personality as love, mercy, and ministry;*

disclosed on impersonal levels as justice, power, and sovereignty.” (UBo:1.17)

In addition to the Mindal spirit circuitry of the Universe Mother Spirit—the Holy Spirit— and her seven Adjutant Mind Spirits, there are three key elements that make up the potential and possibility of spiritual growth. *The Urantia Book* tells us the sacred core of existence lies in our God-given design, which comprises the inner being of the free-will, normal-minded human being. This sacred core “... is composed of the evolving soul and the Indwelling [fragment of God], and its third component is ... the unique personality or personhood.”¹ This sacred trinity works together as one.

This inner trio is encased within a body-mind system, which, along with the trio, “... creates the conditions for our soul evolution, personality unification, and the eventual eternal fusion of the sacred triad.”¹ It is at this fusion that our indwelling fragment of God, our Thought Adjuster, takes on our personality as well take on his spirituality.

While the idea of personality is made broader to us in *The Urantia Book*, the one quality that is absolutely important to spiritual growth is this God-connection via the Personality Circuit that enables us to exercise the prerogatives of personhood as we evolve as an immortal soul. The prerogatives include the God-like powers of free will and self-awareness.² And it is through these prerogatives that we take individual accountability and responsibility for our life decisions, which are significant in determining how quickly our embryonic morontia soul evolves in this lifetime, how

quickly we move from one psychic circle of cosmic enlightenment to another.

One other UB line that stands out to me is this: “*God can be realized only in the realms of human experience....*”

(UB1:2.7) That is, in the realms of personality experience.

And this idea is essential and indispensable to hope of personalty survival.

Footnotes:

1. Belitsos, Byron, *Your Evolving Soul*, San Rafael CA, Orion Press, 2017, p. xviii.

2. Belitsos, Byron, *Your Evolving Soul*, San Rafael CA, Orion Press, 2017, p. 165.



How can we become more God conscious?

Being more God-conscious means being aware of God’s activity in our lives daily, if not moment by moment. I understand that moment by moment seems impossible, but as we continue to explore the intricacies of *The Urantia Book*, we increasingly learn and accept, and thus embrace within not just our minds but our hearts, the truth of the realization of the ever-present spirit in our lives. What begins to happen is that we look around and realize everything we see has its origins in that First Source and Center, and that everything we do, think, and feel can be initiated and motivated by the many spirit forces that move within and around us. This leads to tremendous benefits for our lives as we become more activated to do better, to be good; to seek truth regardless of its source; to be honest with ourselves and

others; and to recognize beauty where spirit forces have shaped it into existence. We are told that God-consciousness is “. . . *equivalent to the integration of the self with the universe, and on its highest levels of spiritual reality.*” (UB196:3.35) It is not perishable, and anything good, true, and beautiful cannot be taken away from our human experiences.

But there is more to this. We learn that “God-consciousness” is just one of three results of the presence of our indwelling Thought Adjuster. While God-consciousness is “*the intellectual capacity for knowing God,*” there also exists the “*spiritual urge to find God,*” or “*God-seeking,*” and “*the personality craving to be like God,*” which is the “*wholehearted desire to do the Father’s will.*” Striving to be as perfect as we can be in this world represents the perfection of hope. Although “*Urantia mortals can hardly hope to be perfect in the infinite sense, ... it is entirely possible for human beings, starting out as they do on this planet, to attain the supernal and divine goal which the infinite God has set for mortal man; and when they do achieve this destiny, they will, in all that pertains to self-realization and mind attainment, be just as replete in their sphere of divine perfection as God himself is in his sphere of infinity and eternity. Such perfection may not be universal in the material sense, unlimited in intellectual grasp, or final in spiritual experience, but it is final and complete in all finite aspects of divinity of will, perfection of personality motivation, and God-consciousness.*” (UB1:0.5)

The urge to seek God, is a result of the “recognition of spiritual values.” And while there is “. . . no word in any human language which can be employed to designate . . .” the emotions and thought, “. . . or ‘experience’ which we have elected to call God-consciousness. . . ,” it is nevertheless there. *“The spirit of God that dwells in man is not personal — the Adjuster is prepersonal — but this Monitor presents a value, exudes a flavor of divinity, which is personal in the highest and infinite sense.” And this is felt, to us, as the consciousness of God.*” (UB103:1.6)

“. . . [T]rue God-consciousness does not have such an origin [of the projection of the mind itself]. The God-consciousness is resident in the indwelling spirit.” (UB196:3.23) Our goal then is to pay attention, the best we can, to what our Thought Adjuster is trying to tell us and how he is trying to guide us through the psychic circles of cosmic attainment and enlightenment. He is always there, talking to us, guiding us. One day, soon, we will understand him and respond. I am really looking forward to that day.

Footnote 1: All life is sacred because it is from God. What comes from God goes back to God. Thought Adjusters are not requisite. Also remember, the Revelators told us *The Urantia Book* is a primer; it does not tell all but only scratches the surface. God, as our Father must love each one of his children equally, whether or not they initially have the mental capacity to have a Thought Adjuster or not. Our Universal Mother Spirit, Nebadonia, and her Holy Spirit and her influences are everywhere. Jesus healing ministry circuits are everywhere. Our angels and midwayers are here for us. Where we are, God is, and all is well.

Footnote 2: Nebadonia’s name does not appear in *The Urantia Book*. She is Michael’s consort and creative partner, our Universe Mother Spirit and daughter of the Infinite Spirit. Our Universe was named in her honor.

The Holy Spirit is the name our world has given our Universal Mother Spirit. But our Universal Mother Spirit is NOT the Holy Spirit. Our Mother Spirit is a personality.

“The Holy Spirit is “... *The spirit circuit of the Divine Minister...*”, our Universal Mother Spirit, *“the spirit of the Spirit.”* Our Mother Spirit’s circuits are of the mind: mindal and she is responsible for our intelligence-ministry circuit, “... *including the more or less unified activities but diverse functioning of the seven adjutant mind-spirits.*”

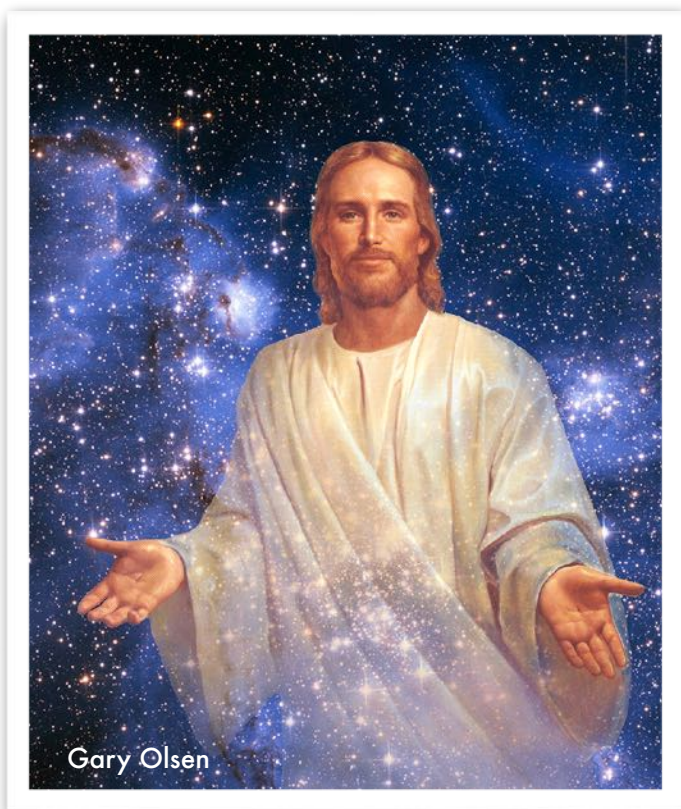
In most religions, the Spirit of Truth is the same as the Holy Spirit, which is false. The Spirit of Truth is Michael’s bestowal spirit that now is encircuited within us, also called The Comforter. “*Since the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth, man is subject to the teaching and guidance of a threefold spirit endowment: the spirit of the Father, the Thought Adjuster; the spirit of the Son, the Spirit of Truth; the spirit of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit.*” (UB194:2.11) These plus the seven adjutant spirits. All of these are internal to us.

Death and Eternity



Personality survival

“*The material self, the ego-entity of human identity, is dependent during the physical life on the continuing function of the material life vehicle ... But selfhood of survival value, selfhood that can transcend the experience of death, is only evolved by establishing a potential transfer of the seat of the identity of the evolving personality from the transient life vehicle — the material body — to the more enduring and immortal nature of the morontia soul and on beyond to those levels whereon the soul becomes infused with, and eventually attains the status of, spirit reality.*” (UB112:2.20)



The material self is like a loaner, akin to a new BMW for some, while for others, it resembles a rent-a-wreck. At least, that's how it appears from the rent-a-wreck perspective. I'm just sayin'.

