

the Fellowship Herald

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A publication of *The Urantia Book* Fellowship



"Flight of the Gravity Messengers"



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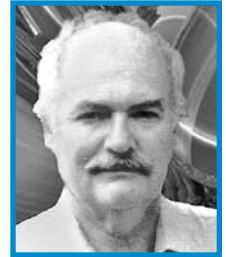
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Flight of the Gravity Messengers

Troy Bishop has been producing *Urantia Book*-oriented creations since 1981. His current cover image, “Flight of the Gravity Messengers”, refers to an order of modified and personalized Adjusters who carry out missions under the command of the finaliters, and with whom finaliters develop a touching and profound affection. Gravity Messengers have a “timeless technique of traversing space” and are “competent to utilize any and all energies, circuits, and even gravity.” [31:22.1] P. 347) Troy, 81, recently released two new Amazon Kindle books, *Sandpiper Shores*, and *Bright World of Choice*. His existing *Urantia* related print books at Amazon are being reformatted for Amazon Kindle. Troy’s recently completed



android app, “*Urantia Book Access*,” is available at Google Play. More of his work is available online at www.starspring.com.

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Please note that the views expressed in this publication represent the opinions of their authors and not necessarily those of The *Urantia Book* Fellowship or the editors of The Fellowship Herald.

EFFECTIVE STUDY GROUP LEADERSHIP: LIGHTING THE WAY

By David Kulieke, Lincolnshire, IL

The following speech was delivered at the UAI Study Group Symposium, June 11–15, 2014 in Madison, WI.

INTRODUCTION

There was a young man walking down a street one day who saw three people struggling with a piano in a doorway. The piano was wedged tightly, and the three couldn't move it. Being a good Samaritan, the young man pitched in to help. A half hour later, he paused, mopped his perspiring brow, and said, "I don't know if we'll ever get this thing out of this building." The other three looked at him and said, "What do you mean out?"

This little story illustrates a point that is made in Paper 81:

Ten men are of little more value than one in lifting a great load unless they lift together—all at the same moment. [81:6.37] (P. 911)

But *The Urantia Book* also describes what can happen when people do work together:

A social group of human beings in co-ordinated working harmony stands for a force far greater than the simple sum of its parts. [133:5.6] (P. 1477)

The *Urantia Revelation* needs our groups and our group leaders to function as well as they can if we are to prosper. We are all dedicated to improving and to growing the number of *Urantia Book* study groups. Like you I yearn to enhance my study group's spirituality, to maintain or improve our quality of study, and to create more stability and community. We can all always improve what we do.

I'm often reminded of an image from a recent political campaign, the vision of comparing the doing of good things to "1,000 points of light." This is one way to view our need to maintain, improve, and create study groups. Creating real, valid groups that study *The Urantia Book* is simply logical, and it is imperative that we not only seek to create new groups but that we continue to try to enhance and not to give up on any groups that already exist. Once we ignite one of those lights, we need to keep it burning!

If our *Urantia* groups are to burst forward with new vigor and success, these groups must depend very much on their leadership. Let's enlarge on the first quotation we read:

In civilization much, very much, depends on an enthusiastic and effective load-pulling spirit. Ten men are of little more value than one in lifting a great load unless they lift together—all at the same moment. And such teamwork—social co-operation—is dependent on leadership. The cultural civilizations of the past and the present have been based upon the intelligent co-operation of the citizenry with wise and progressive leaders; and until man evolves to higher levels, civilization will continue to be dependent on wise and vigorous leadership. [81:6.37] (P. 911)

Such "wise and vigorous" leaders must understand what issues they will address and how they will address them. I believe that three major concerns that study groups face are the needs for increased but real spirituality within our groups, improved study of *The Urantia Book*, and greater attention paid to improving our sense of community. Wise and vigorous leadership will consider how to gracefully and appropriately enhance prayer and worship, effective study, and strong relationships within their groups.

ENHANCING SPIRITUALITY WITHIN OUR GROUPS

The Urantia Book makes clear the value of group prayer and worship, and a significant matter for leaders is how to fairly and appropriately enhance their groups' approaches to prayer and worship.

Bill Sadler said "*The Urantia Book* is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end." I've actually heard this idea many times and said it myself. It should be obvious; after all, the physical reality of *The Urantia Book* is nothing more than processed wood containing black abstract symbols on a white page that must be translated into words and then turned into facts, knowledge, meaning, and values. If applied, these values can eventually lead to relationships between personalities, including between us and God—finally, ends in themselves. So actually the book is a means to a means to a means to—well, you get the idea—to an end.

Some of our most important goals or ends are clearly stated in the oft-quoted passage from the paper "Personality Survival": *Everything nonspiritual in human experience, excepting personality, is a means to an end. Every true relationship of mortal man with other persons—human or*

divine—is an end in itself. [112:2.4] (P. 1228)

We are also told that: *Spiritual experience is the real soul of man's cosmos.* [102:4.6] (P. 1123)

Although *The Urantia Book* strongly emphasizes our personal relationship with God as our most important spiritual activity, the book also encourages us to pray and worship in our groups.

We read: “...prayer need not always be individual. Group or congregational praying is very effective in that it is highly socializing in its repercussions. When a group engages in community prayer for moral enhancement and spiritual uplift, such devotions are reactive upon the individuals composing the group; they are all made better because of participation.” [91:5.2] (P. 998)

I have frequently heard discussed the importance of bringing more spirituality into our study groups. That such a desire exists is not surprising. Historically, early readers sought to avoid turning our study of *The Urantia Book* into a church, perhaps because of their own experiences, perhaps because they wanted to avoid any sort of authoritative interpretation or ecclesiastical hierarchy. But the atmosphere of a study group may not lead to worship and prayer as readily as does that of a church or temple wherein rituals and prescribed approaches to worship exist in buildings designed for that purpose. However, *The Urantia Book* clearly suggests that we do benefit from group prayer, thankfulness, and worship: “Thus does the mind of one augment its spiritual values by gaining much of the insight of the other. In this way men enrich the soul by pooling their respective spiritual possessions.” [160:2.7] (P. 1776)

Yet how we bring our spiritual communion into a group can be a delicate undertaking and a challenge for study group leaders. One group I was in debated the proposal for a mandated prayer to start each meeting, while others wanted only a moment of silence, and others wanted no prayer at all. We compromised by making it voluntary for the leader of each meeting. Many sincere readers are quite uncomfortable with group devotions, whether due to form, to being asked to engage in an activity that is personally uncomfortable, to one's own religious background, to a discomfort with an approach that feels mystical, or to myriad other reasons. We must be mindful of the sensibilities of group members if they are to remain group members. Consequently, the group needs a strong understanding of what *The Urantia Book* actually teaches us about our spiritual communions.

There are many references about effective and ethical prayer which include descriptions both of questionable as well as genuine approaches.

We read: “Do not be so slothful as to ask God to solve

your difficulties, but never hesitate to ask him for wisdom and spiritual strength to guide and sustain you while you yourself resolutely and courageously attack the problems at hand.” [91:6.5] (P. 999)

Prayer may not be employed to avoid the delays of time or to transcend the handicaps of space. [146:2.9] (P. 1639)

Prayer must never be so prostituted as to become a substitute for action. [91:4.2] (P. 997)

True praying is the sincere attitude of reaching heavenward for the attainment of your ideals.

In all your praying be fair; do not expect God to show partiality, to love you more than his other children, your friends, neighbors, even enemies. [91:4.3] (P. 998)

Remember, even if prayer does not change God, it very often effects great and lasting changes in the one who prays... [91:4.5] (P. 998)

The Urantia Book warns of certain kinds of mysticism: “Mysticism... is often something of a retreat from life which is embraced by those humans who do not relish the more robust activities of living a religious life in the open arenas of human society and commerce. True religion must act.” [102:2.8] (P. 1121) When prayer becomes overmuch aesthetic..., “it loses much of its socializing influence and ends toward mysticism and the isolation of its devotees. There is a certain danger associated with overmuch private praying which is corrected and prevented by group praying, community devotions.” [91:7.6] (P. 1001)

Study group leaders also may consider what *The Urantia Book* says about our actual working relationships with our Thought Adjusters as these leaders try to make their groups' prayer and worship practices valid and attractive: We are told: “Every decision you make either impedes or facilitates the function of the Adjuster...” [110:6.6] (P. 1210)

You must not regard co-operation with your Adjuster as a particularly conscious process, for it is not... [110:3.6] (P. 1206)

While the voice of the Adjuster is ever within you, most of you will hear it seldom during a lifetime. [110:7.9] (P. 1213)

... it is dangerous to entertain the idea that every new concept originating in the human mind is the dictation of the Adjuster. More often, in beings of your order, that which you accept as the Adjuster's voice is in reality the emanation of your own intellect. [110:5.6] (P. 1208)

It is difficult to fully please every member of the group when it comes to instilling group practices of prayer and worship. However, group leaders might consider including the welfare of their groups when they are praying and wor-

shipping individually. Remember the book's suggestions for "worshipful problem solving," a consistent habit of Jesus.

IMPROVING STUDY

Enhancing spirituality in our study groups may be paramount. But if we are to use the book to grow spiritually, then we also must read *The Urantia Book* effectively to enhance our spiritual lives.

Our spiritual growth and our relationships are our true ends; studying the teachings of *The Urantia Book* is a means to those ends.

We do not need *The Urantia Book*, of course, to find God, who loves us, is within us, and is available to anyone who seeks him and has faith in him; nevertheless, *The Urantia Book*, the Fifth Epochal Revelation of Truth on Urantia, is a magnificent resource that helps us to gain spiritual insight and to better understand who we are, why we are here, and where we are going. At least it can be such an aid if we study it deeply and then sincerely try to incorporate its teachings into our lives. The fact that this revelation is presented in book form certainly tells us that the revelators want us to use our minds and use them well.

Thus, one of the most important tasks for study group leaders is to help readers better understand *The Urantia Book*. Improved comprehension through stronger study should be one of our highest priorities.

Several references support this idea:

The divine spirit makes contact with mortal man, not by 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. [101:1.3] (PP. 1104–05)

Material mind is the arena in which human personalities live, are self-conscious, make decisions, choose God or forsake him, eternalize or destroy themselves. [111:1.3] ((P. 1216)

... to start such a magnificent and intriguing adventure through space by means of the progression of time, [mortal man] should begin by the organization of knowledge into idea-decisions.... [101:6.7] (P. 1112)

We also see this emphasis on human learning in the life of Jesus. The primary mission of Michael's bestowal on Urantia was that of God knowing man, of the Creator Son of Nebadon enhancing his comprehension of and empathy for his creatures. Jesus' education while on earth was supreme, and he learned all that he could about human beings even as he loved them. He worked in many professions and became expert in several, he traveled where he could throughout the civilized world, and he was a scholar of religion and history

and everything human.

Regarding Jesus' life-long learning, we are told that:

As a child [Jesus] accumulated a vast body of knowledge; as a youth he sorted, classified, and correlated this information; and now as a man of the realm he begins to organize these mental possessions preparatory to utilization in his subsequent teaching, ministry, and service ... [127:6.14] (P. 1405)

The teachings of Jesus constituted the first Urantian religion which so fully embraced a harmonious co-ordination of knowledge, wisdom, faith, truth, and love... [101:6.8] (P. 1112)

Like Jesus, a major task of our Urantia careers is to learn all that we can about others and about the world around us. I would suggest that not only do we want to study *The Urantia Book* as well as we can in our study groups, we want to educate ourselves individually about other subjects as well. I am an English and music teacher, but I believe that, after everything we study for our vocations and our interests, some primary intellectual pursuits include history and then integrating all that we learn. We are told that:

Revealed religion is the unifying element of human existence. Revelation unifies history, co-ordinates geology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, sociology, and psychology. [102:4.6] (P. 1123)

At first life was a struggle for existence; now, for a standard of living; next it will be for quality of thinking, the coming earthly goal of human existence. [81:6.28] (P. 910)

It is the purpose of education to develop and sharpen these innate endowments of the human mind; of civilization to express them; of life experience to realize them; of religion to ennoble them; and of personality to unify them. [16:6.11] (P. 192)

HOW TO STUDY MORE EFFECTIVELY

I know many of you belong to fine study groups. I have been fortunate to belong to study groups in Chicago which have sincere and dedicated readers. Nevertheless, we continue to look for ways to understand *The Urantia Book* better. For example, we have always had prepared leaders and a program. But we've innovated lately. This included an entire year spent on "The Foreword" as we began our fifth sequential reading through the book since 1956. Another group has adapted what we call "Paper Topicals" instead of sequential reading. Some groups require homework and preparation. But I also know from observation and from conversations that many groups need deeper study of the book if members are to gain more from reading it.

I also know from observation and from conversations that many groups need deeper study of the book if members are to gain more from reading it.

There are many ways to approach studying *The Urantia Book* effectively, and variety is one of them. Many people enjoy reading *The Urantia Book* sequentially, and the book assuredly can be studied in-depth in that format. But whether reading sequentially or not, I would suggest that leaders consider some of the following approaches:

- Use outside references that do not compromise the central purpose of studying *The Urantia Book*; these resources include having an excellent dictionary with etymologies, good atlases, and other reference books; literature and history books can often be used; The Bible and other sacred books, when relevant, are helpful; and, of course, study aids for *The Urantia Book*, whether print or electronic, should be readily available.

- Delve deeply into the book, even when it's difficult, even when you've just been told by a Divine Counselor that he doesn't get it, either. Everything is there for a purpose, and even if we can't reach a final answer on a topic, we expand our perspectives when we explore these difficult ideas.

- Instead of feeling that time was wasted when occurs that oft-repeated phenomenon of finding your discussion addressed in the next paragraph, rejoice when this happens! Notice that it doesn't happen as often, if at all, when reading alone; it happens because good discussion has opened up a topic. This is substantiation of the exquisite integrational techniques of the writing of *The Urantia Book*, of the power and need for discussion, and of the beauty of good questioning techniques.

- Through the use of the rotating moderator, give all chances to speak and read if they wish. Don't let quickness or a dominating personality squash those who are quieter or less aggressive. As an English teacher, I strongly urge the raising of hands, even in a small group. I like to tell the story of the class I observed when I was getting my master's degree. I watched the English class of Mr. H, a very sincere and gentle soul. There were only 11 students in the class, and Mr. H did not require raised hands. For my project, I was to keep track of each student's minute-by-minute activities in this discussion formatted class for five class periods. To hear and watch this class, one would think it extraordinarily quiet and

respectful. But at week's end my statistics showed that one student, Ben, had made more than 90% of the comments because of his alert, interested, rapid-fire, but not necessarily perceptive personality. Two other students had said almost everything else, and the other eight students said virtually nothing all week except when whispering to each other.

- Attend to physical issues that can help or inhibit a good study meeting, such as having plenty of copies of the book available, staying on time, and having comfortable seating so that everyone can see each other: when we welcome our unseen friends, that is not supposed to include George who is crammed into the alcove around the corner.

- Try different study and educational approaches. One place you can start is by perusing the document "Prime Education Quotations by Category," a list of references of what *The Urantia Book* says about education and teaching that is available.

I do not believe we should ever apologize for seeking to improve the quality of thought and scholarship in our study groups; but what we also need to do is enhance the spiritual quality of our meetings.

We read that: "*When the development of the intellectual nature proceeds faster than that of the spiritual, such a situation renders communication with the Thought Adjuster both difficult and dangerous. Likewise, over-spiritual development tends to produce a fanatical and perverted interpretation of the spirit leadings of the divine indweller.*" [110:6.4] (P. 1209)

Balance is the key.

CREATING COMMUNITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Besides addressing prayer and worship, as well as seeking improved study, study group leaders must consider steps to cultivate community and relationships.

We are told: "*Personality cannot very well perform in isolation. Man is innately a social creature; he is dominated by the craving of belongingness. It is literally true, 'No man lives unto himself.'*" [112:1.16] (P. 1227)

The Creators well know that it is "not good for man to be alone," and provision is accordingly made for companionship, even on Paradise. [25:8.4] (P. 283)

If no one had mentioned anything about study groups, we would have invented them, not only for the sake of group prayer and enhanced study but for the sake of relationship and community.

There is a real purpose in the socialization of religion. It is the purpose of group religious activities to dramatize the loyalties of religion; to magnify the lures of truth, beauty, and goodness; to foster the attractions of supreme values;

to enhance the service of unselfish fellowship; to glorify the potentials of family life; to promote religious education; to provide wise counsel and spiritual guidance; and to encourage group worship. And all live religions encourage human friendship, conserve morality, promote neighborhood welfare, and facilitate the spread of the essential gospel of their respective messages of eternal salvation. [99:6.2] (P. 1092)

The group potential is always far in excess of the simple sum of the attributes of the component individuals. [10:5.2] (P. 113)

I am reminded again of our history of avoiding a church-like institution. The reasons may be obvious, that we don't want the rigidity and authority that a church might bring and that we want nothing that an institution might erect to stand between us and the revelatory truths of *The Urantia Book*.

But in avoiding churchiness, we have created a need to make up for what churches can provide. Churches have done well in creating a sense of community, of friendship and acceptance, of a place where people can worship together. Perhaps most of all they provide stability. If I don't go to that beautiful, stain-glassed building on the corner this Sunday, I still know that other people will and that the church will be there with services next Sunday and the Sunday after that. We cannot necessarily say that about our study groups. Perhaps someday we will evolve into that kind of institutional momentum borne of brick, mortar, and stability, or perhaps we can partially fill this need for social support in our online meetings.

Meanwhile, study group leaders need to try a lot harder than they would otherwise with a different structure, not only to expand the Revelation one group at a time but also to keep their own study groups vibrant and extant, to keep the light burning.

A close friend of mine, a stalwart and active reader, recently said to me, "You know, the Urantia movement just isn't very attractive." This person referred to the movement as a whole, not to any of the specific organizations.

That statement shocked me somewhat, and I'm not sure that I agree with it.

Whatever its truth, however, this individual's perception can be a call for us to make the movement more attractive, whether we are describing study groups, seminars, local conferences, or international events.

Study group leaders need to be assertive, to reach out to potential readers, especially those who already have the book and have made contact, and to seek to bring them to our gatherings. Our groups need to be welcoming, to be appealing, to be safe for someone new. They need to be places that

showcase the truths and beauties of our unique Revelation, to be places of prayer and worship, but also to be places of friendship and community. Our meetings need to be where we can go to share and to break bread together.

Leaders must reach out to readers they've heard of and to those they've not seen of late. The organizations need to help people find each other.

CONCLUSION

Despite the advantage we enjoy in offering the Fifth Epochal Revelation of Truth to the world, our efforts are not producing the numbers of active participants we might want. We need to reach out to non-readers who have the potential to become readers, help current readers to become more involved, thorough, and in-depth students of the book, and encourage active readers to become contributors to outreach. We need to rededicate ourselves to a wise and spiritual mission of outreach and growth.

On the next-to-the-last page of *The Urantia Book* we read: "There are three separate evidences of [the Thought Adjuster's] indwelling of the human mind:

1. Humanitarian fellowship—love.
2. Interpretation of the universe—wisdom.
3. Spiritual evaluation of life—worship." [196:3.6-9] (P. 2094)

Study groups are very, very important places and study group hosts are very, very important leaders in our pursuit of stronger community, progressing comprehension, and fuller and more real prayer and worship.

David Kulieke is a third generation reader of The Urantia Book. An active member of the First Society of Readers of The Urantia Book since 1973, he is a career English teacher who now tutors and consults in the field of education. David became chair of the Fellowship Education Committee in 2012, and with his committee he seeks to expand and improve educational services within the Urantia movement based on sound pedagogy based on educational philosophy and the teachings of the book. He lives in Lincolnshire, Illinois, with his wife Marilyn, who is vice president of Urantia Foundation.

CAN WE HAVE A UNIVERSAL STANDARD OF MORALITY?

By Dave Holt, Concord, CA

People are throwing rocks at our shining city on the hill. Do we too, carrying our heavy stones, prepare to meet them on a battle ground? Most observers agree that moral differences and disagreements lie behind the enmity raging between Islam and the West. Polls that measure public opinion back them up.

Some think this is not publicly acknowledged in the political arena as it should be. Perhaps politicians are afraid to speak about morality, a social or political morality, preferring to leave it underneath religion's umbrella. The governing systems favored in Islamic countries do not separate politics and morality, the separation of church and state that we attempt to implement.

My interest in moral codes, systems of behavior regarding standards of right and wrong, was piqued when I read in a magazine, "Canadians are still Victorians." The observation echoed my own thoughts about Canada, where I was born and grew up, in what was known as the British Commonwealth. I recognized what I inherited, the old British morality in myself, even though I was a sixties child, one who rebelled against Victorianism. I knew I was still a Victorian because I get squeamish over public references to sex and the body, whereas Americans seem quite comfortable with such things. Secret references are okay to Victorians, though usually more lurid.

The British Empire, and its colonies, was built on the repressed and sublimated industrial energy of the Victorian era. The Empire's Victorianism began to be undone, unzipped, uncorseted if you will, first by two world wars, and then by the counterculture movement of the 1960s.

I asked my American-born wife about her moral influences. Her childhood was shaped by fundamentalist Evangelical Christianity, a moral system she described as Calvinist. Most would probably say that Puritan morality shaped the American moral code. Puritans inherited the Calvinist tradition (John Calvin 1509-1564). Today, this moral system expresses itself politically by espousing traditional "family" values. These have become associated with "Christian values," in our era. These Calvinist heirs despise socialism in any form decrying it as Communist, "the nanny state," etc. Through "right wing" Christianity, the modern

version of social conservatism motivates the forces that try to roll back the country's cultural orientation left over from the influence of Counterculture or liberal morality, portrayed as having a non-religious basis.

The continuing strong influence that the old moral codes exert on our politics and economics can easily be observed. The traditional moralities that persist today were created and evolved within religious or church communities, the same way Islam created theirs.

Religion has handicapped social development in many ways, but without religion there would have been no enduring morality nor ethics, no worth-while civilization. [92:3.6] (P. 1006)

Our current system of morality gradually evolved during an era of secularism, which excluded religious considerations from public life. We have a code of conduct that is more ethically relativistic, culturally conditioned, and thus not derived from everyone's human experience.

