

FOR CLASSROOM USE ONLY
THE BOULDER SCHOOL

A SYNOPTIC INTRODUCTION TO THE URANTIA BOOK

I. Introduction and Synoptic Overview

A. In some ways The URANTIA Book is like Process Theology; for the initiate it is helpful if the basic concepts are summarized and interpreted.

1. The URANTIA Book is published by URANTIA Foundation, 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614. The book contains 2097 pages, divided into four sections:
 - I. The Central and Superuniverses, 354 pages.
 - II. The Local Universe, 294 pages.
 - III. The History of Urantia, 671 pages.
 - IV. The Life and Teachings of Jesus, 778 pages.
2. The style and content of the book are of high quality. It supports the basic Judeo-Christian theistic approach to central philosophic-religious positions and undergirds the best in all religions.
3. The URANTIA Book claims to be new revelation but we would remind readers that claim of authority is not an adequate philosophic criterion of truth. The reader should evaluate the book entirely on the quality of its content.

In these meetings we shall attempt to maintain the critical philosophical attitude. Our intent is to inform and use the highest standards of academic freedom in our discussions. The reader is urged to exercise his own critical judgment of value.

B. General Introduction: Leavening our Religious Heritage. (Lecture)

1. There is a great need for a fresh and enlarged spiritual vision.
2. One should be suspicious of revelatory claims. The acid test is that of coherent philosophic evaluation and the pragmatic validity of experience.
3. The book presents a mature and holistic philosophical orientation. It enlarges, enhances, and integrates traditional concepts and values.
4. It is a resource, not an imperative.
5. The URANTIA Book is not interested in creating a new church or a new religion but in leavening all of the traditional religious concepts, forms, and institutions.

C. Specific Introduction: Traditional Theology and The URANTIA Book. (Lecture)

1. Revelation: Epochal revelation is periodic, successive, and evolutionary. Insofar as the indwelling Spirit reveals truth to individuals, revelation is continuous. Revelation always upsteps the religions of evolution.

2. Doctrine of God: The traditional static and the contemporary dynamic concepts of God are expanded, enhanced, and integrated.
 3. Cosmology: The book presents an expanded and complex physical and spiritual cosmology and an extensive hierarchical system of spiritual administrative and ministering personalities.
 4. Christology: Jesus is portrayed as truly human and truly divine. In addition to acting as a mediator and saviour, he is pictured also as a Greater Son after the view presented in the prologue of the Gospel of John.
 5. Salvation: All are saved who have faith in the highest source of truth, beauty, and goodness (God) available to them and achieve the Universal Father through the mediating ministry of Christ.
 6. Doctrine of Man: Man is a mortal son or daughter of God who has great potential for both good and evil. Each person is indwelt by a fragment of God which, if followed, in time will lead unerringly to the Father by the way ordained by God the Son through the ministry of the grace of God the Spirit.
 7. The Church: Religious institutions are necessary and good but are only social institutions. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual relationship which transcends social institutions.
 8. Future Life: Our spiritual development is seen as a long, gradual, and experiential ¹³⁵⁰⁻¹³⁵⁸ ~~road~~ ^{to} the Isle of Paradise at the center of the universe of universes and to the Universal Father. Our traditional concepts of heaven and hell are seen as puerile visions of a truly great destiny. A future of unimaginable grandeur and service is ahead.
- D. The basic theological positions of The URANTIA Book reinforce the essential tenets of mainline Christianity but on a vastly enlarged universe scale. In the judgment of tens of thousands of discriminating people, including many ministers, the book contains the greatest stimulus to spiritual growth in contemporary literature. It certainly merits critical examination and evaluation by all who are seriously interested in the future of religion on our world.
1. If you should like to have a loan copy of The URANTIA Book to read, please let us know and we will endeavor to get one to you.
 2. At our next meeting we will pursue in more detail the concept of revelation in The URANTIA Book. The opening lecture will be on the origin of the book which is the first thing most people wish to know about.

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A SYNOPTIC INTRODUCTION TO THE URANTIA BOOK

II. Revelation

A. The origin of The URANTIA Book. (Lecture)

1. The first thing most people wish to know about The URANTIA Book.

- a. A natural reaction because of our cultural conditioning.
- b. Revelatory claims should always be questioned.
- c. We should judge not by claim but by the quality of content.