The material self, sometimes referred to as “a temple of God,” can be understood as such only through the recognition of the existence of the Thought Adjuster that dwells within each of us. However, like many other temples from bygone ages, the “temple” has often been regarded as

THE thing. The body is seen as THE entity to preserve, to keep fit and perfect as much as possible. Yet, the purpose of the temple may be long forgotten—out of sight, out of mind, as they say. Consider the many temples of historical architecture. For instance, the Temple of Athena in Athens. Assuming Athena ever existed, she certainly isn't seen as being present now. However, the temple remains—mostly.

Our temples, though regarded as very important during our use of them—indeed they are, as they serve as the vehicle that accommodates the more essential parts of us: our mind, Thought Adjuster, and evolving soul.



I am safe in the everlasting arms

How do evolving mortals escape the chains of material existence and previous causation?

I have found several places in our text that speak to that point, as it is a subject of the other course, Truth Coordinated Living, as well. The simple answer is that increasing our understanding and faith in our Father makes our everyday world less stressful, and I become less inclined to worry. (The more common metaphysical interpretation is “thoughts in mind produce after their kind.”) My knowing, and increasingly, I hope, my spiritual insight has amplified this for me. “Fear not” takes on a whole new meaning. When Jesus asked his apostles, *“To a God-knowing kingdom believer, what does it matter if all things earthly crash?”*

(UB100:2.7) I wholeheartedly agree. What would it matter to any of us, for we know what lies ahead? A new adventure in faith and love.

Here is the entire paragraph from 100:2.7: *“Jesus portrayed the profound surety of the God-knowing mortal when he said: ‘To a God-knowing kingdom believer, what does it matter if all things earthly crash?’ Temporal securities are vulnerable, but spiritual sureties are impregnable. When the flood tides of human adversity, selfishness, cruelty, hate, malice, and jealousy beat upon the mortal soul, you may rest in the assurance that there is one inner bastion, the citadel of the spirit, which is absolutely unassailable; at least this is true of every human being who has dedicated the keeping of his soul to the indwelling spirit of the eternal God.”*

Additionally, in paper 112 on personality survival, there is a list that recounts what the text reveals about personality. One of them states: *“It is not wholly subject to the fetters of antecedent causation.”* (UB112:0.5)

Furthermore, we are told in the Foreword: *“Having thus provided for the growth of the immortal soul and having liberated man’s inner self from the fetters of absolute dependence on antecedent causation, the Father stands aside. Now, man having thus been liberated from the fetters of causation response, at least as pertains to eternal destiny, and provision having been made for the growth of the immortal self, the soul, it remains for man himself to will the creation or to inhibit the creation of this surviving*

and eternal self which is his for the choosing. No other being, force, creator, or agency in all the wide universe of universes can interfere to any degree with the absolute sovereignty of the mortal free will, as it operates within the realms of choice, regarding the eternal destiny of the personality of the choosing mortal. As pertains to eternal survival, God has decreed the sovereignty of the material and mortal will, and that decree is absolute." (UB5:6.8)

And also: "The bestowal of creature personality confers relative liberation from slavish response to antecedent causation, and the personalities of all such moral beings, evolutionary or otherwise, are centered in the personality of the Universal Father. They are ever drawn towards his Paradise presence by that kinship of being which constitutes the vast and universal family circle and fraternal circuit of the eternal God. There is a kinship of divine spontaneity in all personality." (UB5:6.9)

And, finally, in UB111:4.8-9: "You cannot completely control the external world — environment. It is the creativity of the inner world that is most subject to your direction because there your personality is so largely liberated from the fetters of the laws of antecedent causation. There is associated with personality a limited sovereignty of will."

Since this inner life of man is genuinely creative, each person bears the responsibility of deciding whether this creativity will be spontaneous and entirely haphazard or controlled, directed, and constructive. How can a creative imagination nurture worthy children when the stage on which it operates

is already burdened with prejudice, hate, fear, resentment, revenge, and bigotry?

And so it is.



More discoveries

I also found these two paragraphs that are pertinent to the discussion:

“Jesus showed mankind the new way of mortal living whereby human beings may very largely escape the dire consequences of the Caligastic rebellion and most effectively compensate for the deprivations resulting from the Adamic default. ‘The spirit of the life of Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of animal living and the temptations of evil and sin.’ ‘This is the victory that overcomes the flesh, even your faith.’” (UB34:7.6)

“Those God-knowing men and women who have been born of the Spirit experience no more conflict with their mortal natures than do the inhabitants of the most normal of worlds, planets which have never been tainted with sin nor touched by rebellion. Faith sons work on intellectual levels and live on spiritual planes far above the conflicts produced by unrestrained or unnatural physical desires. The normal urges of animal beings and the natural appetites and impulses of the physical nature are not in conflict with even the highest spiritual attainment except in the minds of

ignorant, mistaught, or unfortunately overconscientious persons.” (UB34:7.7)



And what of the sparrows?

What my divine parents want for me is what my earthly parents wanted for me: the best they could give. While that may not have included as many material things that would have been nice, it included a vast multitude of intellectual and moral gifts... and lots of love. My divine parents, on the other hand, are quite similar in that they can and will provide ongoing intellectual and spiritual gifts of time and eternity, as well as endless and total love. They also provide for all the material gifts that I need. Surprised? I support this supposition by the many teachings of Jesus when he tells his apostles not to worry about tomorrow, the numbering of sparrows, and the beauty of the lilacs.

“Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is cut down and cast into the fire, how much more shall he clothe you, the ambassadors of the heavenly kingdom. ... [Y]ou should not be of doubtful minds concerning the support of yourselves.... Let me assure you, once and for all, that, if you dedicate your lives to the work of the kingdom, all your real needs shall be supplied. Seek the greater thing, and the lesser will be found therein; ask for the heavenly, and the

earthly shall be included. The shadow is certain to follow the substance.” (UB165:5.3)

My job is to embrace the reality of my participation and do my best to be the best I can be for the sake of truth, beauty, and goodness in fulfilling the will of my Father.

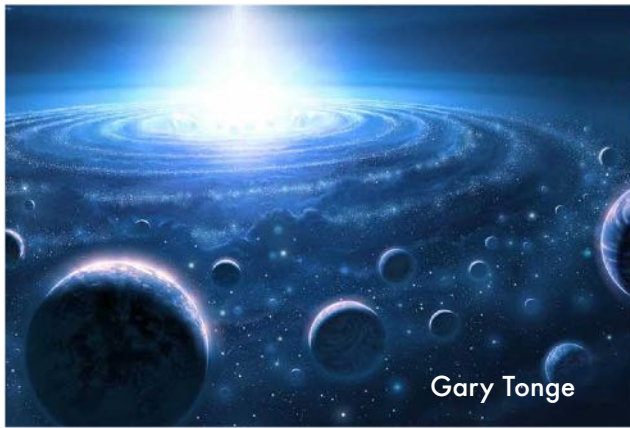
Cosmic morality is “... *the universal sensitivity to, and acceptance of, duty. This is a morality which transcends the temporal sense of relative right and wrong; it is a morality directly predicated on the self-conscious creature’s appreciation of experiential obligation to experiential Deity.*” (UB117:4.8) But cosmic citizenship is the “... *honest recognition of your progressive obligations to the Supreme Being, awareness of the interdependence of evolutionary man and evolving Deity. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty.*”

(UB110:3.10) Yet there is more to duty, or rather less that the word implies: “*The idea of duty signifies that you are servant-minded and hence are missing the mighty thrill of doing your service as a friend and for a friend. The impulse of friendship transcends all convictions of duty, and the service of a friend for a friend can never be called a sacrifice.*” (UB180:1.6)

I have made my personal commitment to “... *find the Paradise Father and participate in the evolution of the Supreme.*”

C H A P T E R 2 6

The Central Universe



Gary Tonge



The troubles right here in Havona City

Disappointments, defeat, and certain problems are to be expected even on Havona. What is the real purpose of such difficulties? What is their relationship with the afflictions that we face here on our world?

We are told repeatedly that the whole ascendancy concept is based on experience—at least ours is. While the inhabitants of Havona are existential, they lack the opportunity to have the same kind of experiences we do. Their experiences seem to align more with accommodating us as we transition into this spiritual environment, bidding farewell to our morontia selves.