None of the codes of conduct mentioned here live up to the philosophical definition found in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (www.plato.stanford.edu/entries/morality-definition/), a "universal normative code of conduct that under any plausible conditions would be endorsed by all rational persons, often independently of their religious beliefs."

Born out of the secular age, the counterculture of the 60's and 70's was a breakaway movement, differing from other traditions in that a lack of religious affiliation became more common. This new anti-authoritarian movement included an inclination to dismiss the necessity or value of family life and conventional marriage; a support for sexual freedoms; stronger advocacy for gay and women's rights, and also advocated for civil rights, minorities, the environment, etc. The counterculture influence, in association with other circumstances, has created the increasingly secular state we have in the United States today.

This localized clash of differing moralities is often called the Culture Wars. Worse perhaps than this ongoing American quarrel is the discomfiting feeling that the country, with the advance of secularism, no longer has a moral philosophy. Or that which we had is being swamped by ma-

terialism, acquisitiveness, the lust for power, and greed.

More accurately, we do not have a moral philosophy that unifies us. An intriguing irony here is that both groups, social conservatives and the counter culture, have offended the Islamic moral sensibility in different ways, the “right” insisting that Jesus is the way, and the “left” with its sex, drugs and rock and roll. The clash of the Middle East with America, who Ayatollah Khomeini named, “the Great Satan,” now occupies the world stage.

Looking over the U.S. cultural landscape, none of the moral systems mentioned, Puritan, Calvinist, Counter-Culture, Victorian, or Muslim can win over the hearts and minds of all, or even most people in a diverse society such as ours; thus the current climate of confusion, conflict, and social dysfunction. Our shining city on the hill struggles to keep its lights burning bright for the world.

THE JOURNEY OUT OF DISCORD TO UNITY

How can we establish a universal moral code in such a pluralistic society as the United States? It is near impossible to adapt a socially constructed moral code based on a religious tradition to meet the needs of all. Yet the country is clearly in need of some unifying vision or value system, as is the planet, with Islamists and Westerners hurling judgments of fanaticism and immorality at each other. People quote the Bible’s famous proverb, Proverbs 29:18 with its dark intimations, “Where there is no vision, the people per-

The West likes to castigate Islam on this issue, decrying the burka, the repression, the unjust and unequal applications of Shariah law, the punitive sentences, etc., and counters the charge of immorality in one way by defending our country’s record on women’s rights. But we must look at the violence we commit against women in Western Christian culture. The industries of sex workers and pornography created by our free market economy have led to the debasement of women and trampled those very rights in our own land, making it difficult to cast judgment on Islamist societies. We don’t see how we ourselves demean women in our thoughts, regarding them as sex objects. The hardly acknowledged impact of these sex and pornography industries on our society is vast. This invites Islam’s disdain of our values and culture, a not undeserved outcome.

The thought/question: how to find and establish a basis for interaction by appealing to a common morality? has interested me ever since I published my interfaith project statement on the social media site, LinkedIn. “The task that lies ahead for us is to bring about religious unity, not to seek a comfort zone in uniformity of thinking. Interfaith workers seek to discover the unity in each other’s spiritual traditions and shared goals.”

Where do we look to establish a universal moral code around which we may unify? Efforts in the past included Immanuel Kant’s famous categorical imperative, “an unconditional moral law that applies to all, and is independent of

The task that lies ahead for us is to bring about religious unity, not to seek a comfort zone in uniformity of thinking. Interfaith workers seek to discover the unity in each other’s spiritual traditions and shared goals.

ish,” sometimes without adding the reminder, “but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

The Urantia Book warns, “A lasting social system without a morality predicated on spiritual realities can no more be maintained than could the solar system without gravity.” [195:5.9](P. 2075)

The Urantia Book teaches that we will achieve equality of the sexes on our way to an age of light and life, “Sex equality prevails on all advanced worlds.” [49:4.4] (P. 564) “The apostles were at first shocked by... Jesus’ treatment of women; he made it very clear to them that women were to be accorded equal rights with men in the kingdom.” [138:8.11] (P.1546)

any personal motive and desire.” He recognized “the moral law within,” a natural altruism, an urge to choose to act in the world such that our actions will improve the world. His approach to a universal code of conduct was made from the basis of philosophic reason rather than religion.

The Golden Rule naturally comes to mind because of its near-universal appearance in many wisdom traditions, with sources as ancient as the Egyptian and Indian civilizations. The principle of reciprocity we know as the Golden Rule preceded Kant and comes closest to fulfilling the requirement of a universal moral guide. This Ethic of Reciprocity, as it’s also known, appears in Islam as well. “Not one of you truly believes until he wishes for others what he wishes for

himself,” said the Prophet Muhammed, (Hadith).

The negative form of the rule appears in some traditions. Confucius summed up his teaching as: “Don’t do to others what you don’t want them to do to you.” (Analects 15:23)

FORGIVENESS AS THE FOUNDATION, FAMILY AS THE MODEL

The Urantia Book confirms that Jesus based his “system” of morality on the child-parent Father-son relationship as the gospel accounts had inferred. As long as families are universally revered in our world, this model could help repair our fractured vision, and provide the basis of a shared morality, but it has not been put into practice. Secularism and the counter culture have become unintentional obstacles to this ideal.

Without God, without religion, scientific secularism can never co-ordinate its forces, harmonize its divergent and rivalrous interests, races, and nationalisms. This secularistic human society, notwithstanding its unparalleled materialistic achievement, is slowly disintegrating. The chief cohesive force resisting this disintegration of antagonism is nationalism. And nationalism is the chief barrier to world peace. [195:8.10](P. 2082)

Nationalism is also a barrier to the discovery of a universal basis for a unifying moral code.

Many who are not part of a church or religious group’s condoned moral system still carry a collection of moral sets of principles that include the Golden Rule. “Some persons discern and interpret the golden rule as a purely intellectual affirmation of human fraternity. Others experience this expression of human relationship as an emotional gratification of the tender feelings of the human personality. Another mortal recognizes this same golden rule as the yardstick for measuring all social relations, the standard of social conduct. Still others look upon it as being the positive injunction of a great moral teacher who embodied in this statement the highest concept of moral obligation as regards all fraternal relationships. In the lives of such moral beings the golden rule becomes the wise center and circumference of all their philosophy.” [180:5.6](P. 1950)

The “great moral teacher,” Jesus in our culture, taught a morality based on the model of parental devotion on a cosmic level, as well as one mirrored in ideal family relationships on Urantia. “If a son shall ask for bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?” (Luke 11:11)

He taught four steps, by way of a personal religious experience, to discernment of the universal morality of the Golden Rule, including that we must learn to accept forgive-

ness to actually practice the Golden Rule.

The forgiveness does not have to be sought, only received as the consciousness of re-establishment of loyalty relations between the creature and the Creator. [89:10.6](P. 985)

Faith is the price you pay for entrance into the family of God; but forgiveness is the act of God which accepts your faith as the price of admission. And the reception of the forgiveness of God by a kingdom believer involves a definite and actual experience and exists in the following four steps...

1. God’s forgiveness is made actually available and is personally experienced by man just in so far as he forgives his fellows.

2. Man will not truly forgive his fellows unless he loves them as himself.

3. To thus love your neighbor as yourself is the highest ethics.

4. Moral conduct, true righteousness, becomes, then, the natural result of such love. (170:3.3–7) (P. 1861–62)

Though presented here as the necessary foundation of moral conduct, the idea of forgiveness is lamentably absent from the discussion in our current climate. “Today the nations of the world are directed by men who have a superabundance of ideas, but they are poverty-stricken in ideals. That is the explanation of poverty, divorce, war, and racial hatreds.” [111:4.10] (P. 1220)

It does not appear that much has changed since *The Urantia Book* published this remark in 1955. The idea of national political leaders forgiving each other looks as hopeless as ever, and implementing the Golden Rule in political negotiations laughably impossible.

There are strong objections to Jesus emphasis on forgiveness, his “turn the other cheek philosophy,” feelings that the generosity to enemies he advocated is just not possible in our world. Although we cannot achieve a universally agreed on moral code, “Neither can environmental limitations, even on an isolated world, thwart the personal attainment of the individual mortal; Jesus of Nazareth, as a man among men, personally achieved the status of light and life over nineteen hundred years ago on Urantia.” [55:11.7] (P. 636)

MORALITY EVOLVES AND GROWS

The development of ethics is an evolutionary one. We begin with an inborn, innate sense of duty that responds instinctually. “Ethical obligations are innate, divine and universal...” [54:4.4] (P. 616)

As morality continues to evolve, we progress from the

level of mind that recognizes its duty, “by a cosmic technique of self-revelation...mind-reason intuitively knows its moral duty,” [16:6.10] (P. 192) to the level of heart and mind knowing and experiencing love. The desire to do good to others is born in our consciousness.

We learn to develop a “moral will,” as we choose to use the human instinct for morality to make ethical decisions, choosing good over evil. “Goodness is always growing toward new levels of the increasing liberty of moral self-realization and spiritual personality attainment—the discovery of, and identification with, the indwelling Adjuster.” [132:2.5] (P. 1458)

We move beyond mere tolerance of the other to valuing the other, learning to love others as the Father himself loves us (1 John, 4:7). We advance to spiritually moral actions, spending ourselves in service to humanity. Finally we attain that spiritual level where brotherhood is founded not on duty alone, along with the proper choosing of good over evil; but upon the love of humanity’s common father, the Universal Father as revealed in *The Urantia Book*; “...the compelling presence of that new and all-dominating love of your fel-

to do his will, we gradually upstep our moral code to one that unifies all who personally experience God’s presence in their lives.

In his latest book, *The Future of God*, Deepak Chopra points out, “Reality can’t be defined by rules and laws. It is dynamic, unbound, creative, all-embracing and eternal.” (pg. 240)

In the same way, Jesus eschewed rules of living. It is by way of personal religious experience that we discover the universal morality of the golden rule. “Jesus stripped morality of all rules and ceremonies and elevated it to majestic levels of spiritual thinking and truly righteous living.” [140:10.5] (P. 1585)

THE FUTURE: PROGRESS IN MORALITY

The universal morality we seek is destined to unfold as our knowledge evolves further to meet a new obligation to God the Supreme, the god of action, the *finite god*. [117:4] (P. 1283) who is missing from traditional teachings such as the Bible. We will grow in our acceptance of God as Father. But we also come to learn our duty to the evolving Supreme

To help manifest the Supreme, we must act, serve, complete our decisions, blaze our trail “of actualized reality,” and realize our potential to aid the evolving Supreme

lows...will so soon fill your soul to overflowing because of the consciousness which has been born in your heart that you are a child of God.” [130:6.3] (P. 1438)

Morality is elevated by revelations such as that which Jesus proclaimed to the frightened young man named Fortune on the Island of Crete. “Evolutionary religion may become ethical, but only revealed religion becomes truly and spiritually moral.” [2:6.2] (P. 40)

Jesus taught us that the personal journey beginning with the “four steps” mentioned above will result in a new societal direction, one of service to the spiritual brotherhood. The development of a universal morality has to originate with individuals in their worshipful communion with the divine First Source, God the Father.

In *The Urantia Book*, “The one characteristic of Jesus’ teaching was that the morality of his philosophy originated in the personal relation of the individual to God—this very child-father relationship. ... The golden rule as restated by Jesus demands active social contact; the older negative rule could be obeyed in isolation.” [140:10.5] (P. 1585) By spiritualizing the concept of duty, choosing to partner with God and

Being, although it challenges the Christian concept of God, the biblical God that is absolute and unchanging. To help manifest the Supreme, we must act, serve, complete our decisions, blaze our trail “of actualized reality,” and realize our potential to aid the evolving Supreme. We reveal this experiential God in our choices, “action, completion of decisions, is essential to the evolutionary attainment of...progressive kinship with...the Supreme Being.” [110.6.17] (P. 1211)

We don’t so much hear instructions about the will of God in our lives and then act on them; that was the old viewpoint we grew up with. Rather, we point ourselves in a direction, and are supported in our growth and development through a harmonization of our direction with the Supreme, a god that nurtures all possibilities. In the Supreme is our assurance of the fulfillment of our potential and promise, a ladder to the dreams we have a “duty” to fulfill.

The temporal relation of man to the Supreme is the foundation for cosmic morality, 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.
[117:4.8](P. 1284)

It includes an obligation to our community to “let our light so shine” as to reveal the Supreme in our lives. This is a ways off in the future for many of our fellow citizens on the path of truth, but *The Urantia Book* has seen fit to reveal it now.

Against all odds, I prefer to hold high the viewpoint that every nation, tribe, race, age group, ethnicity, man, and woman, speaking every language, longs for the same things: love, peace, family, and personal fulfillment. In spite of appearances to the contrary, we are all moving towards the same goal, a world establishment of a human community where peace reigns, wars have been brought to an end, and our dreams have a chance to be realized.

How do we do it? Not many, at this point, seek a personal experience of the divine Father and Mother God, the true religion that Jesus revealed here on Urantia. A modern day prophet of the twentieth century, Reverend Martin Luther King, understood the need. Back in 1966, he preached:

“The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace, and brotherhood ... This hour in history needs a dedicated circle of transformed nonconformists. Our planet teeters on the brink ... dangerous passions of pride, hatred, and selfishness are enthroned in our lives ... and men do reverence before false gods of nationalism and materialism. ... The saving of our world from pending doom will come, not through the complacent adjustment of the conforming majority, but through the creative maladjustment of a nonconforming minority.” www.thevalueofsparrows.com/2014/07/13/sermon-transformed-nonconformist-by-martin-luther-king-jr/

Encourage, and join, gatherings of small groups of individuals who share the same personal journey, those who are learning and practicing forgiveness of the other. Though the numbers might be small, we can implement the results, manifest a fuller understanding of the golden rule, and reveal it in our lives, as the love of the emerging Supreme, to the world.

Dave Holt, born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, of English, Irish, and Ojibway Indian ancestry, relocated to the San Francisco Bay area in 1970. He graduated from S.F. State University's Writing program in 1995 (B.A. & M.A.), and has won several poetry prizes including the Thomas Merton Foundation's Poetry of the Sacred Prize, the Ina Coolbrith Prize (Nature category), the Maggie H. Meyer prize (2x) and is published in several literary magazines. His prose/poems collection, *Voyages in Ancestral Islands* won a Literary Cultural Arts award in 2013. During his time with the Fellowship's Education Committee, he presented workshops and worship programs at several International Conferences and Summer Study conferences from 1996 to 2006.

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“Every day a true believer lives, he finds it easier
to do the right thing.” [156:5.13] (P. 1740)

DESTINY OF THE MASTER MICHAELS

The following is the transcript of a visit made by William S. "Bill" Sadler, Jr. to a California study group in 1959 or 1960. He was the son of Drs. William and Lena Sadler, and a member of the Forum as well as a member of the Contact Commission for the Urantia revelation. He witnessed the arrival of the series of expanded papers, and asked the questions that brought about the Supreme papers in The Urantia Book.

Why should the worlds of the Eternal Son be non-personal when he is a personal being?

That's the limitation of the Absolute Personality. He can't create personality. Both the Father and the Spirit can. When we get into personality we'll observe this. But he creates, and when he creates in a solitary fashion, he produces other-than-personal beings. And these are the inhabitants of the second belt of Paradise satellites.

Let's do a little thinking. What is the objective of Son-Spirit collaboration? We are now drawing to the closing chapters of the present universe age.

What are the Creator Son and Creative Spirit attempting to do? Well, obviously, their immediate job is to attempt to duplicate on a one per cent basis what the Father and Son

got two thirds of the local universe ahead of him. There'll be further ramifications—but nothing radically new.

Why? I've got a theory. I think a Creator Son is more than finite. And I think that when he becomes a Master Son, he's got some super-finite potentials that could operate, and they don't want them to operate in the present universe age. That's for the next universe age. And I think they just make sure by saying, "Now, look, keep these in reserve."

When the Creator Son and Creative Spirit came out here in time and space, and when they had finished the initial work of whipping this local universe into shape, they engaged in their first creative act, and the product of that creative act was Gabriel. They put everything they could into Gabriel, in terms of producing the perfect executive. I think of Gabriel as the Prime Minister of the local universe.

Did they trinitize Gabriel? The answer is no. Gabriel is not the equal of the Creator Son and the Creative Spirit. If he were their equal, he too would be a creator, wouldn't he? I believe that when the Creator Son and Creative Spirit had perfected this local universe, their function, their required function, begins to diminish.

Let's stop and think. What's it going to be like when Nebadon is settled in light and life? And Orvonton is settled

I think in the next universe age, the age of the first outer space level, the third universe age, I don't think there are going to be any Creator Sons or Creative Spirits in the local universes.

did in Havona. The local universe has one per cent as many inhabited worlds as there are in Havona—ten million in relation to a billion. They're going to do this in time. They're going to grow experientially in the process.

When a Creator Son has finished his bestowal career, they don't call him a Creator Son any more, do they? They call him a Master Son. At that time he receives the title of Sovereign of his local universe. And he takes a new oath. The first oath he took was not to assume sovereignty without earning it.

Now that he's earned it, and they make him Sovereign, they put a new restriction on him. He takes another oath: not to do anything radically new. This doesn't mean that he can't continue to use creative imagination in the further elaboration of the plans which have been propounded. He's

in light and life? When the seven superuniverses are settled in light and life? I'm not so sure that the Creative Mother Spirit will need to minister mind to the inhabitants of these perfected universes. I'm not so sure; because in those days you get your cosmic mind direct and it stays with you, see?

I think maybe the inhabitants of these worlds far settled in the advanced stages of the seventh stage of light and life, maybe they can operate on a cosmic mind. If so, the local universe Mother Spirit's out of work, isn't she? In terms of mind.

If death ever finally vanishes from the inhabited worlds, she probably won't have to keep on creating seraphim.

Is Michael needed as a creator anymore? No. Creation is over in a local universe. Administration is what is required. And, when a local universe is settled in light and life, its

future administration is foreshadowed. Administrative duties are largely assumed by three excellent administrators: the Trinity Ambassador, the Union of Days, Gabriel, and his associate, the Father Melchizedek.

I think in the next universe age, the age of the first outer space level, the third universe age, I don't think there are going to be any Creator Sons or Creative Spirits in the local universes.

I think they're going to be run by these three beings: the Union of Days, the Bright and Morning Star, and the Father Melchizedek, although I think Michael will always retain the title of "Sovereign of Nebadon," just as the carpenter carries the title, "Planetary Prince of Urantia." That's no title for a Creator Son to carry, but it's a great honor for a human being to carry that title.

And don't you imagine that they'll really deck out the streets of Salvington with Japanese lanterns and bunnies on those occasions when Michael revisits his capital, coming in from outer space on the way into Paradise. This will be occasion for great a jamboree on Salvington.

But don't you see? The two Creators have worked themselves out of a job when their local universe is settled in light and life.

They've raised their family. Now, the papers speculate, starting on page 241, but mostly on page 242, they discuss the future of the Master Michaels. They're discussing this problem of restricting superfinite creative powers, and they go on to say, *"It is highly probable that these undisclosed creator powers will remain self-contained throughout the present universe age. But sometime in the far-distant future, in the now mobilizing universes of outer space, we believe that the liaison between a sevenfold Master Son and a seventh-stage Creative Spirit may attain to absonite levels of service attended by the appearance of new things, meanings, and values on transcendental levels of ultimate universe significance."*

"Just as the Deity of the Supreme is actualizing by virtue of experiential service, so are the Creator Sons achieving the personal realization of the Paradise-divinity potentials bound up in their unfathomable natures. When on Urantia, Christ Michael once said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' And we believe that in eternity the Michaels are literally destined to be 'the way, the truth, and the life,' ever blazing the path for all universe personalities as it leads from supreme divinity through ultimate absonity to eternal deity finality." [21:6.3-4] (P. 242)

And that's the adventure I want to take you folks on today.

Let's take a look at page 643. *"As the frontiers of ex-*

periential Deity are extended out into the domains of the Unqualified Absolute," and the domains of the Unqualified Absolute are defined in Paper 12 as the outer space levels *"we envision the activity of God the Sevenfold during the earlier evolutionary epochs of these creations of the future. We are not all in agreement respecting the future status of the Ancients of Days and the superuniverse Master Spirits. Neither do we know whether or not the Supreme Being will therein function as in the seven superuniverses. But we all conjecture that the Michaels, the Creator Sons, are destined to function in these outer universes. Some hold that the future ages will witness some closer form of union between the associated Creator Sons and Divine Ministers; it is even possible that such a creator union might eventuate in some new expression of associate-creator identity of an ultimate nature. But we really know nothing about these possibilities of the unrevealed future."*

We do know, however, that in the universes of time and space, God the Sevenfold provides a progressive approach to the Universal Father, and that this evolutionary approach is experientially unified in God the Supreme. We might conjecture that such a plan must prevail in the outer universes; on the other hand the new orders of beings that may sometime inhabit these universes may be able to approach Deity on ultimate levels and by absonite techniques. In short, we have not the slightest concept of what technique of deity approach may become operative in the future universes of outer space.

Nevertheless, we deem that the perfected superuniverses will in some way become a part of the Paradise-ascension careers of those beings who may inhabit these outer creations. It is quite possible that in that future age we may witness outer-spacers approaching Havona through the seven superuniverses, administered by God the Supreme with or without the collaboration of the Seven Master Spirits." [56:7.8-10] (P. 643)

Well, it might signify the Master Spirits are going to be more concerned with outer space. Remember, these Master Spirits are not finite. These Master Spirits embody all of the Supreme, and all of the Ultimate, and all of the Supreme-Ultimate attributes of Paradise Deity, but not their absolute attributes.

We've reached the end of the present universe age. The papers do some interesting speculating. (Break in tape). ...find the Supreme Being. You'll recall that God the Father and God the Supreme are not respecters of persons. But they operate differently. With God the Father, you have an "each" relationship. With God the Supreme, you have an

“all” relationship. No creature will find God the Supreme until all creatures can find God the Supreme.

