

KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE THIRD TRIENNIAL DELEGATE ASSEMBLY
OF THE URANTIA BROTHERHOOD

by
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A month or so ago I had the unique experience -- unique to me, at least -- of flying to Europe. We left O'Hare in Chicago in midafternoon and changed planes in New York; then, because of a thunderstorm, we were delayed, and took off in the dark -- about nine o'clock in the evening. It was very dark in New York, but when we rose above the clouds we found it was still quite light and really did not get dark until we were flying over Nova Scotia. As we ascended to about eight miles above the Atlantic, I couldn't help but feel removed from the planet, which at the time was shrouded in darkness. Several thoughts passed through my mind, including how symbolic this was of the spiritual darkness that still encompasses the earth. I felt detached, as if I were removed from the earth and could view the world as a whole, in spite of the fact that I could not see anything. As I meditated upon this, the comments of a seraphim at the conclusion of one of the Thought Adjuster papers were impressed upon me.

"Such a life on such a planet....where the blend of many races renders it exceedingly difficult for the Monitors to work efficiently during life, and even after death, adds definitely to the problems of both Adjusters and guardian seraphim; where the urge of ambition is opposed by animal indolence; where the ideals of a superior people are crossed by the instincts of an inferior race; the high purpose of a great mind antagonized by the urge of a primitive inheritance; the long-distance view of a far-seeing Monitor counteracted by the near-sightedness of a creature of time; the progressive plans of an ascending being modified by the desires and longings of a material nature; the flashes of universe intelligence cancelled by the chemical-energy mandates of the evolving race; the urge of angels opposed by the emotions of an animal; the training of an intellect annulled by the tendencies of instinct; the experience of the individual opposed by the accumulated propensities of the race; the aims of the best overshadowed by the drift of the worst; the flight of genius neutralized by the gravity of mediocrity; the progress of the good retarded by the inertia of the bad; the art of the beautiful besmirched by the presence of evil; the buoyancy of health neutralized by the debility of disease; the fountain of faith polluted by the poisons of fear; the spring of joy embittered by the waters of sorrow; the gladness of anticipation disillusioned by the bitterness of realization; the joys of living ever threatened by the sorrows of death. Such a life on such a planet! And yet, because of the ever-present help and urge of the Thought Adjuster, this soul did achieve a fair degree of happiness and success and has even now ascended to the judgment halls of mansonia." (p. 1224)

"Such a life on such a planet!" All of us can echo this.

Yes, this is our world -- an experimental world in the local universe of Nebadon, a small, apparently insignificant planet near the outskirts of the

Milky Way super-galaxy. We are constantly reminded that we are very much a part of it. This is our world, Urantia -- where a number of things were tried that had never been done before. In a sense, I feel we are pioneers -- we are part of a great experiment. The history of the planet is marked with innovations in the pattern of life in Nebadon. We are different in many ways. The very origin of the solar system Monmatia and the earth is unusual. A pre-colored race developed and man lived on our world for half a million years, making very little progress, before the Planetary Prince arrived. On normal, non-experimental worlds this epoch is very different from the prolonged and extraordinarily brutal struggle that characterized this age on Urantia. For in the light of subsequent civilization, this era of primitive man on Urantia is a long, dark, bloody chapter. Religion barely survived. Spiritual darkness prevailed. I am sure we as individuals and as a world still bear the scars of this unusual beginning. When the Prince finally arrived, progress was slow, but there was progress for almost 300,000 years, and it would have continued and accelerated had not Caligastia joined Lucifer in one of the most devastating rebellions in our local universe. Again the world reverted to primitive conditions, and again spiritual darkness prevailed. And the sad commentary about all this is that had Caligastia and Lucifer been patient, they would have received everything for which they claimed to rebel.

However, in spite of the set-back caused by the Caligastia betrayal, physical evolutionary progress continued. The cultural decadence and spiritual poverty resulting from the Caligastia downfall and consequent social confusion had little effect on the physical or biologic status of the Urantia peoples. Organic evolution proceeded apace for about 160,000 years, and then, after an inspection by Tabamantia, a material Son and Daughter, biologic uplifters, were approved by the Most Highs of Edentia. Within one hundred years Adam and Eve arrived on the planet. The outlook for great strides in human development was bright. Life Carriers were not so concerned about some of the unfavorable outcomes of their experiment -- especially those concerning disease -- because they knew the infusion of the blood of the biologic uplifters would act as a vaccine or antibiotic toward many of the diseases.