Even without us entering their worlds, they must have significant challenges to cope with. Within their seraphic ranks, there are three different levels of supernaphim: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The roles of these supernaphim suggest that a lot goes into getting along and loving one another. Of the seven groups of Primary Supernaphim, six focus on helping others through their difficulties, whatever those may be. All seven groups of Secondary Supernaphim are similarly engaged. Among the seven groups of Tertiary Supernaphim, four are involved in helping newly arrived pilgrims of space and time adjust to the Havona worlds and their citizens.

“Excepting perfect beings of Deity origin, all will creatures in the superuniverses are of evolutionary nature, beginning in lowly estate and climbing ever upward, in reality inward. Even highly spiritual personalities continue to ascend the scale of life by progressive translations from life to life and from sphere to sphere. And in the case of those who entertain the Mystery Monitors, there is indeed no limit to the possible heights of their spiritual ascent and universe attainment.

“The perfection of the creatures of time, when finally achieved, is wholly an acquirement, a bona fide personality possession. While the elements of grace are freely admixed, nevertheless, the creature attainments are the result of individual effort and actual living, personality reaction to the existing environment.

“The fact of animal evolutionary origin does not attach a stigma to any personality in the sight of the universe as that is the exclusive method of producing one of the two basic types of finite intelligent will creatures. When the heights of perfection and eternity are attained, all the more honor to those who began at the bottom and joyfully climbed the ladder of life, round by round, and who, when they do reach the heights of glory, will have gained a personal experience which embodies an actual knowledge of every phase of life from the bottom to the top.

“In all this is shown the wisdom of the Creators. It would be just as easy for the Universal Father to make all mortals perfect beings, to impart perfection by his divine word. But

that would deprive them of the wonderful experience of the adventure and training associated with the long and gradual inward climb, an experience to be had only by those who are so fortunate as to begin at the very bottom of living existence.

In the universes encircling Havona, there are provided only a sufficient number of perfect creatures to meet the need for pattern teacher guides for those who are ascending the evolutionary scale of life. The experiential nature of the evolutionary type of personality is the natural cosmic complement of the ever-perfect natures of the Paradise-Havona creatures. In reality, both perfect and perfected creatures are incomplete as regards finite totality. But in the complemental association of the existentially perfect creatures of the Paradise-Havona system with the experientially perfected finaliters ascending from the evolutionary universes, both types find release from inherent limitations and thus may conjointly attempt to reach the sublime heights of the ultimate of creature status.” (UB32:3.8-12)”

I suspect it may be right that some disappointments, defeats, and problems may accompany our ascent in this final effort to reach Paradise, but I am ready to say that it is okay. Each disappointment and so forth can only build more moral character if we allow it. That is, we should not be downcast but rather look forward to continued growth. Viewed this way, each disappointment teaches us something about the experience we did not know before. I recall one of Thomas Edison’s quotes, “I have not failed 10,000 times—I’ve

successfully found 10,000 ways that will not work.” To illustrate the point of another of his quotes, we can refuse to say to ourselves, “I sure wasted a lot of time wringing my hands on this course.” Instead, we can say, “Regardless, I sure had fun doing it.” Or Samuel Beckett: “Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.” And finally, for your consideration by Henry Ford: *“Failure provides the opportunity to begin again, more intelligently.”*

I love the idea of being disappointment-proof. It doesn't mean there will be no disappointments, only that they will not prove to be impactful to our detriment. It's sort of like being bulletproof—bullets still exist, but they don't have their intended consequences. Or rainproof: it still rains, but we stay dry.

C H A P T E R 27

The Universe Economy



Gary Tonge

The Memory of Mercy



When *The Urantia Book* refers to "universe economy," what does it mean?

The universe of universes consists of a totally balanced economy; however one defines economy, it remains balanced. One of the special ways the UB uses the term "universe economy" is reflected in the concept of the "Memory of Mercy."

Here is what the book tells us: *“The Memory of Mercy is a living trial balance, a current statement of your account with the supernatural forces of the realms. These are the living records of mercy ministration which are read into the testimony of the courts of Uversa when each individual’s right to unending life comes up for adjudication....*

“The Memory of Mercy must show that the saving credit established by the Sons of God has been fully and faithfully paid out in the loving ministry of the patient personalities of the Third Source and Center. For mercy is not to be thrust upon those who despise it; mercy is not a gift to be trampled under foot by the persistent rebels of time. Nevertheless, though mercy is thus precious and dearly bestowed, your individual drawing credits are always far in excess of your ability to exhaust the reserve if you are sincere of purpose and honest of heart.

“... [Y]ou should even now understand that mercy is a quality of growth. You should realize that there is a great reward of personal satisfaction in being first just, next fair, then patient, then kind. And then, on that foundation, if you choose and have it in your heart, you can take the next step and really show mercy; but you cannot exhibit mercy in and of itself. These steps must be traversed; otherwise there can be no genuine mercy. There may be patronage, condescension, or charity — even pity — but not mercy. True mercy comes only as the beautiful climax to these preceding adjuncts to group understanding, mutual appreciation, fraternal fellowship, spiritual communion, and divine harmony.” (UB28:6.6-8)

Okay, that's enough about procedure. Other factors included in the concept of universe economy involve how time has been utilized by an ascender: *"Time is a vital factor in everything this side of Havona and Paradise. In the final judgment before the Ancients of Days, time is an element of evidence. The Imports of Time must always afford testimony to show that every defendant has had ample time for making decisions, achieving choice."* (UB28.6.10)

Why is this relevant? Because *"Time is the one universal endowment of all will creatures; it is the "one talent" entrusted to all intelligent beings. You all have time in which to ensure your survival; and time is fatally squandered only when it is buried in neglect when you fail so to utilize it as to make certain the survival of your soul. Failure to improve one's time to the fullest extent possible does not impose fatal penalties; it merely retards the pilgrim of time in his journey of ascent. If survival is gained, all other losses can be retrieved."* (UB28:6.9)

And that is just one....

Then there is the "Law of Abundance," so to speak: *"...for whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap."* I see it as analogous to the so-called "law of attraction" that is popular today and is even mentioned as one of the Universal Laws. Metaphysically, this "like attracts like" works on mental and spiritual levels, but not on material levels, as many try to use it. If the law appears to be working on the material level, you can bet it is due to certain mental processes taking place. It aligns with "as within, so without." Amy Sternberg tells us,

“Our inner landscape mirrors our outer landscape. If we believe in lack, we experience lack. If we believe in abundance, we experience abundance. This is Spiritual Law.”

Supply, substance, is unlimited. However, to receive, we must first do our part by giving. This is the sowing. It involves the “asking,” the “seeking,” and the “knocking” that is required; without these actions, nothing happens.

“If you are only believing disciples, you must earn your own bread and contribute to the sustenance of all who teach and preach and heal. If you are anxious about your bread and water, wherein are you different from the nations of the world who so diligently seek such necessities? Devote yourselves to your work, believing that both the Father and I know that you have need of all these things. Let me assure you, once and for all, that, if you dedicate your lives to the work of the kingdom, all your real needs shall be supplied. Seek the greater thing, and the lesser will be found therein; ask for the heavenly, and the earthly shall be included. The shadow is certain to follow the substance.” Jesus
(UB165:5.3)

Footnotes:

Universe economy and the *Parable of the Talents*. Among the laws of the universe is the one illustrated through the parable of the talents found in paper 176, section 3 (and its cousin, the parable of the pounds in paper 171, section 8), wherein, as Jesus tells us, *“To every one who has, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who has not, even that which he has shall be taken away. You cannot stand still in the affairs of the eternal kingdom. My Father requires all his children to*

Meandering Through The Urantia Book

grow in grace and in a knowledge of the truth. You who know these truths must yield the increase of the fruits of the spirit and manifest a growing devotion to the unselfish service of your fellow servants.”
(UB176:3.5)

The idea a taking money from those poor who have it and giving it to the rich—the rich get richer and the poor poorer—may seem like the way of the world now, but that was not the intent of the teaching. The message is that those who strive for spiritual insight and increased intellectual self-mastery are better equipped to continue to gain more of the same, while those that are not concerned with such may lose them. At least that is my interpretation, however blunt.

A footnote to the footnote: It was William Henry Harrison, the ninth President of the U.S. (1841), said in an October 1, 1840 speech, *“It is true democratic feeling, that all the measures of the government are directed to the purpose of making the rich richer and the poor poorer.”*

C H A P T E R 2 8

Personality



What is the Ego?