And when we find God the Supreme, we are going to find God as comprehensible to creatures. We can understand the Supreme Being because we are like him. He had an origin in time. We don't have to go back and say, “Gee, but it never really happened this way.”

And when we find God the Supreme, we are going to find God as comprehensible to creatures.

He has age. The Infinite Spirit has no age. He's not eternal in the past sense of the word, only in the future sense, as we are. He grew, partly because of the environment of growth, and partly because of his own personal efforts to grow. And that's us. That's exactly how we grew.

We will be able to portray the Supreme Being, because we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. Even as Michael could portray the Father, because he is of origin in the Father. I don't say we make a portrayal of the magnitude of Michael, but as creatures we can portray the Supreme Being.

The papers speculate that he'll become personally resident on Uversa of Orvonton, because it's the seventh superuniverse. And at that time, they'll take down these iron curtains between the superuniverses, and blend them.

There's an interesting principle which they follow. It's like the seven colored races on earth: They want them to pull apart, and work out their own cultures. And then, when they've been upstepped with Adam's blood, they merge them. They're doing that same thing with the superuniverses, aren't they?

There are very few beings who can go directly from one superuniverse to another. Very few. The perfected grand universe of those future days will be vastly different from what it is at present. *“Gone will be the thrilling adventures of the organization of the galaxies of space, the planting of life on the uncertain worlds of time, and the evolving of harmony out of chaos, beauty out of potentials, truth out of meanings, and goodness out of values.”*

The time universes will have achieved the fulfillment of finite destiny! And perhaps for a space there will be rest, relaxation from the age-long struggle for evolutionary perfection. But not for long! Certainly, surely, and inexorably the enigma of the emerging deity of God the Ultimate will

challenge these perfected citizens of the settled universes just as their struggling evolutionary forbears were once challenged by the quest for God the Supreme. The curtain of cosmic destiny will draw back to reveal the transcendent grandeur of the alluring absonite quest for the attainment of the Universal Father on those new and higher levels revealed in the ultimate of creature experience.” [117:7.17] (P. 1293)

When the Supreme Being appears, the First Experiential Trinity can begin to function in the true sense of the word. And that means, at the close of the present universe age or, prior to the opening of the next universe age.

What is this First Experiential Trinity? It has three members: the Supreme Being, the Supreme Creators, remember, we discussed that? Three levels of God the Sevenfold and the Architects of the Master Universe.

I think of them as living blueprints. God has a plan for the master universe. And these Architects are the living embodiments of that plan. They're living, intelligent, administrative, walking blueprints.

They're superpersonal. They're more than personal. That doesn't mean that we can't deal with them. For example, when we enter the Corps of the Finality, the being who swears us in is the senior Architect.

We have one Architect on the Paradise level. Three on the Havona level. Seven Architects on the superuniverse space level. Gee, that makes sense, doesn't it? There's seven superuniverses.

There are seventy Architects assigned to the first outer space level. And in one place in the papers, they speak of

...and they say that in the first outer space level they have already detected seventy major aggregations of matter, any one of which is vastly greater than a superuniverse.

the observations of their astronomers, not ours, and they say that in the first outer space level they have already detected seventy major aggregations of matter, any one of which is vastly greater than a superuniverse. This is big!

You remember when they compute the output of Paradise gravity? You see, if you can measure how much gravity Paradise is exercising, you have measured the mass

of creation, haven't you?

Since Paradise puts out gravity in direct proportion to the mass it has to control. And only 5% of Paradise gravity is accountable for in the grand universe. No, 15% I think. Let's check that. 5%. Ninety-five per cent of the present gravity output of Paradise is engaged in controlling material creations outside the seven superuniverses and Havona.

95%. You get this on page 132. [12:3] Fifteen per cent of the mind-gravity of the Infinite Spirit is unaccountable for, unless it's operating out in outer space. See, you've got intelligence out there. I think Force Organizers.

Apparently, all of the spirit-gravity of the Eternal Son can be accounted for by the seven superuniverses and Havona. But they hedge a little bit. They say, "Look, if there were a few spirit beings out there, the number is so small, we don't think we could pick it up, see?" The inference is that Solitary Messengers maybe can go out there. Maybe Inspired Trinity Spirits can go out there. The papers say they're the only two revealed to us who can collaborate with Force Organizers.

Now, I don't believe in numerology. But I do believe that there is a logic to numbers.

For example, the Mendelian ratio is a basic law of chance. We'll get into the Mendelian ratio, because it appears all throughout these papers. As you get these so-called force creatures, you know? Like these Divine Executioners and the Conciliating Commission?

Why were there seven Master Spirits, and not six, and not eight. Well, you compute it out. If you take the three Deities singly, and severally, there are only seven possible expressions right? It's inherent in the numbers. OK.

If the essence of the growth of the Supreme is the collaboration between the Supreme Creators and the Paradise Deities, and if the Seven Master Spirits are primarily expressive of the Supreme Creators and we know this to be a fact, at least in the case of Majeston, then, if there is a number which would attach to the Supreme Being, it would be ten, wouldn't it? Seven in relation to three. Is there any warrant for that? I say yes. Let's take a look at it again, this can be in either of two places, doggone it.

The worlds of the Father "*contain the potentials of the whole master universe.*" [13:0.7] (P. 144) And in discussing the rulers of these worlds, they're discussing the Trinitized Secrets of Supremacy. And there are ten Trinitized Secrets of Supremacy on each of the Father's worlds. You remember? Divinington, Sonarington, so on.

"The work of each of these special worlds is divided into seven major departments, and one of these co-ordinate rulers presides over each such division of specialized activities. The remaining three act as the personal repre-

sentatives of triune Deity in relation to the other seven, one representing the Father, one the Son, and one the Spirit." [18:1.2] [P. 208] I think where you encounter the number ten, you encounter the function of the Supreme Being. And let's see if this stands up to logic. Does the number ten appear prior to the appearance of the Supreme Being? The answer is no, in this calculation. But the number ten repeats on each of the outer space levels, from the first to the fourth. And I think it's there because the Supreme Being is functioning. Are you with me?

When I first read these numbers, I thought, gee, they make no sense after you go up a little ways. But I got my clue. Seventy to four ninety. It's the square of seven times ten. (306) And naturally, what do you do? You take the cube. This is seven to the third power times ten, and lastly, seven to the fourth power times ten. If you have any doubts, multiply it out for yourself.

In other words, you multiply seven by itself four times, and then multiply by ten, and the answer is twenty four thousand and ten: 24,010.

So, it seems to me that the Supreme Being is a functional reality in all universe ages after the present one. And I would like to refer to them as the post-Supreme ages.

The Supreme Being functions in the Master Universe. He has three levels of function. He functions primarily in Havona as a spirit person. Secondly, in the Grand Universe, as a personality of power, an evolving sovereign. The tertiary function of the Supreme Being is of Master Universe scope, and is an unknown potential.

Master Spirit Number Seven is a perfect blend of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

These are the Architects.

Now, we got into this because we are talking about the First Experiential Trinity. And I think it's very significant that the completion of the Master Universe witnesses the appearance of a Trinity. The completion of Havona witnessed the appearance of a Trinity.

Now, are we going to get a Trinity every time we complete something?

No. There are only three Trinities projected. When will the Second Experiential Trinity appear? Whenever God the Ultimate appears. And when will God the Ultimate appear? Not until the whole Master Universe has been completed.

I think that you get a nuclear universe every time a trinity forms. Havona is obviously the nucleus of the Grand Universe, isn't it? And, the Paradise Trinity formed concurrent with the appearance of Havona.

I would like to submit that the Grand Universe, the seven superuniverses as dependent on Havona, I'm includ-

ing the whole thing, now, is the second nuclear universe, because a Trinity forms concurrent with the full appearance of the Grand Universe. And by full appearance, I mean the perfecting of the Grand Universe.

I think that the Grand Universe is the nucleus, the true nucleus, of the Master Universe. I think the nucleus must have within it the seeds of growth for the future, and Havona is perfect. Havona basically, inherently is non-experiential. I think you've got to add an experiential component to existential Havona in order to get a real nucleus for an experiential universe. Are you with me?

Consider the argument about what is and what is not a nucleus. I think Havona is a nucleus for the Grand Universe because:

1. It is central in relation to the cytoplasmic superuniverses. It's the yolk in relation to the white of the egg. And we're out here in the white.

2. (Tape is unclear)

3. Hereditary characteristics are transmitted by it to the superuniverses. This follows the dictionary definition of a nucleus. And I think we're safe if we deal with organic comparisons. I don't like mechanical comparisons. This is not a piece of machinery, this is a living organism.

4. The birth of the Havona nucleus is associated with the birth of a trinity.

5. Deity appears whose nature is like the nature of the nucleus. Havona's perfect, so also is the Infinite Spirit perfect.

Now. Let's stop and say Havona is the nucleus of the Master Universe. Well, I just don't think it's adequate, because if a nucleus is to transmit hereditary characteristics, then the nucleus must contain those potentials within it. And certainly, even Havona was non-evolutionary until Grandfanda landed.

I would offer this argument in favor of conceiving the Grand Universe, the perfected Grand Universe, as a second nucleus. Now, let's see.

We've got, by process of reasoning, a queer duplication

of events, haven't we? We started with two existential Deities and a power base. We wind up here with two experiential Deities and a power base. I would suggest that these two experiential Deities are going to duplicate experientially what the Father and Son did at the beginning of all things.

Now, these Deities are not infinite, are they? No. The Father and the Son are. But while these two experiential Deities are sub-infinite, they're very great, are they not? Let's stop and think. Our local universe is $\frac{1}{100}$ th part of a little less than $\frac{1}{7}$ th of the tennis ball.

And they have got the moon mobilized. They're able to mobilize the whole of the experiential magnitude of the completed Master Universe, because they grew it, and grew with it. And I think what they're trying to do is to trinitize. The papers refer to Supreme-hyphen-Ultimate, as they refer to Father-hyphen-Son. It's a form of union involving the appearance of an equal being.

And what are they going to trinitize? I think they're going to attempt to trinitize God the Absolute. And that throws some light on a very cryptic statement in the Foreword. The point I'd like to direct your attention to is on page 16, paragraph ⁶. [F:XII.8]

The Ultimate Trinity" that's the First Experiential Trinity" is experientially unifying in completion...

We've just been talking about that. And when it finally unifies, the Master Universe is complete, and we have God the Ultimate.

That's the Second Experiential Trinity.

In other words, if the Second Experiential Trinity could completely unify, they would experientialize God the Absolute out of the Deity Absolute. But if they could do that, they could exhaust infinity. We're in a paradox here, aren't we?

Our concept, however, of the eternal Paradise Trinity is an ever-present reminder that Deity trinitization may accomplish what is otherwise nonattainable; hence do we postulate the sometime appearance of the Supreme-

There are two mighty experiential brothers, a greater and a lesser. They are carrying a stupendous battering ram. This battering ram is the earned, experiential sovereignty of the whole Master Universe. They are approaching a formidable wall that is labeled, "Absolute." And as they arrive before this wall, the Ultimate says to the Supreme: "Swing hard, brother, we are going through."

Ultimate and the possible trinitization-factualization of God the Absolute. [F:XII.8] (P. 16)

This trinitizing act is symbolized in my mind by the following picture: There are two mighty experiential brothers, a greater and a lesser. They are carrying a stupendous battering ram. This battering ram is the earned, experiential sovereignty of the whole Master Universe. They are approaching a formidable wall that is labeled, "Absolute." And as they arrive before this wall, the Ultimate says to the Supreme: "Swing hard, brother, we are going through." They know full well they can never knock this wall down, but they also know that they are going to breach it. Consider, just consider the massiveness of the battering ram they are swinging: the total vastness of the mighty mobilization of all the experience in the completed Master Universe.

Look. Are we going to be there? I submit yes. And here's my reason. The reason I offer you, this speculative thinking, is because it's a string on which I've been able to string so many beads in these papers that help illuminate.

Page 1226, next to the last paragraph: "*The type of personality bestowed upon Urantia mortals has a potentiality of seven dimensions of self-expression or person-realization.*" And don't ask me why it has this, because that's the way God designed it. It comes from him, with these properties.

These dimensional phenomena are realizable as three on the finite level," (first floor), "*three on the absonite level,*" (second floor), "*and one on the absolute level.* (third floor)

This supreme dimension is an associable absolute and, while not infinite, is dimensionally potential for subinfinite penetration of the absolute." [112:1.9] (P. 1226)

Let's kick that around. We have got the equipment right now necessary when they breach this wall—we can't breach it, but we can go through any hole they make. What does "*subinfinite penetration of the absolute*" mean? Well, I use this illustration later on: I can't drink all of the orange juice in the city of Chicago, but that doesn't mean I can't drink some, and can't keep on drinking orange juice.

Havona is a sub-infinite portrayal of God's concept of an absolutely perfect universe. It isn't infinite, though, is it? It's got an outer edge.

I think that we'll be there when this takes place. And I think that it will take place just as sure as the darned thing started. You see, just as Jesus portrays the divine path to God, so the Supreme Being is the pathway from finite limitations to absonite adventures. And so the Supreme and the Ultimate are the pathway to the final adventure, the never-ending attempt to find out more and more and more about God as Absolute.

This is a growth we can start. And isn't it wonderful that

we can never finish it.

It's sort of like this. Consider a ten-year old's concept of success. And then a twenty-year old's concept of success. And then a fifty-year old's concept of success. And someday we'll be fifty million years old. And someday fifty billion years old. And someday we'll look upon fifty billion years as a very small segment of time. We will be making plans involving units of many times fifty billion years. This is not impossible.

Think back in your own experience when you were a kid. Do you remember second or third grade? And do you remember summer vacations between those school years? How long they were? They were awfully long. Well, when you've lived a billion years, you can think about a billion years. You can think a billion years ahead, can't you?

It's on one of the zones on nether Paradise. This is believed to be the central focalization, the Paradise center, of the space presence of the Unqualified Absolute.

He also pervades all space, but here's his central focalization.

Dark bodies the same as dark bodies. If not, what is the difference?

There are two kinds of dark bodies described in these papers. And let's get their technical terminology. They're talking about the two belts of dark gravity bodies surrounding Havona. Now, these dark gravity bodies surrounding Havona are like no other matter anywhere, because they exhibit both linear and circular gravity. They exhibit the kind of gravity that is peculiar to Paradise, and they also exhibit the kind of gravity that is like the gravity we know about—straight line gravity. And they're found only in these two belts surrounding the Central Universe, and nowhere else. Now, I believe what this question refers to is another type.

On page 173, paragraph 2, there is a term, "*the dark islands of space.*" [15:6.6] You all know that a sun is tremendously larger than a planet. But when you have a dark, non-luminous cold body, as massive as a sun, then they use this special term for it—a dark island of space. It is a tremendously massive thing. Jupiter would be a peanut alongside of it. It's got the gravity pull of a sun, a blazing sun, but it itself, it may be a burnt-out sun, that would be one origin of a dark island of space.

They use that specialized term to deal with a cold space body whose size is altogether of a larger magnitude than the size of even a big planet.

Let's take a quick look at the story of the birth of the Urantia solar system. Massiveness of material creation. Listen, if there are 70 thousand aggregations in the first outer

space level, each one of which is bigger than a superuniverse, what do they mean when they say, that more than 50 million years on beyond in the second outer space level, there are far greater energy activities. Holy smoke.

Now, we have no data given anywhere as to dimensions of the second outer space level. But, we've developed two members of a series. And we can speculate concerning the

ect the distance across the third outer space level as eighty thousand feet.

Just to make it easy to figure, let's take a mile at five thousand feet, instead of 5280, and we can see that the third outer space level is 16 miles across.

Orvonton is an inch across. The third outer space level is sixteen miles across. And that doesn't account for the

If the Grand Universe is a two inch circle, the first outer level is eight feet farther out, or a sixteen foot circle. The second outer level is eight hundred feet farther out, or a sixteen hundred foot circle. The third outer level is sixteen miles farther out, or a thirty two mile circle. And the fourth outer level is sixteen hundred miles out, or a circle three thousand two hundred miles in diameter.

third member, because one is to one hundred as one hundred is to ten thousand. That's just an ordinary proportion. Now, this assumes we recognize a rate of increase. We can have two choices now: Is the increase constant? Or is the increase accelerated? Is this thing growing by arithmetic progression, or geometric progression? We have absolutely no way of estimating an accelerating factor. We don't know that it isn't accelerating.

But since we can't even estimate such a factor, I have elected to speculate on the more conservative side, and to assume the rate of acceleration is the constant rate which we've deduced.

So. We draw an inch. Now we've gone from Paradise roughly to the edge of Orvonton. Then we draw a hundred inches. Now we cross the first outer space level. Now to get across the second outer space level, we draw ten thousand inches.

Remember, this is only the linear relationship. The cubic relationship is something else again. And I got tired of multiplying at this point, so I didn't work it out.

If you represent the Grand Universe by a two-inch circle, the first outer space level goes out around eight feet. And the second outer space level goes out around eight hundred feet. Audience: Wonderful! From a two inch, yes. That's right. You can go out in both directions that far, I'm just going in one direction. It keeps it simpler. Are you still with me?

Oh I'm going out in a straight line from the center. We're dealing with radius' here. The diameter's twice this number.

How big is the third outer space level? Well, if we have an inch, eight feet, eight hundred feet, then we can proj-

dead space between. I'm just ignoring it. It's small in relation to the whole.

I think that the quiet zones get bigger, farther across.

Well, how about the fourth outer space level? Let's just summarize it. If the Grand Universe is a two inch circle, the first outer level is eight feet farther out, or a sixteen foot circle. The second outer level is eight hundred feet farther out, or a sixteen hundred foot circle. The third outer level is sixteen miles farther out, or a thirty two mile circle. And the fourth outer level is sixteen hundred miles out, or a circle three thousand two hundred miles in diameter.

You know, I want to tell you, the weekend I worked out these numbers, I damn near dropped my teeth on the desk.

Now, let's get this thing down, and make it real simple. I want you to visualize a tennis ball. It's somewhere close to two inches in diameter, a little oversize. I don't care about precision here, now all I'm speaking for here is a feeling for this. Do you see the tennis ball? Two inches in diameter. Can you visualize a small bedroom? Eight feet cubic. Float the tennis ball in the small bedroom.

The tennis ball is the Grand Universe.

Now you're thinking of the seven superuniverses and Havona in relation to the size of the first outer space level.

We'll use this term tennis ball several times. Now, let's visualize a city block with ten eighty-foot lots on it. These are comfortable building sites. It's a little less than a hundred foot front footage. It's an eight hundred foot block with ten comfortable houses on it. Now, make a cube of this block. And float our little bedroom in the cubic block. You've now got the first outer space level in relation to the second outer

space level.

The block is the second. A city block. I've got to get things that we feel for, you know?

I tried to think of what would be a sixteen mile cube, and I decided we might cube the city of Chicago. You can't cube Los Angeles, because it's almost bigger than North America...

But float our city block in cubic Chicago. And now you've got the second outer space level in relation to the third.

Well, I kept reaching around, what would symbolize the fourth? There isn't anything that works exactly. But the diameter of the moon is twenty one hundred miles, and what we need is something that's thirty two hundred miles but the moon is the nearest object I can think of that's the right magnitude to float Chicago in.

And now we've got the fourth outer space level. The moon is only two thirds as big as it should be for the illustration. But it's a lot bigger than Chicago. Tennis ball, bedroom, city block, cubic city, in the moon.

Think about these bedrooms and things, we should be thinking about concentric doughnuts, shouldn't we? That's the way, really, to think about them. But I find it easier to use terms like cubic blocks and bedrooms and so on.

Do you see why each finaliter company has got attached to it a thousand Gravity Messengers?

They go fast? They go instanter. And when you're dealing with distances like this, you've got to have some pretty high velocity communication techniques. These distances are so great, that a Solitary Messenger would take a while getting there, you know? And a poor seraphim, who can only go three times the velocity of light, well, it takes a seraphim a third of five hundred thousand years to go from here to Uversa. That's a long trip. It takes light five hundred thousand years, and it takes a seraphim one third of that length of time. Of course, a Solitary Messenger can get there pretty fast.

A Gravity Messenger uses gravity, and that moves even faster. I think they give the time it takes a Thought Adjuster to come from Divinington to take up residence in a human being on Urantia, it took about eleven minutes, some of that time spent on registration on Uversa. Thought Adjusters traverse space independently of time.

They're fast as gravity messengers. Gravity Messengers are very much like Thought Adjusters. They're fragments of the Universal Father.

Let's just take a look at them. They're discussed in just one place in the papers, in connection with the Corps of the Finality. [31:2] (PP. 346-47).

It says there's a thousand of them attached to each finaliter company of a thousand, and the chief Gravity Messenger is a member of the finaliter company. It says, "*No other group of intelligent creatures possesses such a personalized messenger corps able to transcend time and space. Similar types of messenger-recorders attached to other finaliter corps are not personalized; they are absonitized.*" [31:2.1] (P. 346)

Don't ask me what that means, I don't know.

Gravity Messengers hail from Divinington, and they are modified and personalized Adjusters, but no one of our Uversa group will undertake to explain the nature of one of these messengers. We know they are highly personal beings, divine, intelligent, and touchingly understanding, but we do not comprehend their timeless technique of traversing space. [31:2.2] (P. 347)

They are personalized Adjusters.

It says, "*Gravity Messengers and glorified mortal finaliters achieve a touching and profound affection for one another; they have much in common: One is a direct personalization of a fragment of the Universal Father, the other a creature personality existent in the surviving immortal soul fused with a fragment of the same Universal Father, the spirit Thought Adjuster.*" [31:2.3] (P. 347)

The reason I believe that we're going on and on and on is not because we're such a much, but Adjusters are. I'm not so sure that we've got the legs to go this far, but we're riding a horse that's a fragment of infinity. I think we're going to go right on through, following the Michaels. The papers suggest that the Michaels are never going to stop the invasion of space.