But, as we all know, Adam and Eve defaulted. "Probably no Material Sons of Nebadon were ever faced with such a difficult and seemingly hopeless task as confronted Adam and Eve in the sorry plight of Urantia. But they would have sometime met with success had they been more farseeing and patient. Both of them, especially Eve, were altogether too impatient; they were not willing to settle down to the long, long endurance test. They wanted to see some immediate results, and they did, but the results thus secured proved most disastrous both to themselves and to their world." (p. 840)

Adam was confronted with a well-nigh hopeless task when, with his beautiful mate, he was transported from Jerusalem to our dark and confused planet. But had they been guided by the counsel of the Melchizedeks and their associates, and had they been more patient, they would have eventually met with success. As it was, the amount of biologic uplift was minimal, and the problems that were to have been solved are still largely with us. A great deal still needs to be done. By the time civilizations on normal, non-experimental worlds approach their culmination, as they move on toward the age of light and life, they have developed one race through amalgamation of the higher strains of each race, further upstepped by infusion of the violet strains of the descendants of Adam and Eve; they have developed a common language, and are at least moving toward

global government and also toward a planetary religion. None of these developments has been accomplished on Urantia.

We should remember that in spite of the fact that Urantia is a decimal planet -- an experimental world -- our planet is one where conditions for human life are quite ideal. Our atmosphere is ideal for the breathing type of man; we are a land type of being, rather than living in the water or in the air; our planetary temperature is in mid-temperature range; we are a two-brained type, and in almost all categories we are grouped with the most numerous rather than the extremes.

Some of the differences, or innovations, or departures, from life on non-experimental worlds caused some problems, but many of the innovations of this experiment were very favorable and helpful to the progress of the planet. Nevertheless, plans for our planet which were probably a billion years old have been disrupted by rebellion and default. We were without a functioning Planetary Prince, and the Material Son and Daughter were removed. Again spiritual darkness prevailed.

Urantia, however, was not without some compensations for these tragedies of rebellion and default that befell the planet. Machiventa Melchizedek came 1973 years before the birth of Jesus with the power, patience, and authority of a Son of God and laid the foundations for the further uplift and spiritual rehabilitation of our world. No, "Misfortune has not been the sole lot of Urantia; this planet has also been the most fortunate in the local universe of Nebadon. Urantians should count it all gain if the blunders of their ancestors and the mistakes of their early world rulers so plunged the planet into such a hopeless state of confusion, all the more confounded by evil and sin, that this very background of darkness should so appeal to Michael of Nebadon that he selected this world as the arena wherein to reveal the loving personality of the Father in heaven. It is not that Urantia needed a Creator Son to set its tangled affairs in order; it is rather that the evil and sin on Urantia afforded the Creator Son a more striking background against which to reveal the matchless love, mercy, and patience of the Paradise Father." (p. 853)

But problems still plagued Urantia. In spite of the simple spiritual appeal of Jesus' message, a different religion, embracing some of Jesus' teachings, but including a compromise with other religious practices, was developed. This new religion, Christianity, developed principally by Peter and Paul as they proclaimed the resurrection and ascension of Christ, was Hellenized, then paganized, and later became comatose for more than a thousand years. Nevertheless, we are told that Christianity contained enough of Jesus' teaching to immortalize it, for it resurrected itself and reconquered the Western world. But it is still true that Christianity, though a mighty religion, is but the second best religion in the world. Too much of the simple truth of Jesus' religion was lost to the world when the apostles and early disciples replaced the religion of Jesus with a religion about Jesus.

But now, as an additional aspect of compensation for all the world's problems, we have a restatement of Jesus' teachings with a cosmic setting in this, the fifth epochal revelation. The Urantia Book must be an essential part of the development of religion on our planet as well as a means of stimulating social and moral growth. In addition, in its capacity of filling in many of the gaps in world knowledge, it becomes most exciting reading for those who have been searching for more truth.

We must remember several things: (1) This Urantia movement is not a temporary, spectacular flash that appears quickly in the panorama of history, and then subsides and is extinguished. Rather, it is a long-range project that is designed to become part of the religious epoch that is characteristic of the post-bestowal Son age. (2) The midwayers have been waiting about 1,000 years to tell the story of the life of Jesus. Let us hope that a little of their patience and forbearance may rub off on us. (3) And we have been told that the Urantia Book is intended for a period in world history that is imminent, but not quite reached -- yet a little while before the world is ready -- when peace shall begin to come and a war-weary world will turn to the words of comfort and enlightenment as expressed by Jesus and recorded in the Urantia Book; when a craving for spiritual food will become the prevailing motive of many peoples and nations.

Our Brotherhood was organized with the prime purpose of disseminating the teachings of the Urantia Book. Our objective here in this assembly is to review the work that has been going on and to elect counselors to direct the activities and to work out problems of growth and development of the Brotherhood so that it may more effectively carry out its purpose -- that of working toward world-wide acceptance of the gospel of Jesus.