2. The author's account.

- a. The authors speak of it as the fifth epochal revelation. The other four: 1. Dalamatian teachings - Planetary Prince, 2. Edenic teachings - Adam and Eve, 3. Melchizedek of Salem - associate of Abraham, 4. Jesus of Nazareth. (1007-8)
- b. Written by numerous supermortals and materialized in the English language. (648:7)
 - (1) Authors acknowledge difficulties in translating spiritual realities into human concepts and language. (17:2)
 - (2) Used thousands of human concepts and statements to facilitate comprehension and communication. (17:1, 1343)
 - (3) Authors were rigorously restricted; they are not allowed to anticipate developments in future. (1109:4)
 - (4) Content of revelation dare not be too far removed from contemporary thought patterns. (1007:1)
 - (5) The authors realize that human beings like to proceed from the simple to the complex but point out that spiritual wisdom is only achieved in a holistic approach, understanding the origin, history, and destiny of universe realities. (215:2,3)
- c. The Thought Adjuster (indwelling Spirit of God) of a human being was used in some way to materialize the URANTIA Papers in the English language. (1208:7, 1258:1)
 - (1) Midwayers (Beings quite close to us who can operate in both the spiritual and material worlds) were used in the materialization process but no description of the process is given. (865:5)
 - (2) Midwayers are in no way associated with spiritualism or mediumistic phenomena and usually do not allow humans to witness their activities. (865:5)

3. The human story.

a. A group of Chicago people received the URANTIA Papers.

- (1) In the mid 1920's a group known as the Forum organized to discuss medical and psychological issues. This group was contacted by the revelators and eventually became involved with the URANTIA Papers.
- (2) In 1939 the leadership of the Forum asked for volunteers to systematically study the URANTIA Papers. Seventy responded and The Seventy were trained by directives from the revelators and their own leaders up to the time of the publication of The URANTIA Book. They were told the book did not belong to the era in which they were living but would slowly take root in our society in the years to come.

b. Over twenty years ago I was a member of a small group of ministers who discovered The URANTIA Book, recognized its potential, and spent years researching the origins of the book.

- (1) The people in the Chicago office of URANTIA Brotherhood answered all of our questions candidly but would not talk about two things: the name of the individual who was used in some way and the details associated with the materialization of the papers.
- (2) They informed us that they were asked to take vows of secrecy concerning these things. When asked why these restrictions were imposed on them, they gave the following reasons:
 - (a) The revelators do not want any human being associated with this revelation - no St. Peter or St. Paul.
 - (b) No human being knows just how this phenomenon was executed. The revelators want nothing which appears miraculous associated with the book. It must stand on its own merits.
- (3) In interviewing people associated with the origin of The URANTIA Book, we found them critical and objective. They had done considerable research into the origin of the papers and were convinced the techniques of the reception of the URANTIA Papers in no way parallels or impinges on mediumistic, psychic, or subconscious mental activity.

B. The URANTIA Book view of revelation.

1. Epochal revelation is periodic, successive, and evolutionary. Insofar as the indwelling Spirit reveals truth to individuals, revelation is continuous. (1107:3)

2. Knowledge must be achieved by evolutionary discovery but it is integrated and given spiritual value orientation by revelation. This saves much time in eliminating the errors and distortions of evolution. (1110:2)
3. Revelation is always fairly closely related to the thought patterns of the age in which it is presented. It is rooted solidly in evolutionary foundations. (1007:1, 1106:2)
4. Revelation expands and advances the religions of evolution. (1007:1)
5. Revelation harmonizes and integrates science, philosophy, and religion by presenting more inclusive visions of reality. It, thereby, 1138:7 transcends man's philosophical-spiritual limitations. (59:4, 1106:1, 1137:3)
6. Revelation can be tested and evaluated adequately only by experience. (1106:6)
7. Revelation is never complete in finite experience until we meet the Universal Father. This culminating experience of finality, however, is only the beginning of learning about the First Source and Center on other universe levels of reality. (1008:3, 12, 13)