There's a wonderful statement here. See if I can find it. Wish me luck. It's in their discussion of universal absolute unity. I'm starting a little below the middle of the page:

And God the Father is the personal source of all manifestations of Deity and reality to all intelligent creatures and spirit beings throughout all the universe of universes. As personalities, now or in the successive universe experiences of the eternal future, no matter if you achieve the attainment of God the Sevenfold, comprehend God the Supreme, find God the Ultimate, or attempt to grasp the concept of God the Absolute, you will discover to your eternal satisfaction that in the consummation of each adventure you have, on new experiential levels, rediscovered the eternal God, the Paradise Father of all universe personalities. [56:9.10] (P. 645)

That's why I've left my firehouse on the blackboard. It doesn't make any difference what floor we manage to achieve, the center pole is there, and that is the personality of the

Universal Father. And the only change that's taking place is in us. We now approach him with a quart-size comprehension instead of a pint-size, and later on with a gallon size.

"The Universal Father is the explanation of universal unity as it must be supremely, even ultimately, realized in the post-Ultimate unity of absolute values and meanings—unqualified Reality." [56:9.11] (P. 645) That's the third floor. Oh, I love these last two paragraphs:

The Master Force Organizers go out into space and mobilize its energies to become gravity responsive to the Paradise pull of the Universal Father; and subsequently there comes the Creator Sons, who organize these gravity-responding forces into inhabited universes and therein evolve intelligent creatures who receive unto themselves the spirit of the Paradise Father and subsequently ascend to the Father to become like him in all possible divinity attributes.

The ceaseless and expanding march of the Paradise creative forces through space seems to presage the ever-extending domain of the gravity grasp of the Universal Father and the never-ending multiplication of varied types of intelligent creatures who are able to love God and be loved by him, and who, by thus becoming God-knowing, may choose to be like him, may elect to attain Paradise and find God. [56:9.13–14] (P. 645)

And that's just as true of outerspacers as it's true of us. Only, in outer space, we will be part of the living ladder on which they will climb, just as the Havoners and Paradise personalities have made themselves into a living ladder for us to climb, from the status of an animal, up to the portals of Paradise.

Well, fellow Argonauts...

Pull theology and cosmology out of this and this complicated book is the simplest religion ever presented to man.

The boss man is your father and wants you, and if you want him, who the hell could keep you apart. There's nobody bigger than the boss.

And you require no intermediaries. He touches you twice. You're in the personality circuit, because you have personality and free will choice. And a piece of him lives inside of you.

Now, that's terrifying and comforting at the same time. This complex religion is at the same time the simplest religion that's ever been presented on this world.

Ability to comprehend is the mortal passport to Paradise. Willingness to believe is the key to Havona. The acceptance of sonship, cooperation with the indwelling Adjuster, is the price of evolutionary survival. [26:4.15] (P. 290)

Very simple. Just as much as the other citation I read you. Very simple. You go adventuring. You encounter many new things. But at the heart of each adventure, you keep finding the same God, the same Universal Father, unchanging, still loving, only you have changed. You can understand more.

Remember the great statement they make in these papers? That God is the first truth and the last fact? To feel God is the first touch of divinity which a creature like us can have; but to understand God as a fact, that is at the end of eternity.

We are developing capacity to explore the fragment of God within us, while we explore the creation of God on the outside. And then we take both experiences, and periodically, I think we go back to Paradise. And each time, we find the same God, only, we're a little higher up on the pole. Do you follow me?

We think we have found more of God. He was always there. We just had more finding capacity.

“You are quite incapable of distinguishing the product of your own material intellect from that of the conjoint activities of your soul and the Adjuster.” [110:4.2] (P. 1207)

THE URANTIA BOOK AND ITS MISSION

By Charles Laurence Olivea, Santa Fe, NM © 2015

PREFACE

I think the revelatory text of *The Urantia Book* offers a solid basis for discerning its mission. I will draw from the text for its wisdom. I am writing this essay because I believe it is always worthwhile to try to articulate the primary aim of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Also, I wish to address what I perceive to be a tendency by some in our movement to veer away from the planetary perspective of the book.

Within the book's framework, this essay will present and elaborate on the following themes:

- Humanity is the intended (potential) audience for the Urantia Papers;
- The effort to appeal more to Christianity than other religions narrows the range of the revelation and constitutes an error in my opinion; and,
- The long view or a higher vision embraces the origin, history and destiny of the myriad of relationships between Paradise and Urantia.

As the author, I represent no group or organization. I am expressing my reflections on the issues at hand.

NATURE OF THE REVELATION AND ITS INTENDED AUDIENCE: HUMANITY AND URANTIA

According to *The Urantia Book*, there are at least three basic types of revelatory experience: personal, racial, and planetary. The personal and racial dimensions are referenced in the context of how the divine spirit(s) impact mortal existence. *"We know [this] by three phenomena...religious faith; second, by revelation—personal and racial; and third, by the...extraordinary...reactions to the material environment..."* [101:3.17] (PP. 1108-09) *The Urantia Book* is described within as a celestial "gift" of revelation to all of humanity on Urantia. *"The Urantia Papers...constitute the most recent presentation of truth to the mortals of Urantia."* [92:4.9] (P. 1008)

I presume all students of *The Urantia Book* make personal interpretations and applications of the revelatory text to their individual lives. It is natural to do so. But the celestial narrative was not written for individual persons per se, albeit it may be viewed that way by some. Nor were the Urantia Papers designed for any particular race (or tribe or nation), but for all races, all peoples.

It was written to appeal to humanity, civilizations, and

cultures, in other words, all Urantians. I would argue that this is hardly a moot point. There are those who refer only to readers of the book as "Urantians." I believe that this is an error. The term, "Urantian," certainly applies to every mortal born in this world. This is the meaning I attach to "Urantian." I think this error reflects an unfortunate tendency to approximate the "chosen-people syndrome." Such a mindset assigns special value and significance to a group. This kind of thinking may have a wider attraction than the designation above. I will address that problem later on in this essay.

The idea of the "Gift of Revelation" as planetary in its nature is supported in other places in the book. One of them is the listing of composite religions. *"On Urantia, evolutionary and revelatory religions are progressing side by side while they blend and coalesce into the diversified theologic systems found in the world in the times of the inditement of these papers. These religions, the religions of twentieth-century Urantia, may be enumerated as follows:*

1. *Hinduism—the most ancient*
2. *The Hebrew religion*
3. *Buddhism*
4. *The Confucian teachings*
5. *The Taoist beliefs*
6. *Zoroastrianism*
7. *Shinto*
8. *Jainism*
9. *Christianity*
10. *Islam*
11. *Sikhism—the most recent."* [92:6, 2-12] (PP. 1010-11)

It seems to me that the Melchizedek who authored this paper is expressing the spiritual relevance of all religion in the progressive evolutionary civilization on Urantia. I believe the celestial government of Urantia wants all sincere religious faiths lifted up through revelatory presentations as led by the divine spirit(s). This listing of composite religions reminds me of the religions compiled by Ganid and Jesus. [131:1-10] (PP. 1442-1454) What impresses me about their work was the supreme spiritual value they placed on the several religions, including "Our Religion," Ganid postulated from the tutoring of Jesus. Comparative religion reinforces the long view, which in turn allows us to keep our eye on the ball, to employ a baseball metaphor. The revelatory message shows respect

to the wisdom-spiritual traditions worldwide, while aiming to enlighten the makeup of evolutionary religion, helping to grow the mortal consciousness of truth.

Is the name of our planet, “Urantia,” derived from the local universe language of Nebadon? Whatever the answer is, the title of the book introduces the worldly scope of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Additionally, I suggest that Michael’s symbol of the Trinity, three blue concentric circles, also highlights the universal character of this “Gift” to the human race.

CHRISTIAN SECTARIANISM AND THE PLANETARY VIEWPOINT

Herein lays a fault line in thinking about the dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and its teachings. I refer to the practice of targeting one religion as being more viable for presenting *The Urantia Book*, rather than craft an approach that recognizes the spiritual equality across human religious experiences. One might be forgiven for supposing that the practice of pitching to one religious tradition over or against others could convey the impression—to non-readers—that the Fifth Epochal Revelation contains a thread of religious favoritism.

Disagreements over how best to present the teachings of *The Urantia Book* seem to stem from the tension between evolutionary behavior and revelatory knowledge. “*Evolutionary religion is sentimental. ... Revelatory religion is propounded by the real spiritual world; it is the response of the superintellectual cosmos to the mortal hunger to believe in, and depend upon, the universal Deities. Evolutionary religion pictures the circuitous gropings of humanity in quest of truth; revelatory religion is that very truth.*” [92: 4, 3] (P. 1007) Even the composite religions of today contain a mix of advancements and animal-origin norms.

Human cultural evolution takes origin in fear and is complicated by a sense of the unknown. Celestial culture arrives as a superior force of mind-spirit facing phenomena partly of animal-origin. The task or challenge of presenting revelation to evolution is necessarily a delicate one concerning proper and effective judgment. Discretion is usually called for, to go forward in service, yet be spirit-led in doing so. We should keep the big picture in sight. I think this is the fundamental responsibility of devotees of *The Urantia Book*. Hence, the supreme importance of crafting an approach that “lets” the text of the revelation “speak for itself” and by the way the revelation is manifested in our lives, the day to day living of the Fruits of the Spirit.

Here is where sectarianism can muddle our best intentions to present the revelation to evolutionary institutions.

I believe that the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth transcend evolutionary religion (including Christianity), yet complement and elevate it when placed in the living context of his universe moral and spiritual authority. Exemplifying Jesus from the higher level of revelation is to present him with his broader presence in universe and world reality. In this way the Fifth Epochal Revelation is “superior” to the evolutionary level. It is the Michael-Inspired-Jesus that I am convinced will help turn Urantian civilization and culture to love and respect our beloved Universal Father.

Here is the rub: any move to “single out” one of the evolutionary religions at the expense of the needs of the others will invariably get entangled in sectarian weeds. Christianity is not the issue; giving the impression of “favoring” it is the issue for students of *The Urantia Book*. I am not disparaging the Christian tradition. God bless those who pursue a biblically based life of prayer and worship in the quest for that amazing grace offered by Jesus. (“Emergent Christians” come to mind.) But I think they are not our priority; touching intellectually and spiritually the spectrum of human religious experience is our priority. Christian interests are a separate agenda. Our responsibility is epochal and non-sectarian. I remain troubled by the convolution of the two in recent years. It is disquieting to listen to, or to read about, notions that could have the effect of “Christianizing” the presentation of this revelation. This is penned more as a cautionary note, than an alarm.

However, the convolution of the two strikes me as unbalanced: unwise and unsound from the cosmic-planetary viewpoint. It smacks of a variant of the chosen-people syndrome and also “being in a hurry.” to rush social evolution. That is what is disquieting to me. Incorporating and singling out Bible-related worshippers as a special domain of our revelatory movement shifts the orientation from higher to lower. In that sense, I believe such a move is in a way, “de-evolutionary,” for Fifth Epochal students. It lessens or possibly ignores the religion of revelation in its fuller super-intellectual cosmic and worldly vantage point. In my opinion, it misses much of the revelatory mark. It attempts to accomplish an evolutionary jump without the basic, pedagogical framework in *The Urantia Book* of the complex > simple. The effort lacks higher vision.

THE LONG VIEW: A VISION OF ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND DESTINY

It is not at all my intention to disparage in any way my fellow students of the revelation whom I regard as misguided, however well meaning. It is not their sincerity I question; my dispute is with their judgment. I do believe firmly that this

“Gift” of revelation provides us with a superlative advantage for mind and soul—a magnificent opportunity to see with an eagle’s perspective (flying high up with its superior eyesight). *The Urantia Book* gives us the chance to penetrate a paradox, The best way to understand and appreciate any present moment is to incorporate past, present, and future, integrating origin, history, and destiny.

There is a rather explicit description (the revelation’s pedagogy) in the book. It is presented as the means of comprehending any phase of universe reality. It is worth quoting at length: “*The human mind would ordinarily crave to approach the cosmic philosophy portrayed in these revelations by proceeding from the simple and the finite to the complex and the infinite, from human origins to divine destinies. But that path does not lead to spiritual wisdom. Such a procedure is the easiest path to a certain form of genetic knowledge, but at best it can only reveal man’s origin; it reveals little or nothing about his divine destiny.*

Even in the study of man’s biologic evolution on Urantia, there are grave objections to the exclusive historic approach to his present-day status and his current problems. The true perspective of any reality problem—human or divine, terrestrial or cosmic—can be had only by the full and unprejudiced study and correlation of three phases of universe reality: origin, history, and destiny. The proper understanding of these three experiential realities affords the basis for a wise estimate of the current status. [19: 1, 5-6] (P. 215)

Briefly, here are some of the ways this is achieved in *The Urantia Book*. The light of universal “origins” is revealed in the first five papers concerning our Father. “History” is revealed in various contexts: the Central Universe (even though it is outside of time and space as we understand them); the development of the Superuniverses and especially ours, Orvonton; the unfolding of the local universe of Nebadon; and likewise for Urantia itself. “Destiny,” leading ultimately to Finaliter status, is detailed throughout the universe hierarchy. All three phases of reality are personified in Michael’s bestowal life of Jesus of Nazareth. He took origin as a babe born of woman, and made history as a man among men, reaching individual destiny by gaining light and life personally. It is the revelatory narrative mainly in Part IV of *The Urantia Book* that fills in year-by-year his glorified earthly story. It is that narrative—greater, deeper, and more universal than anything before it—that must be preserved and disseminated, thoughtfully and meaningfully, now and in the long future ahead.

To elaborate further, it is my position that the long view must at least embrace divine, cosmic, morontial, spirit

(e.g., angelic), and human relationships. As children of the Universal Father, we are actually brothers and sisters to one another (brotherhood, i.e., family). Service in time and space, co-creating Orvonton with the Supreme, makes us (active) cosmic citizens. Cooperating with the angels (Seraphic Guardians and Master Seraphim), through the combination of intelligent prayer and wise action, we become collaborators with the planetary celestial government. And when we practice enlightened fellowship with our mortal brothers and sisters, we create a fraternity of laborers in the vineyards of truth, beauty, and goodness.

A Divine Counselor expresses it with sweeping eloquence: “*The religious challenge of this age is to those farseeing and forward-looking men and women of spiritual insight who will dare to construct a new and appealing philosophy of living out of the enlarged and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness.*” [2: 7, 10] (P. 43)

Within the larger contexts just presented, I would like to highlight two seminal relationships concerning humans and angels. Together, they address one of the priorities in Michael’s Plan: to eventually produce thousands of study groups worldwide. This particular priority, I think, honors the aforementioned high ground of universal-planetary revelation.

To build upon such an association requires a minimum of two intersecting axes. One may be characterized as a “vertical axis” connecting through living faith, prayer, and spiritual patience of the Master Seraphim and students of the book who gather in its study. The other may be characterized as a horizontal axis, whose sociology consists of living faith, prayer, and spiritual fragrance between mortals of the realm. The axes ought to form, conceptually, a “cross,” symbolizing a benign labor of love and Urantia as the “World of the Cross” in Nebadon.

I would make one last point concerning study groups and dissemination in general. Jesus talked about the spiritual liability of going to people with our message, rather than have them want to come to us to learn what we have spiritually and intellectually. “*Let me emphatically state this eternal truth: If you, by truth co-ordination, learn to exemplify in your lives this beautiful wholeness of righteousness, your fellow men will then seek after you that they may gain what you have so acquired. The measure wherewith truth seekers are drawn to you represents the measure of your truth endowment, your righteousness. The extent to which you have to go with your message to the people is, in a way, the measure of your failure to live the whole or righteous life, the truth-co-ordinated life.*” [155: 1. 5] (P. 1726)

He elaborated on this point during some of his Morontia appearances following his resurrection. When he appeared to the faith-believers in Alexandria, he said, *“Peace be upon you. That which my Father sent me into the world to establish belongs not to a race, a nation, nor to a special group of teachers or preachers. This gospel of the kingdom belongs to both Jew and gentile, to rich and poor, to free and bond, to male and female, even to the little children. And you are all to proclaim this gospel of love and truth by the lives which you live in the flesh. You shall love one another with a new and startling affection, even as I have loved you. You will serve mankind with a new and amazing devotion, even as I have served you. And when men see you so love them, and when they behold how fervently you serve them, they will perceive that you have become faith-fellows of the kingdom of heaven, and they will follow after the Spirit of Truth which they see in your lives, to the finding of eternal salvation.”* [191:6. 2] (P. 2044)

These form the contours of my vision. They enable me to draw a “straight line,” figuratively speaking, from the Father’s presence on Paradise to Urantia. (The image is adapted from an excellent lecture I heard in 1972 at 533 for the Summer Study Session.) I follow Jesus of Nazareth, and him only, as a devoted student of *The Urantia Book*. I rely on his Spirit of Truth in my endeavor to discern and do the will of my Father, the Source and Center of all things and beings. The bestowal of his divine spirit—my inestimable Thought Adjuster—is a gift, the length, breadth, and depth of which, I will never fully be able to gauge. But I greatly appreciate this divine spirit companion even now! I happily acknowledge what the celestial administration, with Michael’s blessing, has bestowed so freely and lovingly—the power and glory of these revealed teachings in the pages of *The Urantia Book*.

I would like to conclude with some verses of my own about the Fifth Epochal Revelation that I wrote a few years ago, and a prayer:

Challenge of This Age	The Urantia Book
Past times	Revelation touching evolution
Physical survival	Up stepping progressive civilization
Was the challenge	On a planetary scale
Modern times	East and west may hope to reconcile
Mental adroitness	Non-dualism with personalism
The watch word	The relative with the absolute
Need to discern truth	Universe of universes clarified
Carries this necessity	Paradise at the stable center
Further along	Superuniverses revolving around it
These times	Inhabited planets go from primitive to light and life
Concern the advent	God’s plan of evolutionary worlds connected with celestial worlds
Of new planetary revelation	Lucifer rebellion delays, but cannot prevent our real future
A task	Origin and history in time and space
To be continued	Destiny in eternity and infinity
For 1,000 years.	Truth, beauty, and goodness will yet prevail.
May we be more receptive to our Father’s grace.	
Thank you Father for all that you do.	

Born in New York City in 1943, **Charles Laurence Olivea** married his wife, Mary, in 1966. We raised two sons, Peter and Gordon, both of who are fathers to a grandson each. I enjoyed a teaching career of about 45 years at the high school level and taught history in New York, Connecticut, and New Mexico. We moved to Santa Fe in 1999 where we reside today. I first encountered The Urantia Book in 1965. I became a serious student of the revelation in 1968 and have studied it ever since. I believed it was an epochal revelation when I initially found it and have held it in that light to this day. I think of The Urantia Book as a jewel that will not decay. The Universal Father has given us a blessing of phenomenal scope and depth.

IS THE URANTIA BOOK A SACRED TEXT?

By David Kantor, Denver, CO

Author's note: This essay provides a synopsis of concepts presented in the books listed in the accompanying bibliography, attempting to relate them to the evolving context within which The Urantia Book is read, interpreted, and used as a social object.

Deep in a pre-historic forest, night is falling. A circle of sacred stones contains a small fire. Nearby, a wrinkled old shaman softly chants as he taps a small skin drum. From time to time he sprinkles an offering of tobacco leaves over the flames. At the moment the full moon is first seen between the trees he removes the shoulder blade of a beaver from the fire.

Divining a pattern of cracks in the bone made by the fire he finds a revelation of the cosmos in which his band of hunters lives, a map pointing the way to tomorrow's hunting—a herd of caribou that will provide sustenance for the tribe, specific dangers to be avoided, actions that must be taken to assure success. The most essential information for the life of the tribe is read by the shaman in the cracks of this bone.

I sit by a small lamp in my study. In my hands I hold a copy of *The Urantia Book*, a collection of inscribed patterns of markings made by a complex formulation of solvents and dyes. Divining them, I find a revelation of the cosmos in which I live, guidance pointing the way to sustenance for the day, specific dangers to be avoided, actions to be taken to assure a more successful life. The most essential information for understanding my life may be read in the markings on sheets of paper.

Between the shaman and me much is the same; we each seek guidance from that which is beyond our limited human perceptions, accepting collections of abstract symbols as revelation.

Are these sacred texts the shaman and I are reading? We employ collections of symbols to connect ourselves with a larger cosmos. We engage in the same activity as countless other human beings who daily read the *Bible*, the *Torah*, the *Rig-Veda*, the *Koran*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Avesta*, or any one of countless other collections of writings. Does *The Urantia Book* belong in this category of texts? Or does it transcend this category? Does classifying it as a “sacred text” cheapen it?

LITERACY AND THE REHABILITATION OF AN ISOLATED WORLD

On our isolated world missing both its Planetary Prince and Adamic centers of education and culture, literacy has become a primary mediator of revelation. It is not the material symbols themselves which constitute revelation (as some religious fundamentalists would maintain), but rather the process of reading them which facilitates the catalyzing influence of spiritual benefactors operating within a seeking mortal mind.

The revelators note that, “*The divine spirit makes contact with mortal man, not by 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. . . . Such religious experiences result from the impress made upon the mind of man by the combined operations of the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth as they function amid and upon the ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings of the evolving sons of God.*” [101:1.3](PP. 968-69) You and I, living in a twenty-first century world, spend most of our waking hours processing symbols and extracting meaning from our experience in our environment. We are navigators in a sea of information from which meaning is mediated to us through various texts, images, icons, hand-held displays of light patterns, and devices linked to satellites indicating our exact location on the surface of the planet.

For countless generations our ancestors ordered their lives around what they read in the rocks, the trees, footprints on streambeds, the movement of clouds, and mysteries concealed in nighttime skies and burnt shoulder blades. Information of a cultural or historical nature was passed from generation to generation by story tellers.

But over the past three thousand years humanity has been going through the most significant transition it has so far experienced in its long history—the transition from oral traditions to mass literacy.

You who today enjoy the advantages of the art of printing little understand how difficult it was to perpetuate truth during these earlier times; how easy it was to lose sight of a new doctrine from one generation to another. [93:7.4](P. 1022)

Masses of people reading and manipulating symbols that they themselves create has not only transformed society, but has greatly accelerated the evolution of all aspects of human civilization—including the rate at which symbols carry-

ing meaning are propagated across linguistic and cultural groups.