To many, it is always a “power” or “control” thing, one that seems determined to overcome whatever is in its way, whether for better or worse. To others, it is consistently negative, as if it were the devil acting out. But ask yourself, is it really just one of those things? Or is it something else?

A Course in Miracles (ACIM), in lesson 331, tells us it is this:

The ego is "... the sign of limited and separated self, born in a body, doomed to suffer and to end its life in death. It is the "will" that sees the Will of God as enemy, and takes a form in which it is denied. The ego is the 'proof' that strength is weak and love is fearful, life is really death, and what opposes God alone is true. ... The ego is insane. In fear it stands beyond the Everywhere, apart from All, in separation from the Infinite. In its insanity it thinks it has become a victor over God Himself. And in its terrible autonomy it 'sees' the Will of God has been destroyed."

The lesson tells us that we, as children of God, have no egos. And Lesson 25 says this:

"You perceive the world and everything in it as meaningful in terms of ego goals. These goals have nothing to do with your own best interests, because the ego is not you. This false identification makes you incapable of understanding what anything is for."

There are other lessons that address the ego, and none of them are good. The "Text" is not much better.



Now, I am not going to criticize ACIM for its views on the ego. The Course is not for those new to the world trying to understand what it means to live. Rather, I feel it is for those who already know what is happening and are gathering more evidence about what they already sense in their souls.

But I will say this. I, personally, never felt the ego to be the things described above. And I very much doubt readers of ACIM did either. Yet we understand what the Course is trying to tell us: this negative thing we tend to call EGO is but an immature, yet essential, part of our character growth, leading us to a balanced personality.

How does *The Urantia Book* address the concept of ego? It is rarely mentioned, but there are sections in the book where it is discussed. (A word of caution here: do not confuse the discussions of the “alter ego,” found in paper 91 on *The Evolution of Prayer* with those on the concept of ego.) For example:

“Man tends to identify the urge to be self-serving with his ego — himself. In contrast he is inclined to identify the will to be altruistic with some influence outside himself — God. And indeed is such a judgment right, for all such nonself desires do actually have their origin in the leadings of the indwelling Thought Adjuster, and this Adjuster is a fragment of God. The impulse of the spirit Monitor is realized in human consciousness as the urge to be altruistic, fellow-creature minded. At least this is the early and fundamental experience of the child mind. When the

growing child fails of personality unification, the altruistic drive may become so overdeveloped as to work serious injury to the welfare of the self. A misguided conscience can become responsible for much conflict, worry, sorrow, and no end of human unhappiness.” (UB103:2.10)

The ego in this paper is always seen as “self-seeking.” There is little, if any, judgment there. The reason is that this self-seeking ego is neither evil nor ignorant, bad nor even good. It just is. And it has always been a part of our nature that helps us survive the early history of the evolution of mankind as well as the early childhood of growing up in today’s world. It is the urge or impulse to deny one’s self-seeking ego for the benefit of another—altruism—that starts to bring the ego into balance within the context of building a moral character. And it is here that our Thought Adjuster is of great help. *“All men recognize the morality of this universal human urge to be unselfish and altruistic. The humanist ascribes the origin of this urge to the natural working of the material mind; the religionist more correctly recognizes that the truly unselfish drive of mortal mind is in response to the inner spirit leadings of the Thought Adjuster.” (UB103:5.3)*

But the ego gets its bad reputation from objective viewpoint of seeing within the world of the overactive self-seeking ego acting without any regard for doing good to others. *“But man’s interpretation of these early conflicts between the ego-will and the other-than-self-will is not always dependable. Only a fairly well unified personality can arbitrate the multiform contentions of the ego cravings and the budding social consciousness. The self has rights as well*

as one's neighbors. Neither has exclusive claims upon the attention and service of the individual. Failure to resolve this problem gives origin to the earliest type of human guilt feelings.” (UB103:5.4)

There is a solution through which the self-serving ego and the altruistic urges can be reconciled. *“Human happiness is achieved only when the ego desire of the self and the altruistic urge of the higher self (divine spirit) are co-ordinated and reconciled by the unified will of the integrating and supervising personality.” (UB103:5.5)*

Everything mentioned above connects to how we live our lives in this world. However, there is more—much more.

The ego continues to play a role throughout our morontia careers and is essential in all our pre-spirit lives. *“... for it allows you to more clearly discern fairness. A more balanced ego will openly and honestly compare, ‘would this be fair to me, therefore would it be fair to another?’ as your free-will prerogatives will place you in positions of having to make bigger and more important decisions affecting your siblings.”*

Throughout our eternal ascension path and into Paradise, we will be both students and teachers, often simultaneously. Each of us must treat one another fairly and courteously, as we would like to be treated by others. *“Without an ego that will constantly question, assess, ‘how would I feel in the other person’s place?’ it would be obvious that one would frequently be unfair, discourteous, or act incorrectly.”*

We are to be reminded that, as we ascend from lowly morontia being to something more, we will be working and living with some beings on a lower evolutionary scale. “Both, a clear memory of your terrestrial ‘moments,’ and a ‘shining’ and perfected ego will be essential.” ¹

Is this thing we call ego a part of our personality? Some think it is and must be respected as a valuable aspect of our growth as will creatures throughout all eternity. At some point, our moral consciousness, as we climb the seven circles, embraces our ego within our personality synthesis, and we become balanced individuals where the raging ego that, perhaps, once was is no longer even possible.

Footnotes:

1. The quotes that are not listed as from the UB are from a December 8th, 2017 email from 11:11 Progress Group.





The Nature of Personality in the Universe

How does personality permeate the universe? What is the spiritual value of personality? What role do other personalities play in our progression toward perfection?

God's personality serves as a model for the bestowal of individuality to all his personal creatures in the Universe of Universes. This personality is the unique gift given to each being. It represents the eternal gift of personal recognition that each being carries. It is not the same as unique identity, which we also possess. All material creatures, even lower animals, have unique identities; however, among ascendant creatures like us humans, only mortals possess personality. What many people might refer to as personality, such as "he has a wicked personality," I usually describe as "character"—the layers of influences, akin to an onion, which come from peer pressure, religious dogma, parental training, education, and more. I view character as the mask someone wears to conceal the personality beneath.



Personality and human nature

Human nature encompasses various attributes of animal nature. While DNA, not personality, determines identity, each animal possesses a unique identity just like humans do. However, we also have a unique personality that

animals lack. Nevertheless, as the foundation of intelligence, they have five of the seven Adjutant Mind Spirits that we possess.

Character is an evolving combination of physical, mental, and spiritual attributes built upon a core of unique personality. The choices one makes result from an evaluation—consciously or unconsciously—of a mix of often conflicting urges: self-interest, cultural conformity, and selfless action that may arise from choosing to do God’s will.

A dog also thinks. Therefore, he must be. (To me, this points out a problem with Descartes’ blanket statement. I know he was going for the drama and trying to be poetic.) The difference is that while a dog thinks he is not able to take advantage of foresight to appreciate in advance the consequences of his actions. He must act first to understand the consequences later. Intuition and understanding may be of some use in areas of his domain, but not when it comes to self-consciousness and insight into the results of future action.

In the Foreword, paragraphs 0:5.5 through 12, we are told that the “... *qualities of universal reality are manifest in Urantian human experience on the following levels:*” body, mind, spirit, soul, and personality. With the exception of humans, animals have the first level and part of the second, but that is all.

As we continue along our earthly journey of experience and memory, intellectual and spiritual growth, the evolution of

our mind selves takes precedence over our material selves, followed by our spiritual selves dominating our intellectual selves. This is what the text calls “the evolution of dominance.” That is the purpose of cosmic evolution.

“As mind pursues reality to its ultimate analysis, matter vanishes to the material senses but may still remain real to mind. When spiritual insight pursues that reality which remains after the disappearance of matter and pursues it to an ultimate analysis, it vanishes to mind, but the insight of spirit can still perceive cosmic realities and supreme values of a spiritual nature.” (UB112:2.11)

I am reminded of Gary Renard’s book on *A Course in Miracles* (ACIM) titled *The Disappearance of the Universe*, where, upon our continued ascent up the ladder of ascension, the shadowy world of matter becomes undiscernible to our spirit-minded selves.

The purpose of cosmic evolution is to achieve unity of personality through increasing spirit dominance, volitional response to the teaching and leading of the Thought Adjuster. Personality, both human and superhuman, is characterized by an inherent cosmic quality which may be called “*the evolution of dominance, the expansion of the control of both itself and its environment.*” (UB112:2.15)

I think the idea of the universe being one enormous educational system, as I especially enjoy the opportunity to continue to learn, but at the same time to teach others as

well. I have always had that desire to be a teacher and leader of others into the truth, the beautiful, and the good.