C. Summary.

1. Man has a tendency to confuse language with reality, terminology with truth. The New Testament contains the same spiritual truths whether we classify it as revelation or general religious literature. A rose would look and smell the same if it were called an onion. The URANTIA Book should be evaluated in this way - by its truth content or lack of it, not by its revelatory claims.
2. Historically new spiritual truth has received characteristic treatment. The religious zealots or fundamentalists denounce it as "heresy" or "the work of the devil" as the Pharisees did the teachings of Jesus. The power structure of society usually either studiously ignores it or look down their noses at it, as the Sadducees did Jesus, until repercussions of its message begin to threaten their pocket books or their power. The common people, however, usually receive liberating spiritual truth gladly. The URANTIA Book obviously presents new and enlarged spiritual truth; it will be interesting to observe its reception by society.
3. At our next meeting we will examine the doctrine of God in The URANTIA Book. It combines the best of the traditional static concepts of God with the most meaningful of the present day dynamic concepts (Tillich, Teilhard de Chardin, Whitehead) in a uniquely coherent system. To the best of my knowledge, it is the most comprehensive and insightfully structured holistic concept of deity in philosophic or religious literature.

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A SYNOPTIC INTRODUCTION TO THE URANTIA BOOK

III. The Doctrine of God

A. The I AM Concept - The First Source and Center.

1. The I AM concept is a philosophic attempt to portray timeless realities to the time-space limited mind of man. (6:4) Exodus 3:14
 - a. The I AM achieves personality by becoming the Father of the Eternal Son and the Infinite Spirit. Concomitant with the differentiation of the Son and the Spirit from the Father, the Isle of Paradise and the Central Universe came into being. (In actuality the Paradise Trinity, Paradise, and the Central Universe have always been in existence.) (6:3)
 - b. The I AM has reality existential and potential qualities embraced by seven Absolutes:
 - (1) The First Source and Center - The Universal Father.
 - (2) The Second Source and Center - The Eternal Son.
 - (3) The Third Source and Center - The Infinite Spirit.
 - (4) The Isle of Paradise - the source of all universe energy and gravity control.
 - (5) The Deity Absolute - the source of universe causal and personality potentials.
 - (6) The Unqualified Absolute - the source of universe static-reactive and infinite capacity potentials.
 - (7) The Universal Absolute - the source of universe unity and integration. (1154-56)
2. God, as the First Source and Center, is primordial, ontological, and transcendent of everything in the universe of universes and is limited only by will. (5:2, 31:7)

B. God the Father.

1. The Universal Father is spirit. He is the creator, controller, and infinite upholder of all things. In science God may be regarded as the final cause, in philosophy as the ultimate reality, and in religion as a loving Father. (21:1, 25:1, 59:4)
2. God is the original personality; he relates as a loving Father with all persons. God's behavior is conscious and volitional; he has free will and is not a captive of his own nature. (28:6, 138:2)
3. God is a transcendent personal reality, not just a synonym for nature, law, creativity, or love. And he is certainly not, in his ontological reality, the product of the mind of man. (23:5)
4. God is infinite, eternal, righteous, just, loving, merciful, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, and primal. (44-53)
5. God is the bestower of personality and he dwells within us. In him we live and move and have our being. (70:3, 139:1)

C. God the Son.

1. The Son reveals the true nature of God to all of the universes. He is the Word of God. The Eternal Son is the minister of the Father's love; he extends love, mercy, and salvation to all created beings. (79:4, 74:7, 75:7)
2. The Eternal Son is the source of spirit-gravity in the universe; he draws all personalities Godward. It is because of this spiritual-gravity that mortals are able to ascend the universe and achieve Paradise. (84:2)
3. The Sons of the Eternal Son bestow themselves on the inhabited planets of the universe. They incarnate and take on the nature of the mortals of the realms of space and share their life. These Sons open the way to salvation in the universe. (86:2,5)

D. God the Spirit.

1. The Infinite Spirit assumes responsibility for carrying out the Father-Son plan for spiritual growth and Paradise attainment. The Spirit is the great minister of the universe of universes. (93:7, 98:3)
2. The Infinite Spirit is the correlator of all actual reality - the manipulator of energy, the absolute mind and the source of the mind-gravity circuit, and a minister to personalities. (96:4, 99:3, 102:2, 103:7)
3. The ministry of the Paradise Trinity is co-ordinated. The Father reaches out in love; the Son in mercy carries his love to all creation; the Spirit inspires mortals to respond to this love and become sons and daughters of the Universal Father. (53:7)