Is there a relationship between this transition and the appearance of three epochal revelations in rapid succession? What is the potential activity of spirit within a mind engaged in processing the material symbols of written language?

In 2000 BC Melchizedek revitalized the fundamental spiritual content of the oral tradition (abstract symbols assimilated through the ears rather than the eyes). His training center and the missionaries he sent forth worked entirely within the oral tradition.

Jesus came during a time when the transition from oral to literate was well underway in both the Hebraic and the Greco-Roman worlds. The wisdom of the older Hebrew tradition had just been translated into Greek at Alexandria, liberating it from centuries of accumulated social ritual and reinvigorating its spiritual potentials.

The Hebrews had become known as “the people of the book.” But within that culture, the traditions of the earlier oral period still dominated. Written texts were used as mnemonic devices to aid the recall of memorized passages. The rabbis taught by word of mouth and the unique articulation and linguistic nuances of their sentences were handed down from generation to generation. Literacy, in this culture, meant the ability to enunciate or chant the written words in the ordained manner.

Even today, the oral tradition is strong. The word “Talmud” literally means “learned by heart.” The word “Koran” implies a recitation of scripture. The word “Bible” implies a collection of books and letters. If you visited an Islamic school you would likely find students sitting and repeating together, in high, rhythmic voices, verse after verse of the Koran. It is the same in the traditional Talmudic schools. Elementary Christian education still emphasizes the memorizing of passages of scripture.

Jesus’ parables are great examples of conceptual constructs from which spiritual values may be derived by people in literate as well as oral cultures. The original rendering of the Sermon on the Mount is written in a rhythmic structure which facilitates memorization.

The Urantia Book came at a time of increasing global literacy. According to the World Bank Development Fund, in the world today more than 70% of adult men and women have a basic level of functional literacy. Programs for increasing literacy and levels of educational attainment are being aggressively pursued by governments and international agencies around the world.

LITERACY AS A SOCIAL ACTIVITY

Alan Purves⁵ comments that for some it means the ability to sign one’s name on legal documents. For others it is the ability to read a particular text such as the Koran and answer a teacher’s questions. To a group of women in Bombay it may mean knowing whether a vendor in the marketplace is asking a fair price for a kilo of lentils.

There is one thing these definitions have in common: They assume shared meanings for the symbols used. We assume the meanings of the words we speak are the same meanings the mind of our hearers will attach to them. Literacy does not exist apart from a social context of interpretation.

Reading and writing are not merely skills related to figuring out print or writing a sentence; they involve a number of social activities as well. Each of us enjoys membership in a variety of literate communities; communities which have their own specialized vocabularies and modes of relating linguistically.

Literacy is at heart a social process and does not exist outside of a social context. In the case of religious or sacred texts the social interaction around the texts may become very complex or ritualized. And these social activities have a great deal to do with the way in which particular manuscripts come to be considered “sacred texts.” (There are important implications of this fact which lie beyond the scope of this present essay; they relate to an understanding of specific social contexts within which dissemination of *The Urantia Book* might most effectively take place.)

LITERACY AND ABSTRACT CONCEPTUAL REPRESENTATION

Any understanding of reading must begin with an acknowledgement of the role which the oral tradition has played throughout human history. Mass literacy is a very new phenomenon, present for less than one tenth of one percent of human history.

The earliest texts made no pretension to be actual representations of reality—they existed to help the storyteller remember. True knowledge was understood to exist only in memory; writing was mnemonic, a reminder. Not until the late Middle Ages did texts begin to be used as archival representations of the facts of the world.

The classic sacred texts of our world today, the texts which provide the conceptual foundations for Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, Taoism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism—all of these texts are collections of the most highly valued insights, revelations, and stories from the earlier oral tradition. They have been carried over into this radically new medium of symbolic representation—writing—so that the words of the ancient prophets

and seers might continue to provide humanity with spiritual guidance in a bold new age of literacy.

We can appreciate that the transition from an oral to a literate culture—from hearing words to translating written symbols—would have a profound effect on human consciousness. Completely different parts of the brain are involved in these two activities. Some scholars believe that one of the repercussions of this transition was the discovery, by the Greeks, of the human mind itself.

To the early Greeks, feelings and emotions were understood to be bodily functions. Complex perceptions of reality were thought to come from outside of the organism itself—from some other-than-human source. In Homer's works, no one decides, thinks, knows, fears, or remembers anything within his own psyche. Making a decision was understood as following instructions received from the gods.

Only in the later Classical period is the psyche recognized as a part of the body—a mental organ residing in the head. These Greeks discovered thought as something originating within the human organism and therefore a phenomenon which could be developed and managed by the will of a responsible self.

Seeing actions as the expression of one's own thoughts allows them to be seen as subject to moral and ethical control, thereby providing a foundation for personal spiritual life.

ing is transmitted through texts. In some respects the history of reading could be studied as the history of interpretation.

The early Christian scholar, Origen, argued that all biblical texts could have more than one meaning. Some texts, he concluded, since their straight-forward meaning did not agree with standard theology or ethics, had no literal meaning and the reader was admonished to seek only the secondary spiritual or symbolic meaning of the passage.

The purpose of reading during this period was not to get information; it was to see beyond the physical written text and grasp its hidden wisdom. The graphical images in illuminated texts were intended to facilitate this process of perceiving the spirit believed to be accessed through the medium of the text. The text was seen as only a starting point for pious meditations—an entry point to the spiritual cosmos.

During the Middle Ages there were substantial changes in the way people read texts. Every monastery had its own interpretation of its texts, its own oral tradition running parallel to the written word—and this oral tradition carried far more authority than the words in the books.

Disputes about the meaning of a text arose in the course of writing commentaries on them. The Jewish tradition allowed some latitude for interpretation. Here the correct oral reproduction of the verbal form of the word was of critical importance—the correct rhythm and melodic intonation of

It is important to remember that within early Rabbinic Judaism as well as pre-reformation Christianity, authority in determining meaning still resided with the spoken word rather than in the text.

Surprisingly, the critical element in this process turns out to have been the act of writing. Writing makes us conscious of speech and subjects the expression of our ideas to a degree of scrutiny and refinement not possible in a purely oral context.

The early storytellers did not accept personal responsibility for their own expression of thoughts. In the oral tradition the storyteller or the prophet was only the spokesperson for the muse or the deity—the words were the muse's, the voice was the storyteller's.

"God forbid that we should take a dream of the imagination for a pattern of the world" Francis Bacon

The intellectual landscape of the past century is littered with the debris of theories attempting to describe how mean-

the words and phrases.

At the end of the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas attempted to provide a solution to the interpretive problem by saying that the "literal meaning" of a text is that meaning intended by the writer. The influence of Aquinas was such that his view became somewhat prevalent; the understanding of reading changed from that of seeking "epiphanies" or revelations to the attempt to determine the author's intentions.

But Aquinas did not abandon the notion that there may be a spiritual interpretation of the Biblical text in addition to a literal one. He continued to insist that the deeper meanings and higher truths were available only as a gift from God.

"You attribute to letters a fortune that they cannot possess." Plato in Phaedrus

It is important to remember that within early Rabbinic Judaism as well as pre-reformation Christianity, authority in determining meaning still resided with the spoken word rather than in the text. The church taught that only trained clergy were able to interpret accurately the meaning of scripture and the common people were discouraged from reading the Bible lest they become confused.

No small part of the Protestant Reformation was the shift to the belief that the meaning contained in the biblical text was austere anchored in the literal construction of its sentences themselves a reaction to self-serving interpretations by priestly authorities. The Christians of the new Protestant sects were dogmatic, requiring that “correct” interpretations be distinguished from “incorrect” ones.

AND THEN THERE WERE MAPS

As the Renaissance gave way to the Enlightenment, voyages of discovery were being made across the great oceans of the planet and a profoundly new world view was coming into existence. Until the second half of the fifteenth century, maps of the habitable world showed a circular disc surrounded by the ocean, with Jerusalem at the center, Paradise at the top, and the boundaries of human knowledge around the periphery noted as the domain of dragons.

One of the most important intellectual developments of this period was the refinement of map making and the ability to create maps which could be useful for navigation—symbolic representations that bore a one-to-one correspondence to reality. Navigation had been relatively easy as long as land was in sight. More daring voyages relied on celestial navigation. But once the south-bound voyager saw the North Star sink below the horizon, all means of orientation were lost.

Magellan, his predecessors, and his contemporaries of the sixteenth century, are considered to have made “voyages of discovery” they brought back the information necessary to construct increasingly accurate maps. In contrast, the eighteenth century voyages of Captain Cook two hundred years later are considered to have been “voyages of exploration”. Captain Cook was able to study maps created over the previous two centuries which served as a theoretical model for his thinking.

Magellan’s discoveries were made on the basis of his careful observations of the world. Captain Cook’s explorations were made on the basis of careful study of abstract representations of the world which existed on paper.

We live much of our lives relative to abstract representations of reality. We read instruction manuals, diagrams, cook books, travel guides, maps, and financial reports, documents

which we believe to be direct representations of reality. All of this reading activity causes us to develop particular attitudes toward the process of extracting meaning from what we read.

Many people unconsciously come to assume that scripture is a direct representation of reality in the same way that the owner’s manual for their car describes its construction, use, and maintenance procedures.

Do the passages we read in *The Urantia Book* really bear a one-to-one correspondence to reality? Or are they metaphorical constructs utilized by a vastly superior intelligence for purposes of facilitating the grasp of spiritual values by the mortal mind? Are the concepts in the book simply conceptual models that bear only a distant correspondence to some actual reality? The revelators imply such a construct of the text in several places.

One of these is in the discussion of universe frames in Paper 115 where we find the comment that “*universe frames*” are indispensable to rational intellectual operations but that they are, “*without exception,*” erroneous to a greater or lesser degree. The revelators go on to note that, “*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.*” [115:1.2] (P. 1260)

The revelators appear to have broken reality up into categories with relationships easily accessible to mortal thought processes “*In order to facilitate mortal comprehension... the diverse levels of cosmic reality have been designated as...*” [115:1.3] (P. 1260) Here the revelators confess that they are creatively constructing a model of reality intended to compensate for our limitations. In one place they refer to the concept being articulated as “*a philosophic concession which we make to the time-bound, space-fettered, finite mind of man...*” [0:3.16] (P. 6)

At some points they indicate frustration with the limitations of the process. In Paper 44 an Archangel laments “*the necessity of constantly perverting thought and distorting language in an effort to unfold to the mortal mind...*” [44:0.13] (P. 499)

The danger to be avoided in relying on any scripture as a guide to living is that of falling into the fallacy of fundamentalism—falling into the trap of living our lives relative to abstract representations of reality rather than relative to reality itself; relative to self-constructed facts and meanings rather than relative to spiritual values. This danger is particularly acute in the developed world where a great deal of our daily lives are lived relative to symbolic abstractions represented in various forms of media—radio, television,

film, YouTube videos, email, tweets, magazines, books, and Facebook postings, to name just a few.

Although *The Urantia Book* encourages us to grow intellectually and philosophically, its highest priority is the directing of the reader to the personality activities of worship and service—activities which force personality to become engaged with the world-as-it-is rather than in abstract representations of that world. If our primary engagement in life is with man-made abstractions, we are guilty of nothing less than idolatry—devoting our lives to conceptual representations of reality rather than to personality integration with a personal cosmos. *The Urantia Book* exhorts us to serve our fellows, not abstractions about the nature of reality. A

native events in fiction. Again, the type of logic represented in this mass media of the time had an effect on the way people read scripture.

The early Protestant teachers seemed to distrust the mind, the memory, and to some extent even the scriptural ceremony. They placed their trust in the external text, which they saw as a map intended to lead the soul of the reader to God.

The assumption here is that anyone can read scripture and understand its true meaning without any outside assistance. To hold such a belief is to view the text as an exact picture, not a metaphor; that the text is to God and God's plan as the periodic table is to chemical elements.

...it should not surprise us to find that a large number of people who hold to a strict literal interpretation of their sacred texts are technicians and people from other professions whose daily lives are spent following instructions in books and manuals.

printed text can be a religious fetish just as easily as can an image carved from a piece of wood or stone. Always must the symbol be differentiated from that which it is intended to symbolize.

AND THEN THERE WAS THE PRINTING PRESS

The development of changeable type and the printing press changed the way texts were produced and made them identical to one another across thousands of copies, reinforcing ideas of the authority of the text being greater than the authority of a person.

But by the seventeenth century writers and scholars had become painfully aware of the unmanageably diverse ways in which a given text could be interpreted. The problem is that the meaning of a text, especially texts created in one culture and read in another, is never clearly evident. (And the shortcomings of the most insightful literary theory become painfully obvious in the light of *Urantia Book* ontology and its discussion of the differences and relationships between things, meanings, and values).

We can get a better understanding of seventeenth century consciousness by appreciating the evolution of symbolic representation which had been evolving in other domains: representational paintings of the Dutch masters, the representation of the world in maps, representation of physical motion in mathematical notations, the representation of botanical species in herbals, and the representation of imagi-

During this period scientific writing began to take on precision, and with the work of various anatomists, a map of the human body could be used as a guide to those who would trace various bodily functions. Cookbooks began to appear which included precise measurements and sequences of directions. Timetables for trains and carriages were consulted regularly by an increasingly literate urban population.

Reading became the primary means by which knowledge was accrued. Metaphorical or symbolic meanings were looked upon with disdain. And today, it should not surprise us to find that a large number of people who hold to a strict literal interpretation of their sacred texts are technicians and people from other professions whose daily lives are spent following instructions in books and manuals.

By the middle of the nineteenth century mass literacy was becoming a fact of life in much of the world and associated with it were growing repercussions of mass media—shared culture through the shared reading of texts.

And it did not take the planetary supervisors long to exploit this development with the compilation of the fifth epochal revelation presented in the form of a book.

THE READER AS LOCUS OF INTERPRETATION

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, concomitant with the growing interest in psychology, literary critics began focusing on the reader as the source of meaning in any act of reading. This view says that it is the existing

ideas, feelings, and psychological trends within the mind of the reader which create meanings when the text is read.

In language, an alphabet represents the mechanism of materialism, while the words expressive of the meaning of a thousand thoughts, grand ideas, and noble ideals—of love and hate, of cowardice and courage—represent the performances of mind within the scope defined by both material and spiritual law, directed by the assertion of the will of personality, and limited by the inherent situational endowment. [I95:7.21] (P. 2080)

A related disclaimer may be found in Paper 92 where the revelators seem to acknowledge this post-modern insight that all our understandings of reality—and revelation—are subjectively constructed within the mortal mind. And they do this “...at the risk of weakening the future influence and authority of this, the most recent of the revelations of truth to the mortal races of Urantia.” [92:4.9] (P. 1008)

The recognition that all human concepts of reality are subjectively synthesized within the individual mind has been the source of a great deal of philosophic confusion in recent decades—especially in the areas of literary and communications theory. And while the revelators acknowledge this as a valid concern, *The Urantia Book* affirms the objective reality of truth and our ability to recognize it; it affirms our ability to enjoy integration with cosmic reality through the objective presence of the Adjusters, the Spirit of Truth, and the Holy Spirit all operating within the subjective interpretive processes of the mortal mind. *The Urantia Book* brilliantly illuminates the dark abyss of nihilistic despair.

That which is of greatest importance are the spiritual values our constructs of reality enable us to recognize, along with our choosing to incorporate those values into our interactions with other personalities. These are spiritual elements which become part of the soul which will survive mortal death. The facts and meanings from which those spiritual values are derived are nothing more than scaffolding and have very little cosmic value beyond that of facilitating the formation and growth of the soul.

“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made.” John 1:1

THE TRANSITION FROM BOOK TO SACRED TEXT

Obviously we relate to a text such as *The Urantia Book* in a very different manner than the block of text on a milk carton or the content of someone’s Facebook post. But the way we relate to the book is also very different from the way in which we relate to most other books.

It’s not that we read it front to back, then start over and read it again. We have favorite sections that we read more than others; sections which are still too difficult to really understand, places we go when we are seeking inspiration, clarification, or the illumination of a new idea.

Some of us put notes in the margins of our books creating cross references between various paragraphs and sections. Some of us color-code specific passages with highlighters. Sometimes we engage in topical studies, using some of the supplemental tools created over the years such as Clyde Bedell’s *Concordance*, Harry McMullan’s *Topical Index*, Duane Faw’s *Paramony*, or electronic search utilities such as those created by Kristen Maaherra, Barry Clark and Troy Bishop.

Interestingly, the way in which many of us use *The Urantia Book* closely resembles the way in which we use the Internet. On the Internet we seldom read an entire text or even a full page. We read fragments and jump from one page to another, from one text to another, using hyperlinks.

In light of the source work which has been done by Matthew Block we can view *The Urantia Book* itself as a hypertext document. When we read it we are actually surfing through the gems of our world’s theological ideation as these have been collected and arranged by a transcendent intelligence we don’t fully understand, done in such a manner that enhanced access to universe meanings and a subsequent recognition of spiritual values is made possible.

But this hypertext usage is not unique to *The Urantia Book*. It is a defining feature of how virtually all of the world’s books which have come to be regarded as “sacred texts” are used.

Texts such as the *Bible*, the *Koran*, the *Upanishads*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Torah* are all used in this way; and their use is enhanced by secondary texts such as the *Catholic Breviary*, the *Episcopalian Book of Common Prayer*, the *Ahadith of the Messenger*, the *Talmud*, or the notations in a *Schofield Reference Bible*. The seminal texts themselves are not read in the straight-through fashion in which we read novels. They are compendia, collections which can be read in a variety of configurations depending on the reader and the situation.

The Christian testaments are studied as if the New Testament referred to the Old Testament. The text is often set up in a three-column format with the middle column containing references from the present text space to others before or after. The actual verses and images refer outward to other verses and images so that the New Testament presents a reworking and a re-contextualizing of earlier books, songs and prophecies. The final book in the Bible, the book of

Revelation, is a kaleidoscope of images that are understood to reference various parts of the entire preceding collection of books.

THE COMMUNITY AS THE LOCUS OF INTERPRETATION

There are a number of contemporary theologians who have come to view the authority for interpretation of a “sacred text” as residing neither in the text nor in the individual, but rather in the community within which the text is read and discussed.

“We can imagine that early preachers were often asked to explain what they meant with their talk about God, salvation, and revelation, and when they were hard pressed, when all their parables or references to the unknown God and to the Logos had succeeded only in confusing their hearers, they turned at last to the story of their life, saying, “What we mean is this event which happened among us and to us.” ...H.R. Niebuhr³

In our community of *Urantia Book* readers there seems at times to have been an obsession with avoiding the establishment of anything which resembled a religion—almost to the point of making this avoidance into the central ritual of a new religion! But in spite of this reluctance, *The Urantia Book* may be well on its way to being what is classically considered a “sacred text.”

The primary factor in this transition is the continuing development of social activities centered around the text. Reading aloud in a study group, reading a passage before a General Council meeting, participating in discussions about the meaning of a passage, taking a moment of silence before and after a study group, recalling stories about Jesus during a remembrance supper (to say nothing of associating the ritual of the remembrance supper itself with the text)—each of these is a social activity centered on the text. In our study groups and conferences, the printed text is only a part of the total experience.

There are a number of contemporary theologians who have come to view the authority for interpretation of a “sacred text” as residing neither in the text nor in the individual, but rather in the community within which the text is read and discussed.

It should be obvious that the meanings people derive from the *Torah* today are not identical to those which Hillel or Paul derived from reading it. Meanings derived from reading the Gospels today are not the same as those derived by Augustine or Aquinas. In one sense the texts persist through time and across translations into the marks and symbols of different languages. But the meanings derived from them change as the community reading them changes. The persistence of “sacred texts” over long periods of time lies in the fact that people continue to derive spiritual values from the stories and expressions of thought transmitted by those texts.

But at what point do we begin to consider a collection of writings to be “scripture?” The hypertext nature of its usage by an interpretive community has already been mentioned. But there is more.

One step involves the members of a social group believing that the text is a transcription of the actual word of God or of a divinely inspired person. Another step is the incorporation of the text into the worship life of a community. Sometimes the words of the text are believed to be the actual words of God.

And as these social activities are repeated over time, they become the core rituals and ceremonies of the community. We engage in the ceremony of social reading. We use the text as an entry point to seek understanding of the divine, as a means of engaging ourselves and each other in questions about meaning and spirituality.

In this context, religious community may be the family sitting around the dinner table, it may be a study group, a phone conversation, a conference workshop, or one of many other social settings characterized by intimacy, communication between individuals, and the quest for truth.

Emerging Urantian educational institutions play roles in this process as well—Urantia Foundation’s Internet School, the Fellowship’s summer study sessions, Urantia University, the Perfecting Horizons Institute—these are emerging foundational institutions of a new text-based virtual religious movement.

The Urantia movement is the first significant religious movement whose beginnings are tied to the propagation of its precepts by means of the Internet. The translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek made their wisdom accessible in a new environment, liberated from accumulated ritual and

tradition. The launching of an epochal revelation over the Internet allows it to spread free of authoritarian dogmatism, to take root in the subjectivity of countless individuals living in every country of the world.

As we read *The Urantia Book* within our various reader communities and re-construct the sequence of paragraphs to make the text relevant to specific needs and interests, as we read the text as the central activity of a social gathering that has a religious purpose, we are slowly but surely transforming *The Urantia Book* into much more than a mere book; as its reading becomes associated with acts of worship, it increasingly takes on qualities of scripture.

Does *The Urantia Book* fit into the category of “sacred texts?” Personally I consider anything that mediates the presence of the divine within my mortal mind to be a sacred text. My personal collection of mediating objects, while containing *The Urantia Book*, also contains other books, pieces of music, paintings, icons, pieces of poetry. My most highly valued sacred text is life itself where I find evidence of transcendent mind in snowflakes, cloud formations, flower structures, leaf patterns, revelations about the history of the earth in rock formations, evidence of transcendent personality in relationships with other personalities.

My appreciation of *The Urantia Book* stems from the fact that I perceive the pattern of its conceptual description of reality as belonging to the author of DNA, the originator of spiral galaxies, and the source of love.