My new understanding about Personality

We each have ten powerful influences in our lives that impact us from within, the most powerful being our Thought Adjuster, the indwelling fragment of God our Father in Heaven. Additionally, we have access to the Spirit of Truth and the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, built into us are the seven Adjutant Mind Spirits from our Universe Mother Spirit, Nebadonia (for whom our local universe is named). The Spirit of Truth and the Holy Spirit are more like external influences that work within our minds. That accounts for the ten.

In truth, we have other external influences, such as seraphic guardians and various angel groups that are working on our behalf. We must also remember the Midwayers. This list could go on, as there are many other celestials, both revealed and unrevealed, who are assisting us in this world, not to mention beyond.

That is what I would say.

However, the big awakening for me was the influence of our gift of personality to us and its relationship to the Thought Adjuster, its role in our soul development, and its contributions to the Supreme. These ideas gleaned from this course, as well as from Byron Belitsos' book *Your Evolving*

Soul, give me a new and improved way to think about our continuous march toward perfection.¹

To better understand the interplay between personality and our “self-concept,” which is our evolving moral consciousness, sometimes referred to as “ego,” is to enhance our appreciation and enjoyment of the interaction between our personality and our self-will from almost an external perspective—not really, but it seems more objective than subjective. To think, for example, that this thing we call personality, as defined in The Urantia Book, is constantly connected to our Paradise Father via the personality circuit is a very powerful idea. It is one that becomes even more significant as it prompts me to reflect more deeply on my actions and on my use of willpower and their consequences.

I am absolutely filled with “zest and enthusiasm” when I consider interrelationships like all these influencing circuits and spirits, working in harmony with my personality, my Thought Adjuster, and my evolving soul. As a result, thinking is clarified, actions are molded, and deeds become more pure. I can never escape the knowledge that my actions are clearly my responsibility. It is my role to take these moral understandings and my God-consciousness, reflected in my personal religious faith, to the Supreme Being.

And God-consciousness is equivalent to the integration of the self with the universe, and on its highest levels of spiritual reality.” (UB196:3.35)



The revealing of God through Personality

The Urantia Book tells us: “Personality is not simply an attribute of God; it rather stands for the totality of the co-ordinated infinite nature and the unified divine will which is exhibited in eternity and universality of perfect expression. Personality, in the supreme sense, is the revelation of God to the universe of universes.” (UB1:5.13)

So, how does God reveal himself through personality?

Consider the opposite of the question above: “Without personality how does God reveal himself?” We are told “personality” is synonymous with “personhood.” To be a person “... is to enjoy an exclusive and singular perspective on reality that is unique in all universes.” It is through this quality of a being, existential or experiential, that connecting with God becomes possible. Not just possible, but probable and, beyond that, inevitable. However, that does not mean one can choose not to make that connection because the connection is built into the will of the creature from the start. Whether or not the person actually recognizes this connection is another matter.

A question to ponder is this: Is this built-in mechanism and its connection to God the catalyst that inspires the source of the first moral decision, thus initiating the coming of the Thought Adjuster? This suggests to me a connection between per-sonality and a sense of morality that I believe is

fundamentally inbred in each of us as a part of this concept called personality.

And we are told that only those with personalities have the opportunity for the growth of a soul, thus leaving out the rest of the animal kingdom on this world. And yet the animal kingdom possesses five of the seven adjutant mind spirits, which gives them, like us, a uniqueness of identity, but not personality, unlike us.

We can continue exploring the personhood that personality provides, enabling God to reveal Himself through all the mechanisms, circuits, and associates throughout the Universes. But as we are told, *“Human personality is the time-space image-shadow cast by the divine Creator personality. And no actuality can ever be adequately comprehended by an examination of its shadow. Shadows should be interpreted in terms of the true substance.”* (UB1:6.1)

But still, the answer may lie within this statement: *“The prepersonal divine spirit [our Thought Adjuster] which indwells the mortal mind carries, in its very presence, the valid proof of its actual existence, but the concept of the divine personality can be grasped only by the spiritual insight of genuine personal religious experience.”* (UB1:6.4)

We all know that within each evolving ascending mortal exists an inner feeling, an inkling, or something significant that is out there for us—the persistent urge to grasp the thread of the personality circuit—or not. Our personal religious experience is something that each of us has,

encompassing both the devout and true believers as well as atheists. The atheist may deny his experience, but his non-religious experience is still a form of personal religious experience.²

In paragraph 10 of section 5 of paper 1 we are told this: “The idea of the personality of the Universal Father is an enlarged and truer concept of God which has come to mankind chiefly through revelation. Reason, wisdom, and religious experience all infer and imply the personality of God, but they do not altogether validate it.” This suggests that if we are looking for the evidence of the proof of personality origin in the Universal Father, we are out of luck without the help of revelation. Revelation, to me, means from sources such as *The Urantia Book* to self-revelation as in the experience of God within our lives as we experience them.³

Footnotes:

1. Belitsos, Byron, *Your Evolving Soul*, San Rafael CA, Orion Press, 2017, p. 26
2. We are further told that only a person can love another personality. Which begs to try to understand the love we have for your fellow creatures of the non-human sort—dogs, cats, and so on. It certainly seems that they, in turn, appear to love us, personality or not.
3. I thought it worth mentioning this point: Rodan tells us that the stability of personality can only be experienced by those who have discover and embraced God. (UB 116:1.14) Thus personality is one thing; how stable it is may be something else altogether different. What does that mean really?



Personality's function in the Divine Plan

“What is the “divine plan”? *“The Universe Sovereigns may engage in adventure; the Constellation Fathers may experiment; the system heads may practice; but the Universal Father sees the end from the beginning, and his divine plan and eternal purpose actually embrace and comprehend all the experiments and all the adventures of all his subordinates in every world, system, and constellation in every universe of his vast domains.”* (UB2:1.4) And it appears there are many “subordinate divine plans”: *“This divine plan of perfection attainment embraces three unique, though marvelously correlated, enterprises of universal adventure: ...”* the **Plan of Progressive Attainment**; the **Bestowal Plan**; and the **Plan of Mercy Ministry**. Together these are referred to as the *“divine plan of progress.”* (UB7:4.1-6) Then there is this one: *“It was the divine plan that the mortal races of Urantia should have had physical natures more naturally spirit responsive.”* (UB34:7.5) In Paper 3:5.3 we find this: *“In the affairs of men’s hearts the Universal Father may not always have his way; but in the conduct and destiny of a planet the divine plan prevails; the eternal purpose of wisdom and love triumphs.”* And there is the reference to the *“divine plan of mortal survival.”* (UB40:10.5)

There are several other references to this “divine plan,” but the question posed is: what is the personality’s function in the “Divine Plan”? Without personality, the divine plan, regardless of the meaning of any of the divine plans, would

not be possible given the structure of the organization of the universe and our role in it. This is not to say the First Source and Center could not have come up with an alternative; of course, he could have. But since he didn't, here we are with this incredible gift from that First Source that allows us to constantly be linked back to our Universal Father through his Personality Circuit.

We already understand that personality is one of the key components of the evolving growth of our embryonic soul. Without it, we could not participate in the fulfillment of the divine plan for eternal salvation, which is essential for our spiritual growth and eventual fusion with our Thought Adjuster. This also allows us to take part in the evolution of the Supreme, another aspect of the divine plan.

But, you know, I am not clear on what “antithesis of a spirit person” means in this context. If it means we are at the bottom rung of infinite personality, itself being thesis, I can see that. Our animal nature is evolving with the aid of the indwelling spirit of God, which eventually results in fusion. That would be the synthesis, I suppose. Or, alternatively, *“As the mind of any personality in the universe becomes more spiritual — Godlike — it becomes less responsive to material gravity. Reality, measured by physical-gravity response, is the antithesis of reality as determined by the quality of spirit content. Physical-gravity action is a quantitative determiner of nonspirit energy; spiritual-gravity action is the qualitative measure of the living energy of divinity.”* (UB12:8.5)



Personality and who I am becoming

If personality is a gift from God and remains constant, never changing, who or what is the other being that I sense I am throughout my life? And am I becoming more like my ideal personality or drifting further away from it? During my early years, I was taught that God is everywhere, all-powerful, loving, and intelligent. I couldn't accept the notion of an angry or jealous god that was preached from the Methodist pulpit. The earlier concept of a loving God came from my grandmother, who was a Christian Science practitioner. While these initial ideas were influential, it was the discovery of the very first Abraham-Hicks publications, *A New Beginning*, volumes 1 and 2, decades later that truly brought

everything back home. From there, an introduction to the Unity church in KCMO led me into a "continuing search for truth," which ultimately resulted in my discovering *The Urantia Book*.