E. God the Supreme.

1. God the Supreme is the actualizing aspect of Deity and is evolving along with the evolutionary universes of time and space. He is the Deity response to the totality of evolutionary universe experience. The Supreme grows as the personalities in the evolving universes progress toward spiritual perfection. (4:4, 1304:2, 1265:6)

This concept is very close to the contemporary deity concepts in the writings of Jung, Tillich, Teilhard de Chardin, and Whitehead. Process Theology, which stems from Whiteheadian philosophy, speaks about the "primordial nature of God (all eternal objects) and the "consequent" nature of God (the evolving aspect of reality) and thus comes very close to the concepts of God in The URANTIA Book. God the Supreme is also essentially the same as the "immanence" concept of God in traditional theology.

2. Sonship is the important relationship with God the Father; achievement, growth, or accomplishment is the all important criterion of our relationship with God the Supreme. The Supreme stimulates growth in the evolutionary universes. (1260:1, 1283:3)
3. At the end of the present universe age the Supreme Being will emerge as the spiritual head of the evolutionary universes. (1280:7)

F. God the Sevenfold.

1. Man progressively discerns God through the ministry of God the Sevenfold. This is the "spiritual ladder" by which man ascends the universe from his planetary origin to Paradise. Mortals in our universe successively encounter God in the following order:
 - a. Christ Michael.
 - b. The Ancients of Days.
 - c. The Seventh-Master Spirit.
 - d. The Supreme Being.
 - e. God the Spirit.
 - f. God the Son.
 - g. God the Father. (11:6, 1296:5)
2. In spite of the complexity of the manifestations of Deity in the universes of universes, God is one and there is universal unity in his ministry. In human experience God is always one. (637:1, 380:4)

G. Summary.

1. Although the concept of God is greatly expanded in The URANTIA Book, it is solidly rooted in both traditional and contemporary Christian views of God.
2. The chief contribution of The URANTIA Book view of God is that it enlarges and integrates traditional concepts in a way which preserves all of the old spiritual values while at the same time has the potential of stimulating new and creative thinking in Christian theology and philosophy.
3. At our next meeting we will take a look at the universe cosmology of The URANTIA Book. This cosmology is both material and spiritual. With regard to spiritual cosmology, this is something like going from the Ptolemaic view of the universe not just to the Copernican view but to the new astronomy of Gamow, Hoyle, and Whipple all in one jump!

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A SYNOPSIS INTRODUCTION TO THE URANTIA BOOK

IV. Cosmology

A. Physical cosmography.

1. A simplified description of the astronomical universe from the center outward starts with the Isle of Paradise which is surrounded by the one billion perfect pattern worlds of the central universe, Eevona. This central creation is encompassed by the seven evolutionary super-universes with their trillions of inhabited planets, all of which, is encircled by four vast outer space levels. (129, 166)
 - a. Paradise, the central universe, and the seven superuniverses all taken together, is known as the Grand Universe which is inhabited.
 - b. The grand universe plus the four outer space levels, which are not now inhabited, is known as the Master Universe.
 - c. The superuniverses are subdivided into major and minor sectors, local universes, constellations, systems, and individual planets.
2. Paradise is the absolute source and eternal focal point of all energy-matter and material gravity. (125-6)
3. This physical cosmography roughly parallels what is known or hypothesized by contemporary astronomy. Orvonton, the seventh superuniverse, for instance, is identified with the Milky Way galaxy and most of its major divisions have been identified by our astronomers. (167:7)
4. The authors report that universe space expands and contracts in two billion year cycles. (123:3) They make many comments which relate to present day astronomical concepts and data.
5. The authors, however, caution us that because of restrictions placed on revelatory activity, the science and cosmology of The URANTIA Book are not inspired. While spiritual insight is a revelatory gift, human knowledge and wisdom must evolve. Very soon, they tell us, the science of The URANTIA Book will be out grown. (1109:4)
 - a. In 1957 I asked a nationally known nuclear scientist and the head of a university physics department to evaluate Papers 41 and 42 which deal with physics and energy. To my surprise, they both said that this was about where leading physicists were in the early 1950's but they thought they were a little behind this now.
 - b. Conversely, the book makes a number of scientific observations which were not discovered until after the papers were received or even after the book was published.