I suppose that makes it a sacred text of sorts, something I read in a manner not too far removed from that of my distant brother, the shaman, reading cracks in bones by his fire, making a small offering to the gods with a sprinkling of tobacco leaves over the flames.

Footnotes:

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4. Olson, David, *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998.
5. Purves, Alan, *The Web of Text and the Web of God*, The Guilford Press, London, 1998.
6. Smith, Huston, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, 1982.
7. _____, *The Urantia Book*, Uversa Press, Chicago, 1996.

David Kantor has been a reader of The Urantia Book for almost fifty years. He is vice president of the Rocky Mountain Spiritual Fellowship. He has recently written, directed, and produced a feature length film, “Re-Imagining Jesus”, based on The Urantia Book.

URANTIABOOK.ORG IS NOW A FULLY RESPONSIVE WEBSITE!



The Urantia Book Fellowship's website, urantiabook.org, has now been converted to a responsive design. If you've visited the site recently, you probably noticed the new look. Site visitors can now access and enjoy our site from any device (smart phone, iPhone, desktop or tablet) because the site automatically adapts to the various screen sizes.

After many months of intense planning, the Fellowship hired the professional designers at Ebwaycreative.com to complete the task. Our team was well pleased with their work. Responsive designs are not as elaborate on a desktop PC, but they are

available to people all over the world via handheld devices, and that's good news! Many people in the world don't have a desktop PC, they access the Internet via smart phones and tablets. Since launching the new site several weeks ago, we've already noticed a huge increase in traffic, with people from all over the world registering. The main resource they visit is, of course, *The Urantia Book*. We hope you will enjoy and utilize this new site design for all kinds of devices!

SIXTY-FOUR ORIGINAL URANTIA BOOK CONCEPTS

By Dr. William Sadler

In this informally published paper, Dr. William Sadler outlines 64 knowledge concepts he describes as original in The Urantia Book based on his own understanding and research. The date of its preparation is not known but it is speculated that it was drafted in the mid-twentieth century.

1. The Eternal Son of Paradise: For the first time in human records the Eternal Son is clearly designated and personally identified. Papers 6–7

2. The Unique Conjoint Actor: The detailed concept of the Third Person of Deity is both unique and original in the Urantia Papers. Papers 8–9

3. The Paradise Trinity: In *The Urantia Book* the Paradise Trinity finds its only present day identification and recognition. Paper 10

4. The Central Geographic Residence of Deity: For the first time the world knows exactly where God lives—Paradise. Papers 11–12

5. The Absolute Isle of Paradise: The original concept of Paradise as the absolute of non-deity reality and its location at the geographic center of infinity is discussed in some detail. Paper 11

6. Multiple Creator Sons: Recognition and discussion of the existence of more than 700,000 Creator Paradise Sons is provided for the first time in *The Urantia Book*. Papers 20–21

7. Concept of the Absolutes: The concept of the Unqualified, Universal, and Deity Absolutes is original with *The Urantia Book*. Foreword.

8. Doctrine of Evolutionary Deity: While I [Sadler] saw an intimation of finite Deity in one of Pratt's books about the time of the coming of the Urantia Papers, I am sure that the concepts of the Supreme Being and God the Ultimate are original. Papers 115–118

9. Concept of the Triunities: The Triunities and Triodities are original *Urantia Book* concepts. Paper 104

10. Havona Universe and Natives: The billion world description of the Central Universe of Havona and its inhabitants is a wholly new and original concept presented in *The Urantia Book*. Papers 12–14

11. The Concept of Space: Notwithstanding the theory of an “exploding cosmos,” the space concept of *The Urantia Book* is new and original. Paper 15

12. The Grand and Master Universes: The overall cosmological concept of the Master cosmos is not only original, but it far transcends all previous ideas. Papers 11–15

13. The Seven Orders of Trinity-Created Days/Sons: While one of these seven orders, the “Ancient of Days,” is mentioned in the Bible, the whole presentation is both new and original. Paper 18

14. The Paradise Sons of God: The story of Magisterial and Trinity Teacher Sons in addition to Creator Sons is entirely original with *The Urantia Book*. Paper 20

15. Trinitized Sons of God: The story and technique of the trinitization of divine Sons is unique and original in the Urantia papers. Paper 22

16. The Seven Master Spirits: While the Bible makes mention of seven Spirits of God, it is only in *The Urantia Book* that these Spirits are identified and their work fully described. Paper 16

17. The Vast Family of the Conjoint Actor: The vast and far flung Family of the Infinite Spirit, the God of Mind—supernaphim, seconaphim. Solitary Messengers are but briefly foreshadowed by the Biblical narrative of seraphim and cherubim. Papers 23–28

18. The Universal Circuits: The gravity, personality, spirit, and mind circuits are original teachings of *The Urantia Book*. Papers 3, 7 & 9

19. Universal Reflectivity–Majeston: The amazing story of universal reflectivity is a wholly new and original presentation in the Urantia revelation. Paper 17

20. Power Directors–Force Organizers: The whole concept of intelligent and purposive control of cosmic energy is original with *The Urantia Book*. Paper 29

21. Evolution of Energy-Matter: While some phases of the Urantia story of the evolution of energy may have been foreshadowed by scientific discovery, nevertheless, the concept as a whole is new as presented in the Urantia Papers. Paper 139

22. The Ultimaton: At the time of the suggestion of the ultimaton in the Urantia Papers, I had never heard of such a concept in scientific literature. Recently there has been some

scientific speculation as to the possible existence of some a particle analogous to the ultimaton concept. Papers 41, 42

23. **Origin of the Solar System:** While the Urantia narrative of the origin of the solar system includes some features of the Moulton-Chamberlain theory, the whole story is so complete and unique as to make it practically an original presentation. Paper 57

24. **The Architectural Worlds:** The concept of Worlds made to order for specific purposes is original with *The Urantia Book*. Papers 15, 43, 46

25. **Universe Administration:** From the inhabited worlds to the management of the grand universe the administrative scheme presented in *The Urantia Book* is entirely new. Paper 33

26. **The Life Carriers:** Nothing like the concept of the Life Carriers has ever been suggested to humankind in all past history. Papers 20, 58–63

27. **Origin of the Human Race:** While the Urantia story of the origin of the human race validates the doctrine of evolution, it presents such a detailed and unique narrative as to constitute an all but original presentation of human origins. Papers 62–63

28. **Origin of the Colored Races:** The Urantia story of the origin of the Sangik races is the only such narrative in existence. Paper 64

29. **Source and Nature of Personality:** While *The Urantia Book*, like science, fails to define personality, it does illuminate its origin as a direct bestowal from God and gratifyingly portrays its significance to human beings and its magnificent destiny. (Entire Book)

30. **The Concept of Thought Adjusters:** While the Bible talks about the “true light which lighteth every man coming into the world,” the story of Thought Adjusters as revealed in the Urantia Papers is so replete and unique as to constitute a new and original story. Papers 107–111

31. **Evolution of the Soul:** The concept of the origin, nature, and evolution of the soul and human responsibility for its growth is original with *The Urantia Book*. Paper 110

32. **Identification of the Holy Spirit:** Pointing out the Holy Spirit as the presence of the Local Universe Mother Spirit, a daughter of the Infinite Spirit, is altogether new and original in the Urantia Papers. Paper 34

33. **The Seven Adjutant Mind Spirits:** While the Bible makes mention of seven spirits and in Isaiah partially identifies them, the Urantia narrative is so full and unique as to make it virtually an original presentation. Paper 36:5

34. **Local Universe Sons of God:** The whole story of Local Universe Sons is new and original. Paper 35

35. **The Ascension Plan to “Be You Perfect”:** While Jesus propounded the mandate “Be you perfect”, etc., the unfoldment of the Paradise ascension plan in *The Urantia Book* is an all but new original concept. Papers 1, 7, 14, 26

36. **The Seven Mansion Worlds:** While the Master alluded to the “mansion worlds,” as noted in the Bible, the replete story of their nature and purpose is both new and original. Paper 17

37. **The Morontia Concept:** The whole morontia concept of the stage between the material and the spiritual is new and original in *The Urantia Book*. Papers 30:4; 39:2; 48

38. **Celestial Artisans and Reversion Directors:** Both of these concepts are new in *The Urantia Book*. The concept of celestial play and spiritual humor is all but new. Papers 30:3; 48:4

39. **Concept of Permanent Cosmic Citizenship:** This is wholly original in *The Urantia Book*. Papers 30: 2; 31:5; 37:9; 40:10.

40. **The Urantia Midwayers:** While the Old Testament does refer to the “Nephilim” the citation is so indefinite as to constitute the Urantia story of the midwayers as a new and original narrative. Papers 30:9; 66:4; 77:6

41. **The Superhuman Planetary Government:** The story of the planetary functions of the Most Highs, the Reserve Corps, and the planetary seraphim is original, notwithstanding the allusion to the work of the Most Highs in the Bible. Paper 114

42. **The Billions of Inhabited Worlds:** At the time of the arrival of the Urantia Papers, there was no literature dealing with inhabited worlds other than our world. The idea was new. In recent years we frequently run across speculations regarding other inhabited planets. *The Urantia Book’s* extensive exposition of the subject is original. Papers 12, 15

43. **Clarification of Sin and Rebellion:** The unique clarification of evil, sin, iniquity, and rebellion is original with *The Urantia Book*. Paper 2:2

44. **Identity of Adam & Eve:** The narrative of the legendary story of Adam and Eve as bestowed personalities, Material Sons and Daughters, is original in *The Urantia Book*. 37:9; 74

45. **Clarification of Melchizedek:** The story of Melchizedek as an individual and as the name designation of a corps of universe teachers presented in the Urantia pa-

pers is a new and original concept. Papers 45:4; 93

46. **Concept of the Ages of Light and Life:** The fruition of mortal evolution as portrayed as the ages of light and life is altogether new and original. Paper 55

47. **A Unified History of Urantia (Earth):** Nowhere else in human expression can you find a consistent and unified history of our world—its origin, nature, and destiny. For the first time we have a chronology of human affairs. Part III of *The Urantia Book*.

48. **Diseases:** The book presents a new and original explanation of microbic diseases. Papers 65:2; 76:5; 90:3

49. **Antigravity:** The whole concept of antigravity is unique and original with the Urantia Papers. Only recently has any scientist promulgated a theory of antigravity. Papers 9:3; 11; 15:8; 42

50. **Jesus' Birthday:** For the first time during the Christian era we know the real birthday of Jesus—August 21, 7 BC. Paper 122

51. **Experimental Planet:** The fact that Urantia is designated as a decimal planet and that the Life Carriers had permission to attempt new features of biologic evolution is information not heretofore known on the planet. Paper 49

52. **The Evolution of Religion:** While you can read much about the evolution of religion on Urantia, nevertheless the narrative in the Urantia Papers is unique and original. Paper 86

53. **The Unique Reason for Jesus' Bestowal:** *The Urantia Book* presents a new, unique, and original reason and context for Jesus' life and death on our world—his seventh bestowal mission as a Local Universe Creator Son. Paper 120

54. **A Chronological Story of Jesus' Life:** The book presents the only complete narration of Jesus' life on this world including his religious life and how he lived it. Part IV of *The Urantia Book*.

55. **Identification of the Twelve Apostles:** The Urantia narrative is the first time the details of the Apostles' identities and selection has been fully clarified. Papers 138; 139

56. **The Unique Story of Mary:** The story of Mary, Jesus' mother, her actual lineage, her role in the Jesus bestowal mission, and her relationship to her son, is unique and original in *The Urantia Book*. Paper 122

57. **The Water and the Wine:** As far as I [Sadler] know, *The Urantia Book* presents an original explanation of this supposed miracle. Paper 137

58. **Explanation of Unintended Miracles:** The book presents a possible explanation of numerous unintended miracles. Paper 136

59. **Jesus' Attitude toward Art and Athletics and Women:** The Master's attitude toward art, athletics, and women are nowhere else revealed. Art—Paper 142:4, Athletics—Paper 124:3, Women—Papers 133:2, 138:8, 143:5, 149:2

60. **The Sermon on the Mount:** I am, of course, not familiar with all the literature on the Sermon on the Mount. But as far as I know, the interpretation of this address in *The Urantia Book* is new and original. Paper 140

61. **The Women's Evangelistic Corps:** This story is new, notwithstanding the brief mention of this matter in the New Testament. Paper 150: 1

62. **Rodan of Alexandria:** This whole story is original with *The Urantia Book*. Paper 160

63. **The Story of Abner:** The unique story of the head of John the Baptist's apostles is original with the Urantia Papers. Papers 144, 162, 166, 167

64. **David Zebedee's Intelligence Corps:** This entire story is found exclusively in *The Urantia Book*. Papers 149; 154:5; 157:6; 186:3

“Self-mastery is the measure of man's nature and the indicator of his spiritual development.”

[143:2.3] (P. 1609)

SOCIETY EVOLVING: CHAOS, PROGRESS, AND ORDER

By Lawrence Schkade, Arlington, TX

"Can you not ... recognize that the watchword of the universe is progress? ... Throughout all these millenniums Providence has been working out the plan of progressive evolution." [4:1.2] (P. 54)

Social evolution on our planet, Urantia, is a part of the much larger story of universal progress. Evolving material universes, spheres, species, and societies arise from the disarray of primitive conditions and progress toward ultimate order, perfection. Accordingly, despite humble origin, as a *"worm of the dust by nature,"* the destiny of humanity is divine, said Jesus. [149:6.9] (P. 1676) The social development of humankind on Urantia, the narrative of man's journey from savage to cosmic citizen, is complex, involving a wide range of issues in multiple disciplines. Accordingly, this overview is limited to selected aspects of societies, for an exhaustive study is beyond our scope and purpose. This essay seeks to relate excerpts from *The Urantia Book* to applicable ideas and analogies from various disciplines. The views expressed herein are those of a seeker of truth "wherever it may lead."

SYSTEMS ASPECTS OF SOCIETIES

In this offering, the term society will refer to the totality of a large group of people who live together in a more or less ordered community. Cultural civilization is equal to *"the sum of man's adjustment"* to the demands of life. [68:5.1] (P. 768) An examination of the system-like features of a human society gives insight into aspects of its nature. In the general, a system consists of three or more parts that interact or "arrange" to form an entity that is greater than the sum of the parts. For instance, in preparation for a performance, musicians "warm up" or practice, each playing a different portion of the program. The combined result is disordered noise. But as the musicians begin to perform together with a conductor, they are an organized entity, a system. In function, the individual musicians constitute an orchestra, a system, only when they perform coordinately in rhythm and harmony. Similarly, societies function effectively to the extent that individual citizens choose to contribute cooperatively. Systems abound in other realms. For instance,

"The mind is a personal-energy system existing around a divine spirit nucleus and functioning in a material environment." [12:9.6] (P. 142) On a cosmic level, *"There is a precise system ... which determines the unfolding of the planetary life plan on the spheres of space." [49:1.6] (P. 560)*

Systems range from being relatively closed to relatively open. A totally closed system exists only in theory. A system is closed if either there is no external environment or no system interaction with an existing environment. An insulated cooler with soft drinks and ice illustrates a relatively closed system. Closing the lid restricts what can go in or out of the cooler. The drinks remain cold for a time, but the ice will eventually melt. As an analogy, a closed mind does not tend to respond to new ideas, limiting its adaptive capacity.

In contrast, living systems are relatively open, e.g., animals, persons, and societies. Such a system interacts with an environment, for it senses change in external conditions and adapts. Resources and information flow in and out across a boundary that separates the system from its environment. Boundaries of systems, such as in society, can be physical, e.g., human body; ideological, e.g., political; conceptual, e.g., theoretical belief; functional, e.g., athletic player ability; markets, e.g., competitive share; etc. Consider an animal as an example of an open system. A tiger scans an area for a source of food, captures prey, and consumes it for nurture (input). The animal also produces outputs, e.g., progeny for species survival; environmental impact, e.g., leaving a carcass on which hyenas and vultures can feed; and interaction with other species in the food chain.

Many systems open or close in response to circumstances. For instance, the tiger in the foregoing example acts as an open system when in search of food, but it performs as a closed system while asleep. Meditation is another instance of closure. The process seeks a deepened state of mind, conscious thoughts and sensory inputs are "tuned out", and attention is focused on the inner mind. In a third instance, selfishness, one's mind is closed to the needs of others. In a fourth, selflessness, openness is exhibited by sensitivity to the needs of others (inputs) and attempts to serve them (outputs). Finally, nations that give assistance to other nations, e.g., foreign aid, are relatively open, but nations that are isolationist and uninvolved are relatively closed systems.

For example, prior to WW II, the United States adopted a policy of non-entanglement in international affairs. Post-WW II American policy opened, e.g., the Marshall Plan, and assisted European nations to repair wartime damages.

While many human societies tend to be relatively open, there are exceptions. For instance, the early Chinese civilization was relatively closed due in large part to its geography. In the modern era, Winston Churchill famously characterized the former Soviet Union as being surrounded by an “Iron Curtain”, because its borders were closed and guarded. North Korea now typifies a society that is essentially closed. With borders closed tightly, severe restrictions are imposed on the entry and exit of people, products, information, etc. Moreover, access to the Internet is rare. The populace is largely uninformed about the external world.

CHAOS AND IMPERFECTION

History tells us that, in Greek mythology, Chaos was the name of their most ancient god who personified the infinite disorganized nothingness of space before the creation of the first material objects. Today chaos has multiple meanings. Some synonyms include formless, confused, disordered, unorganized or unavailable. In this presentation, the term chaos will imply significant disarray, not a total lack of order. Chaos can, but not always, suggest an undesirable condition. For instance, illnesses are termed disorders, undesirable deviations from normal conditions. Jesus healed a child who suffered from a grievous nervous disorder.

In science, the extent of randomness (chaos) is expressed by a measure termed entropy. In physical terms, entropy is a measure of how much of the energy in a system is chaotic and unavailable. In that case, entropy is viewed negatively. Remarkably the opposite side of nature’s “entropy coin” offers a positive view of entropy. In contrast, information theory, an approach to the quantification of human communication, entropy is a measure of the potential for discovering information from chaos. Such disorder is measured as entropy and is viewed positively. For instance, discovery involves uncovering indications of order or meaning in an uncertain situation. Trial and error and/or insight can be employed in problem solving to dispel uncertainty or risk and gain knowledge from experience.

As an aside, there are instances of asymmetric mirror-image pairs in nature other than entropy. Many substances in living organisms have this feature. For example, there are two forms of sugar in fruit and honey, dextrose, and levulose, that are similar in chemical constitution. But when examined by polarized light one is the reverse of the other, rotating the plane of polarization of light in opposite ways. Dextrose is

right-rotating and levulose is left-rotating. In literature, Lewis Carroll wrote in *The Looking-Glass* that Alice wondered, “Perhaps looking-glass milk isn’t good to drink.” Some scientists wonder, was Carroll speculating about adverse results from drinking milk, e.g., a person with lactose intolerance suffers ill effects because of the sugars in milk?¹ In biology, certain snails present asymmetric characteristics analogous to the two fruit sugars above, as some are coiled to the right and others to the left.² In social interactions, mortals choose between two asymmetric interests, self or others, whether to be selfish or selfless.

Discovery can be seen in an example of an experimenter using random sampling methods to obtain information about a variable of interest. Statistical analysis can disclose order in the unknown. Sampling results yield summary estimates, e.g., average, dispersion, etc., that enhance learning. Statistical methods have been used extensively in medical research in the development of procedures and medications for treating disorders, e.g., current research is yielding encouraging results for new medications for treating Ebola.³ Statistical methods, while powerful for making descriptive estimates of groups, have a significant limitation: “*Statisticians may announce laws governing a large number of either atoms or persons but not for a single individual atom or person.*” [42:7.10] (P.478)

Decoding a message illustrates discovery. The process deals with randomness as experience is gained while decoding an encrypted message. The method involves the progressive discovery of order that is clouded by the randomness of characters. For instance, an analyst examines a selected coded sequence. Repeated searches for clues are sought in associative meaning in selected pairs or groups of characters. Various matches of characters are made and gradually disclose meaning (order) in the message. The process continues until decoding is complete, maximum information has been obtained, and there is no entropy. Notable historical instances of decoding include the successful decryptions of German and Japanese military messages in World War II that are believed to have shortened Allied campaigns significantly in Europe and the Pacific.