But now, the process of reading and understanding the book has introduced me to a whole new range of infinite possibilities for living. The knowledge of what comes next, what came before, and how we truly are, and so on, makes this adventure THE thing to grab onto. This means trying to understand it at every level possible. I have begun this journey by absorbing everything I can from any sources I can

find, as long as they are reliably discernible and convey the truth.

So, yes, my personal ideas and values are drawing me closer to what I have learned is the Original Personality, that of our Universal Father. Without going into detail about morality, love, service, or truth, beauty, and goodness, just imagine what it truly means to have a fragment of God indwelling you and that your real personality (not your character) is from God himself. Or consider the role of our Universe Mother Spirit in the formation and actions of our mind. Also, reflect on the truth about Jesus—his origins, his mission, his life, and teachings—and the Spirit of Truth that connects us to him.

Do you suppose if I had been a devout believer in that angry and jealous god, I would find myself immensely disappointed? Sure there were surprises and a few “wait a minute” moments, such as “reincarnation” or the whole idea of Jesus actually being Michael, our creator father of Nebadon. But unless one is a firm believer in the Lucifer and Caligastia approach to universe governance, these surprises can easily be dropped.

The higher concepts of universe personality imply: identity, self-consciousness, self-will, and possibility for self-revelation. And these characteristics further imply fellowship with other and equal personalities, such as exists in the personality associations of the Paradise Deities. And the absolute unity of these associations is so perfect that divinity becomes known by indivisibility, by oneness. *“The Lord God*

is one. Indivisibility of personality does not interfere with God's bestowing his spirit to live in the hearts of mortal men. Indivisibility of a human father's personality does not prevent the reproduction of mortal sons and daughters." (UB1:7.6)

While each of us is an expression of self at whatever level in the cosmos we find ourselves, regardless of who or what we are, we are all connected by the personality of the Universal Father. We all exist within his "indivisibility of personality." However, this indivisibility does not and cannot prevent the individuation of unique personality expression by each will creature, mortal or celestial. Thus, the uniqueness of personality is complemented by a circuit of personality embrace that comes from the Father and reaches everyone without exception.



Personality and Truth, Beauty, and Goodness

“Hence materialism, atheism, is the maximation of ugliness, the climax of the finite antithesis of the beautiful. Highest beauty consists in the panorama of the unification of the variations which have been born of pre-existent harmonious reality.” (UB56:10.4)

“The false science of materialism would sentence mortal man to become an outcast in the universe. Such partial knowledge is potentially evil; it is knowledge composed of



both good and evil. Truth is beautiful because it is both replete and symmetrical. When man searches for truth, he pursues the divinely real.” (UB2:7.4)

What are the contrasts to Truth, Beauty, and Goodness? How about “materialism” (or atheism), ugliness, and sin?

if “[t]ruth is the basis of science and philosophy, presenting the intellectual foundation of religionThe meanings of eternal truth make a combined appeal to the intellectual and spiritual natures of mortal man,’then its contrast is falsehood, and cannot be the basis of any universe or cosmic reality. It is illusion, but there is nothing that says illusion isn’t active in our evolutionary worlds.” (UB56:10.9-10)

If beauty constitutes “... *the presence of appreciative creature mind.*” then its contrast would be the non-presence of appreciation, that is, or the non-appreciative creature mind. “*Beauty is the intellectual recognition of the harmonious time-space synthesis of the far-flung diversification of phenomenal reality, all of which stems from pre-existent and eternal oneness.*” Thus the contrast would be the non-intellectual, or non-recognition, of such harmonious synthesis. As “[u]niversal beauty embraces the harmonious relations and rhythms of the cosmic creation...,” resulting in intellectual appeal thus leading towards a “... *unified and synchronous comprehension of the material universe*” then its contrast leads to what we term “ugliness, the quality of being unpleasant or repulsive in appearance..” But, hey, I know what I like!

A bit more on this. I think there is an innate sense of rightness regarding beauty, a quality of truth when the right combinations of harmony, form, color, melody, or whatever the medium is, that is appreciated by all mentally coherent individuals. Perhaps it is analogous to the inbuilt intuitive response of personal morality. And perhaps it is the Thought Adjuster or the Spirit of Truth that is leading the charge, creating a sense of felt oneness that comes across as truth, or at least truthiness. (UB56:10.9-12)

What is goodness? We learn that “[d]ivine goodness represents the revelation of infinite values to the finite mind.... The recognition of goodness implies a mind of moral status, a personal mind with ability to discriminate

between good and evil.” This will be evil in the sense of sin and iniquity. But what about evil in the sense of ignorance or error? Given the strict meaning of what divine goodness is, even simple ignorance and error fall outside of the definition of goodness.

“But the possession of goodness, greatness, is the measure of real divinity attainment.” This suggests that the contrast with goodness may not match any attainment of divinity reality. (UB56:10.9-12)

Personally, I have discovered—or otherwise decided—that living a life in contrast to truth, beauty, and goodness is far too much work! Non-truth and falsehood in daily living require a memory that must consistently recall the lies told to everyone as well as to itself. It’s simply too hard. As an architect and urban designer, I have always aimed to combine the best efforts in form and materials, budget and schedule, regulations and client needs, along with some talent, to achieve a result that is compatible within its own skin and beautiful to look at and explore. No “pleather,” thank you. While my interests in good and beautiful design have not waned, the visual results of most of our built environment suggest I am in the minority.

I find the idea of doing good, even as I pass by, to be a satisfying way to think, be, and act. Sometimes the urge may arise to evade responsibility for something—I might tell the teacher my dog ate it—but then, in reflection, why would I give my power to a dog? I will own it. I actually get a charge out of that. I also enjoy doing things for others, serving

others, as it were. As I spend at least an hour every day working on some aspect of *The Urantia Book*—reading, answering questions such as these—I try to slip the dollar tip into the jar without the Starbuck partner seeing me do it. Why let the right hand know what the left is doing all the time, eh?





Other Thoughts About Personality

I have had other thoughts about personality that I have not yet addressed. I put them out to the group engaged in the course on personality. Here were my thoughts:

1. Is personality energy? Is the personality circuit an energy circuit?
2. How can one merge their self-concept (sometimes referred to as ego, but not in a negative way) into their personality to create a more consistent expression of divine consciousness in daily living?
3. How is one's self-concept different from one's moral consciousness, or are they the same?
4. How can we be the ones to lead the way for a consciousness of Jesus-ness to spread throughout the world, as the book suggests is necessary?

I didn't expect anyone to respond to these thoughts, but someone did. Here's what they said:

1. Yes! Personality is the universal circuit of the Father's actuality within each of us. Everything in the universe is energy, and each Personality has its own universal energy signature.

2. There is no merging. There is no separateness. Ego is Personality operating for the self instead of God, and always feels separated from Divinity when not doing the Father's Will, which we should be doing always. We must be prepared to serve at all times, to serve humanity in every way possible. How can we think separately when we are one?
3. It's all the same. Moral consciousness is the understanding of Fairness and is Personal to each individual. If one does things for the betterment of humanity, one will always be doing the Father's Will and cause Soul Growth and Mind expansion.
4. The best way is to study the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness of God(Our Personality) as revealed in the 5th epochal revelation, absorb it, digest it, and live it! We must practice reflective meditation everyday, and discern the teachings and bring them into every living moment of our lives. Every day walk in the Spirit of Truth and every moment see the Beauty of God within and without you and spread His(your) Goodness to all you encounter and you will accomplish the highest desire of the Father within you.