B. Spiritual cosmology.

1. Postmortal morontial (part material, part spiritual) and spiritual

activities and training take place on architectural spheres. These specially constructed headquarters worlds and their satellites are distributed throughout the grand universe paralleling the geographic and hierarchical cosmography of the material creations: systems, constellations, local universe headquarters, minor sectors, major sectors, superuniverse headquarters, the one billion spheres of the central universe and the Isle of Paradise.

2. Presiding over each of these ascending spheres is a hierarchy of spiritual administrative personalities. At each level the spiritual activities and training becomes progressively higher. (330-44)
 - a. Our system, Satania, is supervised by a Lanonadek Son, Lanaforge, who is known as our System Sovereign. Lucifer at one time was our System Sovereign but was deposed following the rebellion which he instigated. (511)
 - b. Our constellation, Norlatiadek, is governed by three Vorondadek Sons who are known as the Most Highs. Because of the Lucifer rebellion they have been particularly active in the supervision of our planet. (488)
 - c. Our local universe Nebadon, composed of ten million inhabited worlds when completed, is ruled by a Sovereign Michael Son often referred to as Christ Michael. Following his bestowal on our planet the Universal Father gave him complete authority in our universe. He is a perfect revelation of the Universal Father and the Eternal Son to all in our universe. All who go to the Father in our universe proceed through his loving local universe ministry. (366)
3. The physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of the diverse levels of creation are integrated, correlated, and unified by a superb divine plan and an eternal purpose. Every individual aspect of the universe relates to the whole; nothing exists in isolation. (637, 647:6)

C. Summary.

1. The portrayal of this gigantic material-mental-spiritual cosmology is the most revolutionary and shocking aspect of The URANTIA Book for most people. It presents a picture of the spiritual universe which matches and surpasses the vast astronomical universe our scientists have discovered.
 - a. My suggestion is that you at present neither accept or reject this cosmology. Hold it in your mind. Examine its nature and implications. After you get used to the concept, you may find it stimulates superior spiritual insights and possesses many advantages over the simplistic Ptolemaic spiritual cosmology we inherited from our prescientific ancestors.
 - b. Even if you should eventually reject this cosmological picture, it will not interfere with your appreciation of the magnificent portrayal of the life and teachings of Jesus and the superb philosophical concepts and spiritual insights of The URANTIA Book.

If one accepts the cosmology, it must be on the basis of "reasonable" faith; the philosophical and spiritual truths one can confirm by spiritual intuition, coherent reason, and concrete experience.

2. At our next meeting we will discuss the Christology of The URANTIA' Book along with the meaning of salvation and its ramifications for the future. Except that it is placed on an enlarged universe scale, you will find that the basic theological positions of the book are virtually identical with the theology of mainline Christianity.

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A SYNOPSIS INTRODUCTION TO THE URANTIA BOOK

V. Christology and the Plan of Salvation

A. The divine prebestowal status of Jesus.

1. Jesus was the incarnation of a Creator Son of the order of Michael. He is known in our universe as Christ Michael. Dan. 12:1, Rev. 12:7, (234)
 - a. The Creator Sons are created by the Universal Father and the Eternal Son. Each is unique in nature as well as personality. (234-5)
 - b. They are the creators and rulers of the local universes as described in the prologue of the Gospel of John. (John 1:1-18) Christ Michael is the creator of our universe, Nebadon. (235:5, 366)
 - c. In their local universes these Creator Michaels are known as the "only begotten son." To a local universe, for all practical purposes, a Michael Son is God. He is the local universe personification of the Universal Father and the Eternal Son. None of his universe proceeds to the Father except through his ministry. (66:3), John 14:6
2. Each Michael Son must earn his sovereignty by incarnating in the likeness of the various orders of created beings in his universe. Jesus of Nazareth was the seventh and final bestowal of Christ Michael. (1323)