Societal progress evolves as experience is gained, and order is increased in an imperfect world. “*We are part of a gigantic creation, and it is not strange that everything does not work in perfection; our universe was not created in perfection. Perfection is our eternal goal, not our origin.*” [75:8.6] (P. 846) “*Eventually evolution and culture become related as cause and effect.*” [81:5.1] (P. 905) In a social sense, chaos infers disorganization and risk. A society is “*essentially designed to lessen the risk element in an individual’s*

mode of living.” [68:2.2] (P. 764) The early races learned, “in union there is strength”. [68:1.1] (P.763) Progress in ordering primitive society was also enhanced by the formation of families. “Marriage, with children and consequent family life is stimulative of the highest potential in human nature... The family provides for the biologic perpetuation of the human species ... Family life is the progenitor of true morality, the ancestor of the consciousness of loyalty to duty.” [84:7.28,30] (PP. 941–42)

However, some attempts toward social adaptation can be counter-productive. The existence of castes curtails “individual development and virtually prevents social cooperation.” [70:8.13] (P. 793) When there are castes a degree of disorder prevails, since interaction between castes is stifled and social progress is impeded. In modern times there is, lamentably, limited interaction between the caste-like financial “haves” and the “have-nots” in many societies, despite the fact that opportunity to serve the needs of others is ever-present. Jesus said, “you have the poor always with you so that you may minister to them.” [172:1.6] (P. 1879) Cults have “always retarded social progress.” [87:7.3] (P. 965) “The Christian cult has been devitalized by the loss of many fundamental ideas.” [87:7.4] (P. 965) Christianity has become identified “as part of the social system, the industrial life, and the moral standards of Western civilization... The hope of modern Christianity is that it would cease to sponsor” those systems. [195:10.21,22] (P. 2086) The societies of Urantia will be transformed by “the revelation of God to the world, in and through Jesus.” [196:14.30] (P. 2097)

Acquiring experience in imperfect universes is fundamental in the divine plan. Existential God, the I AM, “cannot personally know imperfection of his own experience,” but does share the consciousness of experiences with imperfection through Thought Adjusters in mortal minds. [2:2.6] (P. 36) Experiential God, the Almighty Supreme, actualizes in response to “the act of the creature’s choosing to do the will of the Creator.” [117:6.1-4] (P. 1288) The Supreme won’t actualize until “the completion of the realization of all evolutionary experience.” [117:7.1] (P. 1291) For that reason, God conceived of imperfect (entropic) worlds on which intelligent creatures could be given free will, experience life, make decisions, and evolve by choosing to participate in a perfecting process. God can self-realize through the life experiences of mortals. The Supreme actualizes as ascending creatures attain Godlikeness through their decisions. Concerning experience we read: “Why should man bemoan his lowly origin and enforced evolutionary career when the very Gods must pass through an equivalent experience before they are accounted experientially worthy and

competent finally and fully to rule over their universe domains?” [21:4.6] (P. 240)

By the way, concerning imperfection, physicists tell us that if our universe were symmetrical physically (i.e., laws of physics acting equally in all directions), there would be no “asymmetric lumps” (life forms) in its otherwise perfect symmetry. Without time, “life would not exist as we know it ... the arrow of time—a broken symmetry—there’d be no future or past, no scientific discovery, no anticipation, and no memory.”⁴ This imperfection in our physical universe is an essential aspect of creation. Imperfection reveals purpose in the creation of the material universes. [117:7.14] (P. 1105) Consider: If perfect worlds had been created, would there be life, things for mortals to discover, societies to evolve, and decision opportunities for mortals to contribute to the actualization of Experiential Deity? Clearly, the answer is no, for without imperfection, none of the foregoing would have been possible

ORDER AND PURPOSE

Order is experienced in a variety of life experiences. For instance, there is order in conformance to set rules, in the logic of mathematics and physics, in proportion and arrangement, in loving intent and action, in spirituality, etc. In our view, a process of ordering can also be seen in a current theory of the origin of our universe. In this theory, chaos reigned in the instant following the explosion of the hypothetical Big Bang.⁵ Energy slowed in the primal universe, initiating an ordering process. Multiple natural forces and subatomic particles, named in the “standard model” of physics, appeared. Molecules of matter formed. This ordering, which started as the universe began, enlarged and continues to expand as gravity “reaches out into time-organizing space.” [106:3.5] (P. 1166)

The “Creator Son intended man to be the masterpiece of planetary creation.” [4:3.1] (P. 57) Accordingly, special care has been taken to stabilize, fine tune, and maintain order on our planet. In this process, physical factors are controlled within narrow ranges of variation. [58:2sec] (PP. 567-568) This delicate balancing of factors provides an environment, called a ‘Goldilocks world’ by scientists, that is habitable by mortals. Observations by scientists have revealed that a large number of physical relationships and ratios are critically balanced to enable life to exist on earth. Changes in these variables, however slight, could make it difficult or impossible for life, as we know it, to exist on earth. The crucial and delicate balancing of Urantia’s physical factors leads some scientists to conclude that we live in a specially ordered universe. They are correct. The scientist’s conclusion

is known as the anthropic principle.⁶ The term anthropic refers to humans. Principle denotes the fine-tuning of vital physical conditions. This principle proposes that the laws, constants and structure of the universe are not arbitrary. Neither is the universe mechanical nor is it mystical. We read that, in reality, dominant divine mind is purposefully in control. The principle also asserts that the stability of more than a hundred variables is not likely to have happened by chance. [58:2.3] (P. 567) The crucial nature of fine-tuning is shown by the following physical effects of imbalance: if our planet's gravity were weaker, the atmosphere would lose too much water; if the water vapor level were greater, a runaway greenhouse effect would result; and if earth were located in a slightly different position, the night sky would appear to have no stars or else the sky might be so flooded with light that no stars could be distinguished.

Organizing is a social ordering process. Individuals transform chaos into order in society by aligning their actions.

Observing order can depend on perspective. Photos of nebulae in outer space, taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, have been distributed widely. Many of these photos show what appear to be chaotic collisions and clouds of turbulence. These observations suggest a mortal's "bottom-up" perception of the universe. According to the divine plan, there is ever "*an underlying order and security in the midst of the energy upheavals and the physical cataclysms of the starry realms ... There is also an organic unity in the universes of time and space which seems to underlie the whole fabric of cosmic events.*" [4:1.5,10] (P. 56) We speculate that a "top-down" view, from a higher cosmic perspective, would reveal universal order.

Organizing is a social ordering process. Individuals transform chaos into order in society by aligning their actions. A social group has systemic features, for "*human beings in co-ordinated working harmony stands for a force far greater than the simple sum of its parts.*" [133:5.6] (P. 1477) Moreover, society is a self-organizing, adaptive system. The fact that living organisms are self-organizing was identified in the early eighteenth century.⁷ Yet the concept of self-organizing fell into disrepute, because the prevailing philosophy of science was based solely on causation, i.e., cause, effect and prior factors. In contrast, self-organization presumes teleology, the use of an end purpose or telos in explaining

phenomena. Aristotle reportedly said, "the acorn sprouted and grew into a seedling because its purpose was to become a mighty oak." In another instance, teleological reasoning asserts, "we have ears for the purpose of sensing sound." More recently distinguished scientists have established the validity of self-organization and self-maintenance (autopiesis) in natural and social systems. The concept of self-organization is now recognized widely in multiple disciplines.

Material science employs causal reasoning exclusively and rests on material facts. This mechanistic philosophy has substantial acceptance in modern society. However, cosmic mind recognizes response on three levels of universe reality: causation, duty and worship. The use of the concept of purpose in teleology is an anathema to causality-focused materialists. In response material scientists ask, "Who says?" and "Whose purpose?" Such questions arise because material facts cannot address a First Cause or an ultimate spiritual purpose. Materialists would do well to follow the causal reasoning of science to "*lead the scientist straight back to the first great cause—the Universal Father of Paradise.*" [195:6.5] (P. 2077) However, such logic will not lead them to realizing God. The realization of the presence of God comes only to those with the "*spiritual attitude of a sincere child,*" not through facts or logic. [155:6.12] (P. 1733) Albert Einstein succinctly stated, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind".⁸ Material scientists ask, "What?" whereas religionists ask, "Why." Our view is that blending the answers to these questions requires supermind (morontia mind) and true scientific reasoning.

"God is ... *the secret of the order, plan, and purpose of the whole creation of things and beings.*" [102:7.2] (P. 1126) The purpose of finite creation, including the social development of "*the material beings of time,*" is expressed by the "*divine plan of progress: the universal plan for the creation, ascension, and perfection of will creatures.*" [7:4.1-2] (P. 85) The mortal ascent of humankind is evidence of purpose in evolution. "*Organic evolution is a fact; purposive... evolution is a truth that makes consistent the otherwise contradictory facts.*" [102:6.10] (P. 1125) The goal of the divine plan is the progressive "*realization of the human upreach and the divine and saving downreach.*" [102:6.10] (P. 1125)

Social evolution is teleological, goal-oriented. "*The eternal purpose of the eternal God is a high spiritual ideal. 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.*" [32:5.2] (P. 364) The divine plan supports continuing societal progress, for "*spiritual idealism is the energy which really uplifts and advances human culture.*"

[81:6.27] (P. 910) The ultimate objective of evolution is the achievement of fully ordered social and spiritual status. “*The Master came to create in man a new will...the eternal urge to become perfect.*” [140:8.32] (P. 1583) “*Every mortal really craves to be a complete person, to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect.*” [140:4.11] (P. 1573) Accordingly, “*the watchword of the universe is progress.* [4:1.2] (P. 54) (underlining added for emphasis) The urge to progress is inherent in life. “*In every living plant or animal cell, in every living organism—material or spiritual—there is an insatiable craving for the attainment of ever-increasing perfection ... all living things evidence within them an innate striving for perfection.*” [65:6.2] (P.737)

Experiencing is central to progress, the gradual but progressive ordering of evolutionary time-space creation. God initiates the perfecting process by creating imperfect universes and evolving will creatures. The Father’s plan has “*predicated finite progress upon effort, creature achievement upon perseverance, and personality development upon faith ... has made it possible for finite creatures to exist in the universes and, by experiential progression, sometime to attain the divinity of Supremacy.*” [115:7.2] (P. 1266) *The perfecting process depends on human decisions to do God’s will.* [130:2.9] (P. 1228) Mortals and societies progress as they are prompted by the urge to become perfect, totally ordered. We are all included in the divine plan of God. “*There is in the mind of God a **plan** which embraces every creature of all his vast domains, and this plan in an eternal **purpose** of boundless opportunity, unlimited **progress**, and eternal life. And the infinite treasures of such a matchless career are yours for the striving!*” [32:5.7] (P. 365) (bold added for emphasis)

SOCIAL EVOLUTION

Societal progress on Urantia has a long history. “*Social evolution of the co-operative order was initiated by the Dalamatia teachers*” hundreds of thousands of years ago. [68:0.3] (P. 763) “*Evolution is a cosmic (divine) technique of growth.*” [100:3.7] (P. 1096) The earliest human cultures on Urantia progressed through four great stages in their evolution: collection, hunting, pastoral, and agricultural. Land use and population-related issues were major factors in social evolution. “*Land is the stage of society; men are actors.*” [68:5.1] (P. 768) “*All human institutions minister to some social need.*” [69:1.1] (P. 772) These institutions are classified as providers of “*self-maintenance, self-perpetuation and self-gratification.*” [69:1.2-5] (P. 772) The progress of planetary civilization is not uniform, but “*all evolutionary spheres progress in certain well-defined directions.*” [50:5.2] (P. 576)

In general, the development of civilizations includes the following epochs: “*nutrition, security, material comfort, quest for knowledge and wisdom, philosophy and brotherhood, spiritual striving and light and life.*” [50:5.4-10] (PP.576-77) These epochs may not be discrete, i.e., distinctly separate. Societal progress is apparently not uniform on Urantia. An examination reveals some overlap, as some societies appear to be experiencing portions of several developmental epochs simultaneously. Social system progress occurs “*slowly and by...gradual stages*” as decisions made by individuals contribute toward the fulfillment of the divine purpose, perfecting. [39:4.12] (P. 435) Social evolution includes the gradual progressive development of several component subsystems, e.g., economic, political, defense, etc. However societies must continue to be dynamic and progress, for “*economics, society, and government must evolve if they are to remain. Static conditions on an evolutionary world are indicative of decay; only those institutions which move forward with the evolutionary stream persist.*” [71:4.1] (P. 804)

“*Society is not a divine institution; it is a phenomenon of progressive evolution.*” [81:6.39] (P. 911) The experience of discovery is essential in societal evolution. Discovery requires the presence of chaos. Without chaos discovery would be impossible, consequently no experiencing. Amid essential chaos, trial and error has been employed in the search for methods of social ordering. Social discovery involves the experience of developing new ideas and finding suitable actions for adapting to shifts in the external environment. Societies,

The evolution of commerce stretches more than fifteen thousand years from local bartering and trade in prehistoric times to global e-commerce of today.

as systems, can experience a generative process termed self-organization.⁶ This phenomenon, a sort of ‘Eureka effect’ experience, occurs as component parts at a lower level of a system interact spontaneously to produce an idea for increased order or cooperation at a higher level of the system.

Random actions can also produce useful results that can feed back into a system to prompt adaptation and progress. However, some adaptive attempts have not been successful.

Many ideas must be tested for effectiveness as strategies for change. Evolution consequently takes a long time, but the process is effective, for it leads to improved societies. For example, the history of commerce is the history of civilization. The evolution of commerce stretches more than fifteen thousand years from local bartering and trade in prehistoric times to global e-commerce of today. During this evolutionary period commerce became *“the most potent influence in the spread of cultural civilization.”* [81:3.6-7] (P. 904) Other factors contributed to societal progress. The formation of classes brought a degree of order in societies. *“Religion is the mighty lever that uplifts civilization from chaos.”* [70:8.18] (P. 793) *“The state is a useful evolution of civilization”* that promotes social order. [71:0.1] (P. 800)

The civilization which is now evolving on Urantia grew out of, and is predicated on, the following factors ... natural circumstances, capital goods, scientific knowledge, human resources, effectiveness of material resources, effectiveness of language, effectiveness of mechanical devices, character of torchbearers, racial ideals, co-ordination of specialists, place-finding devices, the willingness to co-operate, effective and wise leadership, social changes, and the prevention of transitional breakdown ... And it was by these rungs on the evolutionary ladder that civilization climbed to that place where those mighty influences could be initiated which have culminated in the rapidly expanding culture of the twentieth century. And only by adherence to these essentials can man hope to maintain his present-day civilizations while providing for their continued development and certain survival. [81:6.2-43] (PP. 906–912)

Western civilization *“groans wearily under the tremendous overload of luxury and the inordinate multiplication of human desires and longings. Modern society is enduring the strain of one of its most dangerous phases of far-flung interassociation and highly complicated interdependence.”* [68:2.5] (P. 765) The development of epochal communication technologies, written language, the printing press and the digital computer, have *“enormously accelerated the rate of cultural advancement.”* [81:6.9] (P. 907) These technologies plus others, including the means of transport, space technology, weaponry, market globalization, international finance, outsourcing of labor and services, etc. have provided benefits but also compounded societal strain and stress. *“Human society is now plunging forward under the force of the accentuated momentum of all the ages through which civilization has struggled.”* [81:6.44] (P. 912) Without help from superhuman sources the strain of society breaks down upon reaching certain limits and plunges mankind into *“war and bloodshed.”* [68:3.4] (P. 766)

SPIRITUAL ORDER IN SOCIETY

“The attainment of a high cultural civilization demands, first, the ideal type of citizen and, then, ideal and adequate social mechanisms wherewith such a citizenry may control the economic and political institutions of such an advanced human society.” [99:3.4] (P. 1088) Social evolution will continue until the realization of the ultimate human goal, the brotherhood of man. Higher levels of order are achieved as mortals seek to do the God’s will through love and selfless service, the essence of Jesus’ teachings. *“Love is the essence of religion and the wellspring of superior civilization.”* [102:6.3] (P. 1124) We are mindful of Jesus’ words, *“It is my will that they should eventually be perfect, even as I am perfect,”* as our goal. [137:8.13] (P. 1536) Arising from the imperfection of mortal origin, spiritual progress is *“inward and upward from man to God.”* [109:1.5] (P. 1196) Ascender’s contribute to social evolution by striving to do the Father’s will in life. All else is a degree of deviance, disorder and mortal illusion. Achieving spiritual order is the God-seeking ascender’s goal and opportunity. *“The attainment of completed spiritual insight enables the ascending personality to detect harmony in what was theretofore chaos.”* [118:10.10,19] (P. 1306) Spirituality has major implications for social progress. *“The advances of true civilization are all born in this inner world of mankind ...”* However we should note, *“Civilization can hardly progress when the majority of the youth of any generation devote their interests and energies to the materialistic pursuits of the sensory or outer world.”* [111:4.3] (P. 1220)

Self-mastery, a basic goal of spiritual order, *“is the measure of man’s moral nature and the indicator of his spiritual development.”* [143:2.3] (P. 1609) Jesus said, *“you are first transformed by the Spirit of Truth and thereby strengthened in your inner soul by the constant spiritual renewing of your mind, and you are so endowed with the power of the certain and joyous performance of the gracious, acceptable, and perfect will of God.”* [143:2.4] (P. 1609) He went on to say, *“Your secret of the mastery of self is bound up with your faith in the indwelling spirit, which ever works by love.”* [143:2.7] (P. 1611) *“Self-control leads to altruistic service.”* [54:1.6] (P. 614)

A spiritual personal life is a masterpiece of order. A significant trait of such a life, self-forgetfulness, follows a radical paradigm shift from self to selfless. Becoming selfless requires being *“born of the spirit.”* [142:5.4] (P. 1601) Spiritual thinking habits are formed to replace selfish reactions. Jesus gives us the model for selflessness by the life he lived. *“But mortal personality, through its own choosing, possesses the power of transferring its seat of identity from the passing material-*

intellect system to the higher morontia-soul system which, in association with the Thought Adjuster, is created as a new vehicle for personality manifestation. And it is this very power of choice, the universe insignia of freewill creaturehood, that constitutes man's greatest opportunity and his supreme cosmic responsibility." [112:5.4-5] (PP. 1232-33)

Spiritual order in personal life comes as one strives for "spiritual satisfactions and cosmic understandings." [50:5.9] (P. 577) These gifts are bestowed on ascenders who strive spiritually. "The keys of the kingdom of heaven are: sincerity, more sincerity, and more sincerity. All men have these keys. Men use them—advance in spirit status—by decisions, by more decisions, and by more decisions. The highest moral choice ... is to choose to do the will of God." [39:4.14] (P. 435)

Ascenders contribute to social evolution by living lives of loving service, the fruit of the spirit. In the Father's plan progress follows effort, "creature achievement upon perseverance, and personality development upon faith." [115:7.2] (P. 1266) "Faith most willingly carries reason along as far as reason can go and then goes on with wisdom to the full philosophic limit; and then it dares go to launch out upon the limitless and never-ending universe journey in the sole company of TRUTH." [103:9.7] (P. 1141) As planetary citizens striving for spiritual order, we have the opportunity to contribute to societal growth through the enhanced quality of our lives. Seraphim "portray the responsibility and morality of cosmic citizenship to the material mortals on the inhabited worlds." [39:4.9] (P. 435) As law-abiding United States citizens seeking to contribute to social progress, it is well that we recall: "True religion ... is born of the experience of knowing God and striving to be like him." [99:2.6] (P. 1088) "Religion is exclusively a personal spiritual experience." [99:5.1] (P. 1090)

As citizens we are also mindful of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution that states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This statement is the basis of the federal policy for the separation of church and state. In addition, Jesus said to his disciples: "You must not seek to promulgate truth nor to establish righteousness by the power of civil governments or by enacting secular laws." [178:1.12] (P. 1931) Moreover we read, "But there is no excuse for the involvement of the church in commerce and politics; such unholy alliances are a flagrant betrayal of the Master." [195:10.13] (P. 2085)

Perhaps we have heard comments akin to: "Thinking about the enormity of creation makes me feel miniscule, like a mere grain of sand on the cosmic beach of the universe."

Such a demeaning quantitative statement would debase a person to being a fact. However, our qualitative reality reveals self-worth, value, for we are created in God's image by being invested with Thought Adjusters; we are God's children by faith; and we have been given the opportunity to bring truth, beauty, and goodness—love—to this planet. God invites all of us to become his partners in the grand order-producing cosmic drama of which societal development is a part. "When man goes into partnership with God, great things may, and do, happen." [132:7.9] (P. 1467) Clearly, the contributions between all of us, as 'inspired grains' taken together, comprise the 'beach' of social advancement. Synergistically, we are greater than the sum of the parts. 'The only game in town' is to do the Father's will.

Jesus said, "love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself." [142:3.22] (P. 1600) When ascenders try to follow this commandment in life they need no other rules, requirements or commandments to grow in spiritual order and to contribute to society. Ultimately, spiritual order will have become perfected when the Father's will is being done by all ascending creatures on all worlds across the universes of time and space. "The sincere religionist is conscious of universe citizenship and is aware of making contact with sources of superhuman power ... The consciousness of self-worth has become augmented by the stimulus of the quest for the highest universe objectives—supreme goals." [100:6.3] (P. 1100) As ascending mortals of faith, we progress toward greater spiritual order as the self is being surrendered in "the intriguing drive of an all-encompassing motivation which imposes heightened self-discipline, lessens emotional conflict, and makes mortal life worth living." [100:6.4] (P. 1100)

The highest level of society attainable on Urantia is the brotherhood of man, the realization of the ultimate human goal, a "civilization encompassed by love." Imagine living in a society wherein all citizens strive to live according to the highest of levels of the Golden Rule. Such a society would surely be the realm of light and life, "the acme of evolutionary material development." [55:5.2] (P. 629) Until we reach that achievement we are assured: "Be not discouraged; human evolution is still in progress, and the revelation of God to the world, in and through Jesus, shall not fail." [196:3.30] (P. 2097)

While we are not likely to reach light and life on Urantia, we are destined to have such experiences on the Mansion Worlds. It is thrilling to anticipate such delights and to being there with you!

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THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

By Preston Thomas, Earlysville, VA

I would like to begin by asking you to consider a question that students of the Urantia revelation often ignore:

Is our ministry to the Christian world important?

I believe that it is, and there are two major reasons why. The first is personal and the second comes from *The Urantia Book* itself.

PERSONAL REASON

My personal reason for favoring Christian ministry derives from two inescapable facts of my experience:

Fact # 1. I want to minister to others, especially family and friends. I want to be able to draw near to them and offer help, guidance, comfort, and inspiration, especially in their times of need. I would like to be an encouraging example of religious living in the midst of a secular and materialistic world.

I do not want my religious beliefs to be seen as strange or function as a barrier between us. Rather I want to be able to freely share my religious insights. Like many of you, I believe I have found in Jesus, especially as portrayed in *The Urantia Book*, the way of truth and the way of life. I want to share the religious guidance and comfort that the teachings of Jesus brings.

Fact #2. I live in a Christian world. The traditions, culture, beliefs, and values I contact with in my daily life are basically Judeo-Christian. Even those who reject organized Christianity generally hold to a background belief in

the goodness and value of its better teachings. And on a wider level our highest planetary ideals in morals, ethics, and religion are embodied within the Christian tradition. Even in a world that has grown increasingly secular and materialistic many people still accept, to one degree or another, the authority of the Bible and the value of its Jesusonian teachings.

Given these two facts: that I seek to effectively minister to others, and that Christianity is the dominant religious influence of my world, I have made a conscious decision. I have decided to rely on the life and teachings of Jesus as portrayed in the New Testament gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Fact #1—Desire Effective Personal Ministry

Fact #2—Live in a Christian World

Resolution—Focus on Jesus; use the Bible

I have found that by using the Biblical record of Jesus I can effectively minister and teach the insights I have discovered in *The Urantia Book* without arousing antagonism or resistance. Indeed I find that people are quite receptive to a better understanding of Jesus when it is presented in harmony with Christian teachings.