Of course, I had to respond with: Wow. I really didn't expect anyone to answer these questions. Good for you. I intended the questions to suggest many other concepts that might be explored through further thinking on the subject of personality. Let me respond to your thoughts:

1. We do read that everything is "energy" but we are also led to believe there are different types of energy, in fact, many different types. We know the spiritual gravity circuit is not the same as the Paradise gravity circuit. And pure spirit is a long way from the nature of material vibration that makes up our finite world. The book tells us that on Paradise all energy is unified. Unified in what? Spirit? But if God bestows upon us the Thought Adjuster and our personality, consider this: Is the TA energy? Which suggests God is energy too, wouldn't it? And if our personality is a direct gift to us, is it really energy, or something else? It is too easy to say that everything is energy, since doing so tells us nothing, really.
2. While you say there is no "separation," there certainly is in the finite worlds. The book makes it clear that the differences relate to the worlds of existential reality and those like ours, experiential reality. If there were no difference between the two, we would already be perfect instead of perfecting will creatures. Would you say you are perfect now? Or perhaps you are working on it. What is the difference between the two conditions? It is our intentional efforts to align our non-perfect self-concepts—egos—with our perfect and unique personality that help evolve our soul.
3. Your answer to this one could open a whole can of worms; good for you! Moral consciousness has a great deal to do with growing our souls. Morality, as you say, is understanding of fairness—AND APPLYING IT. To understand it without acting upon it is probably not the

will of God. While one's morals may be personal to each individual, aren't they motivated by the exact same forces? The bigger question might be how does one determine what is for the betterment of humanity? Most people "do what they do because they think they are doing the right thing. This is true for the ISIS suicide bomber as it was for Hitler. Herein lies the can of worms—or perhaps Pandora's box.

4. 4. If we all rely on readers of *The Urantia Book*, and even fewer actual absorbers and digesters of it, we will never achieve our goals. My question would be more along the lines of how we, as readers, can be the catalyst for others to look to Jesus' life as a model for their own lives. In fact, how many UB readers actively act on this now? Consider this: there may be a million or so UB readers worldwide. Let's assume there are 1.3 million instead. Compared to the 130 MILLION new people born each year, possibly more. Our entire UB readership today is only one one-hundredth of a percent of the number of new babies born each year. It is my understanding that our study of *The Urantia Book* is mainly for our own edification. However, we need to take action as well. Remember, mere faith won't take us there; we need to do something to move Urantia toward Life and Light. That is the real issue.

Then another participant shared this: "I think that the answer is simply follow the two commandments Jesus gave us. Love God and love your neighbor."

I had to tackle this one also with:

Except that the second commandment is not the one that Jesus wanted us to obey. In the end, Jesus said, *“You well know the commandment which directs that you love one another; that you love your neighbor even as yourself. But I am not wholly satisfied with even that sincere devotion on the part of my children. I would have you perform still greater acts of love in the kingdom of the believing brotherhood. And so I give you this new commandment: That you love one another even as I have loved you. And by this will all men know that you are my disciples if you thus love one another.”* (UB180:1.1)

And, *“You should become the apostle of the new commandment which I have this night given you. Dedicate your life to teaching your brethren how to love one another, even as I have loved you.”* (UB181:2.4)

That is the new commandment. Even so, how simple is that? With the exception of Jesus, is it humanly possible? It is a goal; it is not a reality. If it were that simple, we would not need *The Urantia Book*, would we? We would already be in Light and Life.

Recall the expression “a man’s reach should exceed his grasp” (from a poem by Robert Browning). The reach is for all of us to love each other as Jesus loves us. Our grasp is where each of us happens to be in our current intellectual and spiritual evolution at any point in time.

In conclusion: Personality is, indeed, a mystery, even to the celestial authors of our text. But so are a whole of other things. What I enjoy about the UB is that the authors don't know everything, and they are willing to tell us they don't know everything. Refreshing, isn't it? But they do not stop there; they do their best to speculate about what they think may be going on regarding things they don't quite understand. That is the approach I really appreciate. And that is the approach that make these courses so valuable to my studying of the UB.



Discussion points from the viewpoint of personality

1. Will my love rejuvenate an evil person's soul?

1 I think the answer is unqualifiedly yes, I believe love can do that (perhaps not mine, however, but someone's). If not on this world, on the next.

2. Should true spiritual morality tolerate iniquity?

Love tolerates much, and iniquity, while tolerated on this world, will be disintegrated in the mansion worlds unless redeemed.

3. Must one tolerate evil or iniquity to persist?

I don't see that we have much choice in our political lives. In our more private lives—socially, intellectually, and

spiritually—we can choose not to be around it and avoid it the best we can. But the experience of evil (ignorance and sinfulness) and iniquity is a part of our experiences. They are, in part, what makes us agondonters. (If you don't know what that is, see UB50:7.2.)

4. Are there not spiritual warriors?

It depends on what defines a warrior. If it is someone who takes up “arms” for a cause, but Jesus asks us to be discerning in our “fight” and to fight the good fight against doubt. What is the proper fight to undertake? Jesus tells his apostles, “I have repeatedly told you that my kingdom is not of this world, and that my disciples will not fight to effect its establishment.” Yes, we are here to make a difference in the material plane, but also in the spiritual realms. Thus, we must take up “arms” for some worthy and morally beneficial battles, while resisting not evil in the process. We must fight “the good fight of faith.” These experiences are “soul-making” ones and we gain much through them.

5. Do material warriors exist?

The United States has been at war for over 70 percent of its existence. Sounds like we are a nation of material warriors. While many will claim we do so in the name of democracy and freedom, there is ample evidence today that we have been kidding ourselves.

6. Should morally depraved people be terminated?

While Jesus tells us that it is not our place as individuals to make such judgements, he also tells us that that is the role of civilized governments. Morally depraved individuals will have a tough road upon graduating from this finite world. Keep in mind that to terminate a morally deprived individual (assuming he or she is not totally iniquitous) is to terminate prematurely the opportunity for that individual to have the benefit of the experiences of the rest of his or her life upon the ascension career still ahead. Plus it cuts short the opportunity of the Thought Adjuster to make progress upon the individual's behalf.

7. What perspectives are spiritually progressive?

Since the First Source and Center is gaining experiences through our lives, surely he is looking at all possible experiences to experience, and those are also the ones that go to the Supreme. Thus, perhaps all perspectives are, in some way or many ways, spiritually progressive.

8. When should moral battles for civilization's advancements be initiated?

This is a great question. I say this in order to stall for time. At the time of this writing, I was reading two very interesting books that delve more deeply into this question. Both are by the same author and were both recommended by The New York Times, if I recall correctly. The author is William Ophuls. One book is titled *Immoderate Greatness: Why Civilizations Fail*. The other is *Sane Polity: A Pattern Language*. (I mentioned these books a few weeks ago.) I

think these are important books. The ideas expressed in them carefully lay out all the contributing factors that lead to the failure of civilizations. We are in decline presently and, probably, will fail shortly. Whether we are paying attention or not, we all experience evidence of this daily. And since we are all connected worldwide economically, politically, environmentally, and so forth, the failure of civilization this time will be global. The author tells us what is happening and what can be done, if anything. If nothing else, they are guidelines of what to do and not to do next time a civilization of immoderate (hopefully) greatness arises to take our place. So yes, moral battles are important. Far more important than battle for land or oil or money or power or control. Our souls require moral battles; those are the only ones that count in the long haul.

9. When do conflicting perspectives induce action for good?

Conflicting perspectives between individuals are opportunities to find the path of most love. To me that is the path of truth. If each party to a dispute can, with integrity and without prejudice or bias or opinions, move toward a search for truth, the path will become clear. I am reminded of the statement that “truth has no agenda.” If, in the search for truth, an agenda is being pushed, the truth will not come out. Perhaps some truthiness, but that is usually a long way from Cosmic Reality. Conflicting realities are not agendas per se, but they are only starting points on the road to discovery. Each day I start out with a perspective. It is mine. I meet someone that has their own perspective. Can we get

along. Of course. If the goal is mutual and we both do our best—our honest best—to get there. Most of life that is pretty easy. Considering world affairs, however, is another level of complexity. But the rules are the same. I am reminded that one of the major goals of our ascension careers is spending much time working within teams that consist of all kinds of different perspectives that likely conflict with each other. But this is the way the universe of universes is structured. If we can not learn to build upon each others' conflicting ideas to co-create something better, then we have a tough road ahead.



The Unsolved Mysteries of the Universe

The Query: *"Personality is one of the unsolved mysteries of the universes."* (5:6.2) (That sure takes some pressure off...!) Yet, how do I understand personality? What is God's relation to my absolutely "unique" personality?