B. The bestowal of Christ Michael on our planet as Jesus of Nazareth.

1. The purposes of Jesus' mission were to:

- a. Reveal the Father. (1407:2)
- b. Reveal man to God. (1328:5)
- c. Acquire mortal experience. (1407:2, 1424:3,4)
- d. Terminate the Lucifer rebellion. (1494:3)
- e. Prepare the way for the universal bestowal of Thought Adjusters and the Spirit of Truth. (1328:3)
- f. Become the inspiration for religious living for all of his universe. (1328:4)
- g. Establish a new and living way from man to God. (1426:1, 1965:4)
- h. Acquire sovereignty. (1323:2)

2. The events of Jesus' bestowal.

- a. Jesus was born August 21, 7 B. C. (1351:5)
- b. The early training and education of Jesus was received in the home and synagogue. He graduated from the synagogue school during his 13th year. When he was 14 his father was killed in a construction accident and Jesus became the sole support and comfort of his family. (1373, 1387-8)
- c. From the ages of 15 to 26 Jesus served as the head of his family following which his brother, James, took over the family responsibilities.

- d. During the years from age 27 to 32 Jesus conducted a private personal ministry traveling widely about the Roman world and the Caspian Sea region and working in the Zebedee boat building shop.
- e. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist 1/14/26 in his 32nd year. He spent most of the next year selecting and training his apostles. His public ministry began 1/19/27 and terminated at his crucifixion 4/7/30. (1504:5, 1587, 2006-7)
- f. On 4/9/30 Jesus came forth from the tomb with a morontia body - the same kind of body mortals will have when they are resurrected from the sleep of death. (2022-3)
During his postresurrection sojourn on our world Jesus made 19 appearances to mortals. His ascension took place 5/18/30. (2057)

C. The plan of salvation.

1. Jesus' death on the cross was not to atone for any sin of Adam or for man's supposed racial guilt. Jesus is a savior but not a ransom or a redeemer. (2016:7, 2017:2)
 - a. Evil, sin, and judgment are stern and sober realities in the universe; nevertheless, the Universal Father is not a spirit despot who requires blood sacrifice or atonement for sins. (2017-19)
 - b. By allowing misguided mortals to put him to death, Jesus made the cross an eternal symbol of the triumph of love over hate and the victory of truth over evil. (2018:2)
2. Survival is determined by the affirmation of truth, beauty, and goodness (God) as the person sincerely understands these values. We are saved by faith. (63, 69-70)
3. Death works no magic whereby we are instantaneously transformed from animal-origin material beings into perfect spirit beings. We advance in the universe by evolutionary growth and experience. The entire universe is a vast school for perfecting mortals.
 - a. The Universal Father has decreed that all created beings shall strive for perfection as the requirement for ascending in the universe. (21:3)
 - b. We have a long Paradise journey ahead that will eventually lead to the Universal Father, entrance into the Corps of Finality, and future universe service. (354:3)
4. In spite of the imperfection, suffering, and disappointments which are a part of this life, we have ahead a great destiny of eternal progress and endless service. Indeed, the grueling experiences of this world are part of the divine plan to mold us into strong and courageous personalities who will be prepared for the greater tasks and opportunities ahead. (258, 365, 498, 1194)

D. Summary.

1. The URANTIA Book prebestowal status of Jesus differs from that of traditional Christian views in fact but not in truth. In our ignorance of universe cosmology, we assumed Jesus was the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity. Ha, in truth, does have all of the prerogatives of the second person of the Trinity in our universe. Christ Michael is even more important in the URANTIA Book picture - being both creator and savior - than in traditional Christianity.
2. The centrality of Jesus to salvation is identical with that of orthodox Christianity but because of the enlarged spiritual cosmology salvation is open, not just to Christians, but to all who live on our planet.
3. The enlarged and enhanced presentation of the life and teachings of Jesus has great potential for revitalizing the churches of Western Civilization and stimulating a spiritual renaissance among all religions.
4. The URANTIA Book reminds us that all religions have admirable qualities and that they have much to learn from each other.

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VI. The Church and the Kingdom of Heaven

A. Distinctions between the Christian Church and Jesus' concept of the Kingdom of Heaven: the church is largely a social institution; the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual relationship.