THE CALL OF THE URANTIA REVELATION

My second major reason for Christian ministry derives from *The Urantia Book* itself. For if we look at what the Urantia Papers really teach we do not find that they direct us to spread Urantia Books—rather, they call for a new revelation of Jesus and his actual teachings. The following

quotations should help make this clear:

There must come a revival of the actual teachings of Jesus... [170:5.19] (P. 1866)

Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. [196:1.3] (P. 2090)

Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus' life and illuminated with a new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation. [195:10.1] (P. 2084)

And let us take special note of this last quote:

Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings. [196:9.4] (P. 2082)

CHRISTIANS ARE OUR TARGET AUDIENCE

There is another aspect of Christian ministry that is important to realize: the Urantia revelation not only calls for a new revelation of Jesus; it also directs us to bring this new revelation to Christians.

For example, consider this quotation from page 2082:

...Christianity stands in need of new contact with the uncompromised teachings of Jesus; it languishes for lack of a new vision of the Master's life on earth. [195:9.2] (P. 2082)

In Christian doctrine, an outward church has taken the place of Jesus' inner spiritual kingdom of submission to God. But membership in the church is not equivalent to citizenship in the kingdom; one is spiritual and the other mainly social. Jesus' spiritual kingdom still exists in those believers who are dedicated to doing the Father's will. This brotherhood of the kingdom now slumbers within the Christian church, but it will eventually come forth. Our job is to help awaken and inspire sleeping Christians through a revival of Jesus' actual teachings.

And we should understand that a new revelation of Jesus, which attracts and unifies all true believers, is the great goal the revelators present to us in their vision of our world's ideal religious future. Listen to their prophetic promise from page 2086:

The great hope of Urantia lies in the possibility of a new revelation of Jesus with a new and enlarged presentation of his saving message which would spiritually unite in loving service the numerous families of his present day professed followers. [195:10.16] (P. 2086)

In sum, the clear call of the revelators is to uplift and unify Christians by turning them back to the foundation of their faith, Jesus' original gospel of the kingdom, the good news that God is our loving heavenly Father and we are all his planetary children, sons and daughters of God.

EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES FOR REVEALING JESUS

If we take seriously *The Urantia Book's* call to bring about a new revelation of Jesus to the Christian world, what should be our approach? For example, should we spread Urantia Books in an effort to bring about this new revelation of Jesus? If this is what the revelators intended, they certainly do not say so; they consistently call for a return to Jesus' actual teachings, but nowhere do they tell us that this is to be accomplished by spreading Urantia Books.

For me the answer to this question of how to bring about a revival of Jesus' actual teachings is the same as the answer to the question of how I can be most effective in my personal ministry. I believe we need to recognize the background beliefs and values of our world and adapt our ministry to the understanding and receptivity of our audience. This means we need a ministry that, like the Urantia revelation itself, exalts and affirms the best in Christianity. We need to recognize that the truths originally portrayed in the New Testament gospels are the same saving truths that *The Urantia Book* teaches.

In doing this we are merely following the example of Jesus' ministry to the Jewish world. He always adapted his teachings to the ways and comprehension of his audience. He did not incite confusion and arouse antagonism by teaching truths too far removed from the capacity of his hearers. Jesus always affirmed the best in the Jewish religion and showed due respect for the ways and traditions of his people. He often affirmed and even relied upon the authority of the Jewish scriptures in his effort to get across his own expanded teachings.

In our work for a new revelation of Jesus I believe we should do the same. Whereas Jesus lived and taught mostly among the Jews, the culture we live in is basically Christian. If we are to go to the world we live in, the Christian world, we should first respect their traditions, second, affirm our commonly held beliefs and values, and third, present our expanded revelation of Jesus in a way that best harmonizes with their understanding and belief system; in sum, we should simply relate to Christians as fellow religionists who share many of our beliefs and values, and learn to speak to them in their own language.

PART II: EXPERIENCES IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

What results may we expect when we pursue such an approach?

I have experimented with this form of ministry for more than forty years and the following is an outline of some of my experiences and observations. I hope they will inspire you in your personal ministry and help make that ministry

more effective.

These experiences and comments are presented on three major levels: personal ministry to close family and friends, social ministry in my workplace environment, and the wider sphere of planetary ministry.

PERSONAL LEVEL

My first really significant experience in teaching Jesus using the Bible occurred many years ago when my grandmother lay on her deathbed. At such a crucial time in her life I felt a strong urge to read to her good and meaningful words. I searched for the best and most trustworthy teachings I could find and finally settled on a small inspirational book that contained only the teachings of Jesus. I came into her room as often as I could and read to her from this book. I hope and believe it was helpful; certainly I had the great

discussions through the years and both feel a sense of shared values. In fact, our relationship has been defined more by unity of religious values and ideals than by differences in theology. I have enjoyed attending his church as well as religious retreats sponsored by that church. Even at these church gatherings I found I could easily minister insights I had gained from *The Urantia Book*, and in turn was uplifted by a sense of unity and fellowship with other sincere Christians.

I have even had a positive discussion with my father-in-law concerning the atonement doctrine. With this more fundamentalist believer I was able to make all my important points and arguments by prefacing my discussion with this viewpoint:

“Of all the teachings in the Bible, Jesus’ stand out as the highest and best. His teachings are perfect, and all others

Of all the teachings in the Bible, Jesus’ stand out as the highest and best. His teachings are perfect, and all others should be judged by their harmony with his concepts and pronouncements.

satisfaction of knowing I had ministered comforting words and the saving teachings of Jesus at a time that would have special meaning for her.

On the personal level the best part of a ministry that seeks harmony and unity with Christianity is the sense of oneness I feel with close family and friends. I grew up as a part of a large and closely-knit extended family that included parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. We all grew up faithfully attending mainline churches and the Christian religion has always been a central part of our lives.

What has my acceptance of the Urantia Revelation meant to my relations with this close family circle? It has not meant that we live in two separate worlds where each side rejects the beliefs of the other. In fact our religious unity has grown much stronger. Because I accept and affirm the best of Christianity, our religious viewpoints are mutually respected. I can minister freely to those closest to me and by openly affirming Jesusonian teachings I can help strengthen them in “fighting the good fight of faith.”

While most members of my personal family circle are a part of the mainline tradition, my wife’s parents and my brother adhere to a stricter interpretation of Christian doctrine. With these religionists I have also found a deeper and closer relationship.

My brother is a devoted Christian, who adheres to traditional Christian theology. We have had many positive

should be judged by their harmony with his concepts and pronouncements.”

In this way I operated from an authoritative source that he also respected. We had a six-month correspondence and actually drew closer while arguing for fundamentally opposing viewpoints.

It is important to observe that my ministry to the Christian world has not just been one way. In many instances Christian friends and acquaintances have ministered to and prayed for me in my times of need. Indeed, I feel certain that their prayer and ministry has been instrumental in bringing me through my most difficult times. My experience is that when we seek religious unity with others we gain great benefit from the, fellowship, prayer, and ministry of our Christian friends.

SOCIAL LEVEL

This sense of religious community that I feel with close family and friends has also extended to my workplace environment.

For twenty-seven years I served as director of the Einstein School, a small private school I founded in 1981. The following words were part of the school’s original statement of guiding principles. They demonstrate the ease with which one may blend Christian and *Urantia Book* teachings in a way that is acceptable to the general public:

“Einstein School believes that learning and character development should not be separated. Its purpose is the balanced development of the whole personality—body, mind, and spirit. The school affirms the basic values and teachings of Jesus. It encourages students to see themselves as children of a loving heavenly Father and to treat others in a brotherly manner. Love, thoughtfulness, helpfulness, and service to others are emphasized.”

This religious orientation was generally reassuring to parents of all persuasions, and in twenty seven years I knew of only one parent who rejected the school because of its religious stance. On the contrary, the fact that the school fostered Christian beliefs and values was a major plus. A number of parents indicated that the school’s religious outlook was an important factor in choosing Einstein School for their child.

We generally had a number of students who came to us from Christian Schools, but we also had others who came from non-religious and secular backgrounds. Also, the school employed a number of excellent Jewish teachers and we often had Jewish students. By ignoring Christian dogma and focusing on the actual teachings of Jesus we are able to speak freely to all and encourage our students to learn and live Jesusonian ideals.

I found it both rewarding and effective to apply Jesus’ teachings in the many real life situations that arose at school. For example one of the most fundamental problems children face is lack of self-respect. This often results both in serious learning problems and in difficulties relating to other students and to teachers. The school’s answer to this widespread problem was to teach the students to see themselves as children of God and therefore worthy of respect. At the same time it was emphasized that all others are also worthy of respect, and that the more we respect others the more we can respect ourselves. This idea and ideal that we are all sons and daughters of a loving heavenly Father was the central teaching of the school, the one that we sought most to impart to our students.

Because the school was openly Jesusonian and Christian in its policies I found it easy and natural to minister in many ways. For example, I began each Monday morning by announcing a “word of the week.” It was a character or positive value word such as faith, tolerance, altruism, etc., and sometimes a phrase like “Be of good courage,” or “To have friends be friendly.” We discussed the concept and each student looked up the word and wrote a short description of it. The younger students also did a color poster each week and we voted each Monday on the best poster of the previous week; these posters were then prominently displayed in

the school.

The school enjoyed great success and we had no shortage of applications. It became well known in the community as a place where children who had previous difficulty in school enjoyed success, growth, and more fully reached their full potential. All this took place in a school that taught revealed Jesusonian concepts using the Bible as a background authoritative source.

PLANETARY LEVEL

My primary efforts at ministry beyond the personal and social levels involve a book entitled *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* that I first published in 1992. I began work on it in the mid 80’s after searching in vain for a book that isolated and compiled all the Biblical verses dealing with Jesus. Failing to find a book that I felt comfortable with, I decided to undertake the project myself. Using *The Urantia Book* as a guide, I sought to collect and organize all the true Biblical verses concerning Jesus, in chronological order, from birth through death and resurrection. I used the Revised Standard Version as my basic text, but also used some 26 versions of the Bible to find the most fitting translation.

My first and most basic purpose for the book was to have an easy to read, trustworthy, and acceptable version of Jesus’ life and teachings to give to others. The book was dedicated to the students of Einstein School and every year at our closing ceremonies I presented a copy of the book to each departing pupil. I felt real satisfaction in being able to leave every student with a book that continued and reinforced the ideal ministry of the school, and that also could serve as a life-long source of guidance, comfort, and inspiration.

This book was always readily received and even looked forward to by the students. In fact, one year my high school students repeatedly requested that we study the book. So that year I taught History of Religion to my eleventh grade class using *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* as our textbook.

I have also given the book to many others, especially friends and individuals who are facing difficulty or crisis in their lives, and have received numerous reports of positive results. Other readers have also found the book useful. For example one long time *Urantia Book* student told me it had helped heal his relationship with his parents who had been concerned about his being into *The Urantia Book*. In another instance, a couple reported using it with great success to teach a Sunday school class in a mainline church—in fact, most of the class later ordered the book.

The book has achieved remarkable success in a number of venues without any effort at distribution or marketing. For example, a seminary in Texas gave *The Life and Teachings*

of Jesus to graduates at their closing ceremonies for several years. A pastor from India, who discovered the book on the internet, (lifeandteachingsofjesus.org) heads a network of more than thirty pastors that use the book as a primary teaching tool. This pastor has even translated the book into Telegu, their native language.

SUMMARY

In summary, I do believe that our ministry to the Christian world is important. On a personal level, it is important because it allows us to freely share our religious viewpoint with others, especially family and friends. On a planetary level, Christian ministry is important because the Urantia revelation calls for it. It calls for a new revelation of Jesus' actual teachings. And it calls for a unification of Christianity through a return to Jesus' original gospel of the kingdom, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

The real question is how best to achieve this objective. If we want to be effective ministers of the truths that Jesus taught, we must be wise in our techniques.

I believe that success in this great enterprise will be achieved only through unifying with Christianity and recognizing the authority of the Bible. I have cited a number of examples from personal experience that clearly show the effectiveness of this approach. Nor are my experiences unique; other Urantian believers are having real success in their ministry by focusing on the great truths we share with Christianity and as recorded in the Bible.

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS

In this regard, I suggest that my book, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, can be a valuable tool. It collects and organizes all the true teachings of Jesus that are readily available and accepted by the great mass of humanity. It provides a way for *Urantia Book* believers to minister the truth they have found without requiring that the other person read a 2000 page book and make a faith commitment to its truth.

This book gives proper emphasis to Jesus original gospel, the good news that we are all children of God. And it clearly reveals his concept of the kingdom, the rule of the Father in the heart of the believer. Even its organization and the chronology of Jesus' life is revelatory of the greater vision found in *The Urantia Book*.

The Life and Teachings of Jesus is also valuable because it harmonizes *The Urantia Book* and the Bible. Its very existence is a demonstration of the deep harmony that exists between the teachings of the gospels and Part Four of *The Urantia Book*. The realization of this harmony should

lead students of *The Urantia Book* to grow in respect for believers in the Bible, and lead Christian believers to gain new respect for followers of *The Urantia Book*.

For both sets of believers this book is valuable because it provides the cream of the gospels relatively purified of the human errors that became a part of the early Christian teachings. The words of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament gospels are our common religious heritage; they naturally evoke religious feelings, and in this organized and purified form we may more readily enjoy and be inspired by them.

So, I urge you to make use of this book. It makes a great gift. It can be a valuable source of uplift and guidance. It is an effective way to spread *Urantia Book* teachings. It can be a help and comfort to someone going through hard times. And it is an easy way to say to others that you stand for the way of Jesus in the midst of our secular and materialistic world.

CLOSING

I would like to close now with some words of encouragement from the *The Urantia Book* for those who feel this call to spread Jesus' religion in our world. Here is what the revelators say regarding our present time and the prospects for a new revelation of Jesus:

The teachings of Jesus...are even now slowly triumphing over the materialism, mechanism, and secularism of the twentieth century. And such times of great testing and threatened defeat are always times of great revelation. [195:9.3] (P. 2082)

The hour is striking for a rediscovery of the true and original foundations of present day distorted and compromised Christianity—the real life and teachings of Jesus. [195:9.5] (P. 2083)

A new and fuller revelation of the religion of Jesus is destined to conquer an empire of materialistic secularism and overcome a world sway of mechanistic naturalism. Urantia is now quivering on the very brink of one of its most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment. [195:9.2] (P. 2082)

Thus we see that the time for this new revelation of Jesus is not far in the future; it is now. This means that in working for a new revelation of Jesus we are in harmony with the needs of the time. And most encouragingly, the revelators assure us of that and our prospects for success are excellent. The teachings of Jesus are destined to rule our world; this revival of Jesus and his actual teachings will be the next stage in our planet's religious evolution.

If you want to be part of this new revelation of Jesus,

there are three basic steps you will need to take:

- 1) Learn the way of Jesus.
- 2) Live the way of Jesus.
- 3) Teach the way of Jesus

Learn the way of Jesus: Learn the actual teachings of Jesus; know his original gospel of the kingdom. Clearly distinguish his teachings and his gospel from all others. Focus on, study, and know his inspirational life demonstrating the teachings.

Live the way of Jesus: Have faith that God is our loving heavenly Father and choose to do his will. Be born of the spirit and increasingly give forth the fruit of the spirit in your daily life. Grow up to spiritual maturity and become a living example of Jesus' teachings in our world. Let Jesus live again through you.

Teach the way of Jesus: When you have learned and are living the way of Jesus, your life itself will be a living dem-

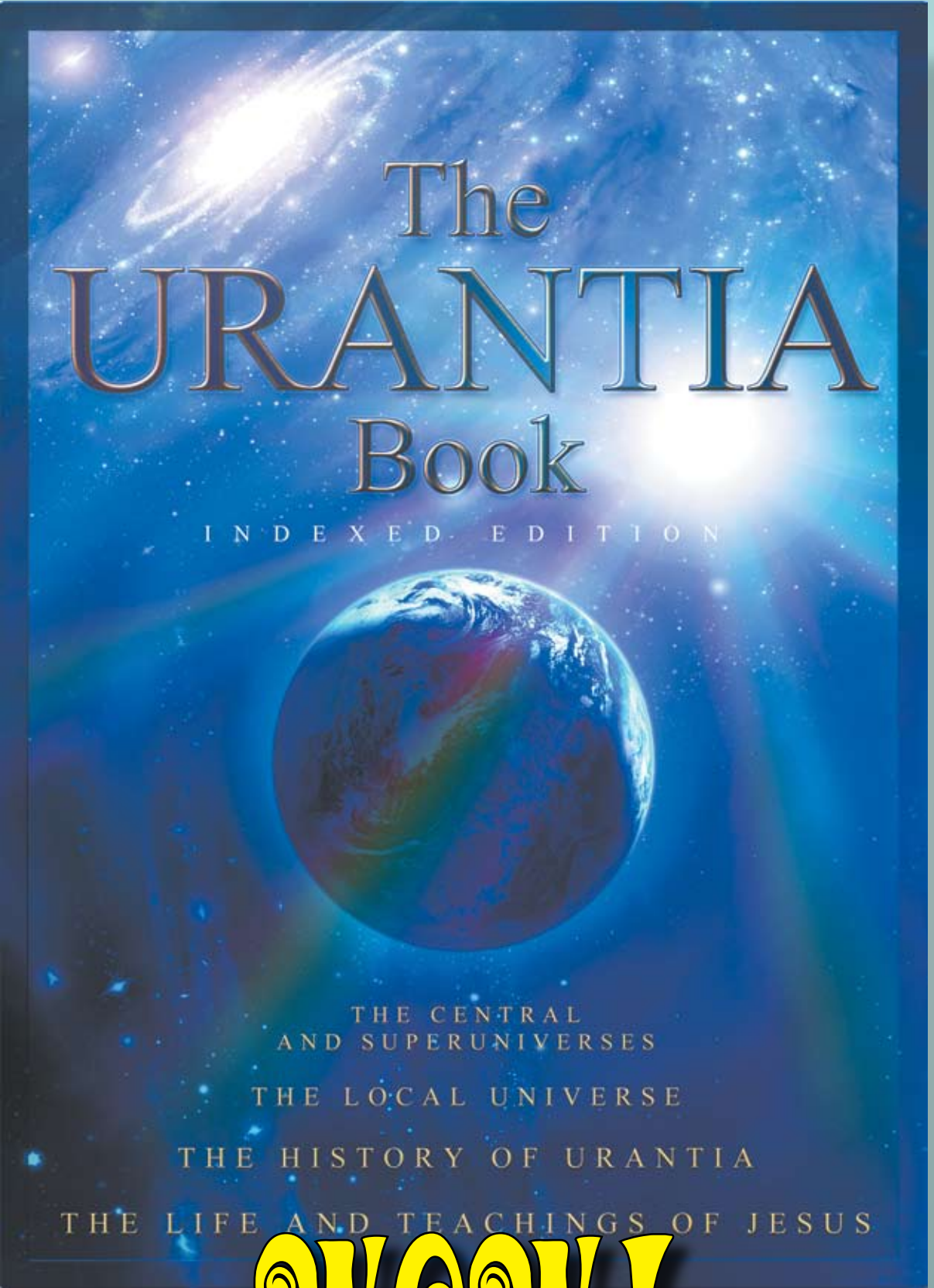
onstration of his teachings. You will have what it takes to effectively minister Jesus to our world. Be wise in your techniques; affirm the best in Christianity and use the scriptural record as an authoritative source. *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* can be a valuable tool.

Preston Thomas holds BA and MA degrees in philosophy from the University of Virginia. As an undergraduate Preston played varsity tennis and he was an NDEA scholar in graduate school. After college Preston worked for ten years as a private tutor for children with learning disabilities (dyslexia). In 1981 he founded the Einstein School, which provided one to one instruction for students with special learning needs, and he served as its director for 27 years. He has presented numerous Urantia related papers and recently published the third edition of his book, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, which harmonizes the Biblical account of Jesus with *The Urantia Book*.

WORDS OF WISDOM TRIVIA QUIZ

Can you find the missing word in these quotes from *The Urantia Book*?

1. "There is no real religion apart from a highly active _____." [102:2.7] (P. 1120)
2. "Faith acts to release the _____ activities of the divine spark." [132:3.6] (P. 1459)
3. "The contemplation of the immature and inactive human intellect should lead only to reactions of _____ [9:5.7] (P. 103)
4. "The soul of man requires spiritual _____ as well as spiritual _____." [91:7.2] (P. 1000)
5. "Personal peace integrates _____." [140:5.18] (P. 1575)
6. "Trustworthiness is the true measure of self-mastery, _____." [28:6.13] (P. 315)
7. "...graciousness is the aroma of _____ which emanates from a love-saturated soul." [171:7.1] (P.1874)
8. "Uncertainty with _____ is the essence of the Paradise adventure.." [111:7.1] (P. 1223)
9. "...lack of spiritual brotherhood is both _____ and reprehensible." [170:5.20] (P. 1866)
10. "Commerce has been the great civilizer through promoting the cross-fertilization of _____." [69:4.8] (P. 775)

The cover of 'The Urantia Book, Indexed Edition' features a vibrant cosmic background. At the top left, a bright spiral galaxy glows. In the center, a detailed image of Earth is shown from space, with blue oceans and white clouds. The background is a deep blue space filled with numerous stars and nebulae. The title 'The URANTIA Book' is prominently displayed in a large, serif font, with 'URANTIA' in a larger, more ornate style. Below the title, 'INDEXED EDITION' is written in a smaller, all-caps font. At the bottom, a list of topics is presented in all-caps: 'THE CENTRAL AND SUPERUNIVERSES', 'THE LOCAL UNIVERSE', 'THE HISTORY OF URANTIA', and 'THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS'.

The URANTIA Book

INDEXED EDITION

THE CENTRAL
AND SUPERUNIVERSES

THE LOCAL UNIVERSE

THE HISTORY OF URANTIA

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS

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*“Spiritual experience is the real
soul of man’s cosmos.”*

[102:4.6] (P. 1123)