Our Brotherhood ship was launched in 1955. None of us had any experience in any similar venture and we did not know what to anticipate. Some expected early acceptance by a large number of people. But we were soon to realize that many individuals preferred not to be unsettled by any new ideas, and wished to keep their religion undisturbed. Even more discouraging was the evidence that too many people did not even want to turn their thoughts to intellectual pursuits, much less anything of spiritual connotation. However, we did find that there were spiritually hungry souls who quickly were attracted to these teachings, and the Brotherhood ship began to move from its moorings. We are fully aware that it has not yet cleared the harbor, but it is beginning to move toward open seas. There have been some cross-currents of objection or resistance -- even among its members -- and occasionally some unfavorable winds come up as some individual takes exception to its message. But it is encouraging to report that its sails are being filled with the winds of increased interest as more and more people learn of these teachings and experience the inevitable growth that results from its acceptance and study.

The time is approaching when we will leave the sheltered bays of relative obscurity and with full sails move toward increasing world acceptance. The voyage will be a long one, commingled with slow progress because of opposing tides of prejudice and alarmed vested interests, and good sailing on swells of popularity and with strong gusts of increasing interest. We will need to avoid the doldrums of indifference and secularism as well as the dangers of moving too swiftly, wherein unwise decisions due to impatience and materialistic tendencies can cause the vessel to crash into reefs of compromise, institutionalization, or uncontrolled too rapid growth.

We can be encouraged.

We are on the move.

Things are happening.

We are finding that there are people who are hungering for truth, whose minds are open, who are looking for enlightenment, who are yielding to the gentle leading of the Spirit of Truth.

Several weeks ago I was standing in the middle of St. Mark's square in Venice, listening to our band playing music that apparently appealed to thousands of people from probably all corners of the earth. Some people were from the cold north; others from hot tropical climes; there were the wealthy and poor, educated and uneducated; Mongoloid, Negroid, Caucasoid. People from Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Ireland, and various parts of the United States spoke to us in words we could understand. Others expressed appreciation, but we could not understand their words. The realization that probably each one had a Thought Adjuster seemed, to me at least, to bring us closer together. And then as I projected my thoughts several hundred -- or several thousand -- years into the future and contemplated a similar situation wherein the majority of those present would be familiar with the teachings of our Master Son, and would have accepted the message contained in the Urantia Book, I thrilled to the thought that similar thousands visiting St. Mark's square (if it were still above water) would be unified by a common religion, notwithstanding the difference in backgrounds, language, culture, mode of living, and total environmental home conditions.

This picture reminded me of the objectives of Urantia Brotherhood. We propose to disseminate these concepts, these teachings, this message that God's spirit indwells our minds. God is our Father, and we thus regard all others as brothers. At present we have been advised to spread these teachings by personal contact and by making them available to those who are seeking for more enlightenment. The time will come when other means might be used, when this gospel of Jesus will so capture the imagination and longings of myriads of people that this religion will become the religion of Urantia, and peace and progress will prevail.

We need then to dedicate ourselves to this high purpose. We need to recapture some of those lost qualities of our primitive ancestors -- their magnificent persistency and courage and bravery -- and couple these with the best combined wisdom that we can muster and then trust that the Spirit of Truth will always tell us which way we must take.

May we devote our best thinking to the promotion of the basic objectives of Urantia Brotherhood. May we avoid fostering any selfish, circumscribed, or personal interests, but rather place above all other concerns a sincere desire to carry out the work that our Master Son brought to this planet.

We have the lives of many of the apostles, especially as they functioned after Pentecost, to inspire us -- even as they heroically accepted torture and death because they would not turn from presenting Jesus' message to the world. We can be confident that our planetary supervisors and a mighty host of seraphim are working by our side. And we can be reassured by the positive statement: Mistake not; there is in the teachings of Jesus an eternal nature which will not permit them forever to remain unfruitful in the hearts of thinking man.

We need to become so saturated with the teachings of the Urantia Book -- especially the life-saving message found in the words of Jesus -- and to become so motivated by the enthralling prospect of the eternal adventure that lies before us, that our very lives will attract multitudes into the soul-saving confines of the Brotherhood or the Kingdom.

While in Rome I walked on the Appian Way and around the ruins of the Forum, and I was reminded of the song, "I walked today where Jesus walked." But each of us can walk day by day as Jesus walked. We can never do all he did. However, we can go from day to day walking as he walked, knowing that a fragment of the First Source and Center is the central nucleus of our lives; knowing that Jesus' Spirit of Truth will guide us through every crossroad; and knowing that we can never be lonely in our journey through this life and through the cosmos, for we know that the Father walks beside us each step of the way, while the very way that we are traversing is the presence of the Supreme.

As Jesus said at the conclusion of his discourse on religion, "Let us be on our way."