1. The Christian Church.

- a. Christianity often promotes a religion about Jesus emphasizing a particular brand of theology; the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual relationship with God emphasizing the religion of Jesus. Jesus stressed the importance of a living, personal relationship with God and serving our fellowmen. (2092:5)
- b. The church has become the socialized and humanized shadow of the spiritual brotherhood and has often taken the place of Jesus' concept of the kingdom. The church as a social expression of the kingdom is both natural and good but the church should never seek to lay claim to the spiritual prerogatives of the kingdom. (1854:6, 1855, 1856:1)
- c. In order to control the dynamic religion of Jesus the church has thoroughly traditionalized, dogmatized, and institutionalized it - thus unwittingly becoming an obstacle to the growth of the real teachings of Jesus and the fellowship of believers. (1088:2, 2085:1)
- d. Secularism broke the bonds of church authoritarianism but now threatens to establish a godless society. Many Christians are unconsciously secularists. (2081:3,4)

2. The Kingdom of Heaven.

- a. The kingdom of heaven is an inner spiritual relationship centered in the truth of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. It is the rule of God in the hearts of men. Jesus repeatedly pointed to the key importance of the "inner" nature of the kingdom of heaven. (1859:3) Luke 17:21
- b. The essentials of entering the kingdom are faith, sincerity, and hunger for truth, beauty, and goodness. (1861:2)
- c. The cardinal features of the kingdom are the realization of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man stressing the importance of the individual and his will decisions, personal fellowship with God, the loving service of man, and the dominance of the spiritual realities in the life of man. (1865:1, 1863:3)

B. The social dynamics of religious institutions.

1. When religion becomes institutionalized the potentials for evil are greatly increased.

- a. There is a tendency to fixate and standardize truth along with a

failure to make up to date interpretations of religious principles.

- b. Ecclesiastical authority usually develops and is often associated with intolerant standards of orthodoxy.
 - c. Institutions accumulate vested interests and become involved in secular activities.
 - d. Leaders become administrators rather than ministers and devote themselves to the service of the church which they confuse with the service of God.
 - e. Institutional religion venerates the past and often ignores contemporary creative opportunities of service and thereby fails to interest and challenge youth. (1092:4)
2. In spite of these problems, there is a real need and purpose for religious institutions.
- a. They help magnify the importance of truth, beauty, and goodness and all spiritual values.
 - b. They provide religious education and furnish spiritual counseling and guidance.
 - c. They strive to enhance the potentials of family-life, friendship, morality, and neighborhood betterment.
 - d. They encourage group worship and spread the message of salvation. (1092:3)
3. Religion, religious institutions, or religious groups should not become organically involved in secular work, social reconstruction, or economic reorganization but as civilization advances they should constantly update their religious positions by making vigorous restatements of their moral mandates and spiritual principles. (1087:3)
- a. It is wise for religious groups to confine their activities to religious causes. (1088:6, 1089:3, 2085:6, 2086:6,7)
 - b. Religionists should function in society, in industry, and in politics as individuals, not as religious groups. (1089)

C. Jesus' concept of the kingdom will prevail.

1. In spite of its limitations Christianity is the best religion of the twentieth century. It is one of the greatest powers for good on earth. (2083:5, 2085:2)
2. The church is the larval stage of the thwarted spiritual kingdom. The kingdom inaugurated by Jesus is still alive and will emerge as the dominant spiritual force on our planet. (1866:4)
3. We are living in one of the pivotal periods of history. We are on the

threshold of one of the most important periods of spiritual enlightenment our planet has ever experienced. The more complete revelation of the life and teachings of Jesus will liberate mankind from nineteen centuries of theological tradition and religious dogma. (2082:8,10, 2083:2, 2084:6, 2090:3)

D. The kingdom of God is an invisible and spiritual brotherhood which is destined to become a living organism transcending social institutions. We are called to spiritual unity, not uniformity.