My "absolutely unique personality," which I call my "personality, is one of the many gifts from God. (Unique identity, while not a gift directly from God, is certainly a result of my inheritance as an heir of God's good kingdom of evolving will creatures, as are the identities of animals and plants, each one being unique.) *"The material self has personality and identity, temporal identity; the prepersonal spirit Adjuster also has identity, eternal identity."* (UB5:6.7)

Personality is “... potential in all creatures who possess a mind endowment ranging from the minimum of self-consciousness to the maximum of God-consciousness. But mind endowment alone is not personality” (UB5:6.3) (And this explains why animals, such as dogs, cats, horses, and so on, do NOT have personalities, yet they do have unique identities and can appear to us as having “personalities.) This personality of ours is a bestowal from our Universal Father and the bestowal “... *is the exclusive function of the Universal Father, the personalization of the living energy systems which he endows with the attributes of relative creative consciousness and the freewill control thereof.*” (UB5:6.4)

Besides that...(drum roll, please...): “*There is no personality apart from God the Father, and no personality exists except for God the Father.*” (UB5:6.4)

Why did God do this? “*The bestowal of creature personality confers relative liberation from slavish response to antecedent causation, and the personalities of all such moral beings, evolutionary or otherwise, are centered in the personality of the Universal Father. They are ever drawn towards his Paradise... upon the personality circuit of the Universe Father.*” (UB5:6.9-10)

As an aside, personalities, although they are never changing in their essence, begin to develop at a very early age (as we are born with this innate personality) and continue to evolve through the various influences on our mortal being. The book sometimes refers to this as building a moral character. I

liken this to the layers of an onion in which a core is overlaid with many layers of stuff that becomes a part of our outward beingness to other people. Sometimes these layers are like masks that conceal who we really are beneath all the layers. However, the layers can also be good ones. To build moral character upon the personality is the growth of our soul. Over time, as we move on, the not-so-fine aspects of our moral character will fall away, leaving our purer personalities recognizable to others who know us as we really are.

Footnote:

God, our Father, has given us (bestowed upon us) several gifts. I suppose one could list a million things if one wanted to, but I will hit the ones the book deems important, as these are the ones directly from God, and not from his associates or subordinates. First, the gift of personality from the time of birth into this world, which is unique and which you keep forever. Second, the gift of the Thought Adjuster. Some would add the gift of time in which to have the opportunity to come to know the Father and desire to be like him. And some would add a unique identity, but identity is actually a part of the process of life all of which has uniqueness (except for a few existential beings way up the food chain). That's it.

There are other gifts we have, such as the Adjutant Spirits, but they come from the Universal Mother Spirit. And the Holy Spirit and Spirit of Truth, both from other sources (UMS and Michael). Also, we have guardian angels and all sorts of helpers, but they are sourced elsewhere also.

The uniqueness that we find ourselves strapped with due to our genetic and environmental and social circumstances I see as overlays of our original personality which appears to continue to mature as we grow in moral consciousness, sort of like the layers of an onion. Eventually, when we move on, we will drop all of the not-so-good layers and keep the best. But our original personality is what everyone will know us by, from here to eternity.

C H A P T E R 2 9

Epilogue — Living on Earth



One Step at a Time



Being “disappointment proof”

The question is asked: How can we start preparing to be “disappointment-proof” here and now on Urantia? Do we simply cease to expect, like some current religions teach? Or is there a more active and positive way to achieve that?

I have learned—but perhaps not yet been tested—to live in this world, but not be of it. This was one of Jesus’ admonitions to us. I have been helped tremendously by *The Urantia Book* teachings. I have learned that this world is but the first and probably the very hardest for all of us, some

much more so than others. But if one can live as Jesus suggested, one can take each event as a threshold to stumble over, make it “a part of the dance,” and move on. We learn that to fear death is nonsense; that while evil is mostly ignorance and not iniquitous, we can forgive much, tolerate some, and accept all. That the acts of certain of those in our lives are not theirs, but just their acts—“loving the sinner but hating the sin.”

I have also learned that to live by this philosophy of doing good as I pass by, taking responsibility for my actions, helping out where I am needed, and appreciating all I meet along the way makes for a much easier path than if I had been otherwise. That is, I move on. Impersonal life situations are such that I may be limited by what I can do to make adjustments, but I am not limited in how I can feel about them. If Jesus were here today—in the flesh—why would he deal with them any differently than he did then? Give unto Caesar when necessary, but otherwise, his would continue to be, as it is now, a spiritual exercise in living. He, too, would let the material world, the shadow world, be what it is. He would continue to live in it, but not be of it.

Is that all there is? For this edition, yes.

However, the number of these documents will continue to grow as more topics are added, resulting from the completion of additional courses and other studies.

Stay tuned.

James Leese

Appendix A - How to read *The Urantia Book* (For beginners)

People from various faiths around the world are increasingly turning to *The Urantia Book* as an inspiring resource that deepens their understanding of the Bible's truths within a non-denominational, spiritual framework. Currently, the book is available in over twenty languages, with additional translations in progress. Numerous study groups worldwide are dedicated to exploring God's mysteries and the universe through this book, while also gaining a deeper appreciation of Jesus' life and teachings—insights that extend beyond those of previous ages.

While concerns about the authorship of the book are common, they are similar to questions about the authorship of many prophets who influence our spiritual journey as depicted in the Bible, or those with spiritual insight from that quiet, small voice across ages—our inner part of God—or the messages received that lead to works like *A Course in Miracles*.

The Urantia Book undoubtedly transforms the lives of those who read it. This applies to everyone engaged in its study. It enhances our spiritual journey to the point that seeking spiritual living becomes the central aim of our pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness for the rest of our lives. We assure you: it will infuse your messages in ministerial

leadership and spiritual ministry with new meaning and expression.

First: Due to the complexity and detailed nature of the content, it's advisable not to begin with the opening. Instead, revisit it after understanding some of the other papers. This approach helps prevent feeling overwhelmed or discouraged by the dense subject matter and condensed language. However, don't avoid reading it—engage with it as your understanding deepens and expands.

Most readers I have encountered and the advice I offer suggest starting with Part IV, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*. Therefore...

Second, Recall a story of Jesus from the Bible, maybe from Sunday School, and locate it in Part IV of the UB. Examples include the miracle of turning water into wine, the feeding of the 5000, Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection, the “Last Supper,” or the “Sermon on the Mount.” Read one or more of these to get a sense of the language and content detail.

Other ideas: Turning water into wine (UB Paper 137, section 4), the feeding of the 5000 (UB Paper), the crucifixion (UB Paper 187), and the resurrection of Jesus (UB Paper 189); the “Last Supper” (UB Paper 179); and the “Sermon on the Mount” (UB Paper 140).

Third, reflect on what you read and consider how it compares to the Bible. Why might it have been different, if so? How did it make you feel?

Fourth, keep an open mind and seek the truth in what you read and understand. There is far more in the Universe than we have been told or led to believe. The Urantia Book can assist you in understanding this and much more.

After reading selected papers or sections in Part IV, you might choose to read it all. As you read, you'll encounter references to other ideas in different parts of the book, guiding your next steps. Some people go straight to Part I without feeling overwhelmed, while others prefer to take their time. Alternatively, you could start with Part III, *The History of Urantia*, before moving to Part I.

You might consider finding a friend to read the book with and discuss it. I've given many copies to friends, and we often talk about its ideas. There could also be a study group in your area, which can be very helpful for gaining additional insights. These groups might be found online through the two organizations mentioned below. There are extensive online resources about the book, including the full text available for download or online reading, as well as audio files to listen to or download as MP3s — for example, urantia.org and truthbook.com. Additionally, Amazon offers many related books connected to the UB.

Enjoy.

Notes

About the Author

I was an architect, a planner, and an urban designer. I am now retired from those professions. However, I still undertake illustrative work for other professionals. I continue to create digital art for my own enjoyment. See my Facebook page.

I relocated to Southwest Florida after 30 years of practice in the Denver area and Kansas City.

My experience includes architecture specializing in mixed-use, residential apartments and loft condominiums, parking garages in urban centers, and other urban core building types.

While in Denver, I was a key participant in the design of many urban and downtown projects in Denver and Boulder, Colorado, Kansas City, San Diego, and Ithaca, New York, many of them award-winning.

I also taught several courses at the University of Colorado Boulder's School of Architecture and Planning and served on numerous community boards and committees, including a five-year term on the City of Boulder Planning Board.

Most recently, I have taken up art and architectural illustration, applying the professional knowledge and the many skills I have accumulated over the years.

I discovered The Urantia Book in 2010.

I became ordained as a minister through the United Brotherhood Mission in 2017.

Education of sorts

- ✳ University of Denver, College of Law
- ✳ Arizona State University, College of Architecture, B. Arch, 1968
- ✳ University of New Mexico, College of Fine Arts
- ✳ Harvard Graduate School of Design (I spent 3 days there, so I have a couple of ball caps)
- ✳ Trip to the Holy Lands - Unity of Fort Myers - 2010
- ✳ UrantiaUniversity Institute - 2015-2018 (18 courses)
- ✳ Urantia Book Internet School - 2011, 2017-2019 (11 courses)



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