1. Spiritual unity is based on common ideals, purposes, and goals, not on the same theological beliefs and creeds. The divisions, rivalry, and antagonism in the Christian Church are a disgrace to an organization which claims to be inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus. (1135:3, 1866:3, 2085:7)

2. The great hope of our world is that this expanded revelation of truth will unite the churches and religions of our planet in common and fraternal purposes and ideals. (2086:2)

E. Summary.

1. The URANTIA Book presents a truly ecumenical approach to religion. It emphasizes that you may belong to any religious group or to no religious group and still be in the kingdom of God. It, hopefully, will become a mighty influence which will some day virtually eliminate the narrow sectarianism, the conflict and antagonism among religious groups on our world.

2. Its mature, evolutionary, universe oriented frames of reference free us from the compulsive desire to "save" people by urging them to adopt our religious or philosophic views. It helps us to be patient, understanding, and loving with the immature, the fearful, the angry, and the egocentric people of our world. The URANTIA Book helps us, as mankind has seldom been helped, to identify with the world-wide family of God.

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7/1/80

A SYNOPTIC INTRODUCTION TO THE URANTIA BOOK

VII. Prayer and Worship

A. The distinction between prayer and worship and their relational aspects.

1. Prayer always has an element of self or creature interest and concern. Worship is self-forgetting; it is the contemplation of God and is an end in itself. (65:6, 1616:9)
2. Prayer may lead to worship and be an aid to worship. Prayer is the powerizing human need reaching out beyond itself which is eventually rewarded by the energizing practice of worship. (1621:7)

B. The nature and effect of prayer.

1. The nature of prayer.

- a. Prayer is communication with God designed to expand insight. (1616, 1848)
- b. Prayer is both a sound psychological practice which augments self-realization and an effective spiritual technique to expand the soul. (997, 999, 1621)
- c. Prayer is not a technique to escape life's difficulties but a way in which we can learn to face conflict and suffering meaningfully and courageously. Prayer does not change God's mind but it may change the person praying. (1001-2, 1619, 1621)

2. The distortion of prayer.

- a. Primitive and immature prayer attempts to plead or bargain with God for health, wealth, power, or preference. Prayer normally has no direct effect on the physical environment or organic disease but through the ministration of mind it may greatly contribute to the therapeutic effect of scientific-medical remedial procedures. (983:7, 999:4,5)
- b. Prayer cannot be used to circumvent universe laws and the limitations of time and space. Our prayers should always be consistent with our knowledge of universe laws. (1638:3, 1639:5)
- c. The spiritual level of people is revealed by the nature of their prayers; however, the more mature should not criticize or ridicule the naive and the immature. (999:3)

3. Conditions of effective prayer.

- a. Words are not important in prayer; God responds only to the true and sincere attitudes of the mind and soul. The verbal aspects of prayer, however, may have autosuggestive or sociosuggestive value. (1002:5)

- b. We should pray for divine guidance to solve our human problems, not for some cosmic, miraculous solution. (1002)
- c. To pray affectively you must face reality honestly and intelligently, attempt to solve problems by the resources which you have, be dedicated to doing the will of God, and have living faith. Prayer should seek for divine wisdom to solve problems. (1003:7, 1620:6)
- d. We can learn much by observing the prayer life of Jesus. Prayer encompassed the total expression of his balanced and creative life on our world. Jesus maintained his unbroken communion with God not by psychic leadings or mystical experience but by sharing his highest values and deepest concerns with the Father. (2089:1)

4. The answer to prayer.

- a. Only prayers which are rooted in spiritual reality and sustained by faith are answered in the frames of reference of the petitioner. Prayers are answered in terms of true spiritual needs. (1638-9, 1848-9)
- b. We should not attempt to use prayer as a substitute for human ingenuity and action. It cannot be used to escape reality. (997:7,8)
- c. Some prayers because of their visionary aspirations and all-encompassing nature can only be fully answered in eternity. (1848-9)

5. The effect of prayer.

- a. Prayer is a vital and indispensable factor in spiritual growth. Even immature and futile prayers expand the soul's potential. (1621:1) (1002:2,3, 998:3)
- b. Prayer is a major resource for the achievement of human self-realization, effectiveness, and inner peace.
- c. Prayer has great social repercussions and is an antidote to personality isolation. (996:4, 993:5)

C. The nature and effect of worship.

1. Primitive forms of worship.

- a. In man's long history he has worshiped almost everything. He has even deified and sainted himself. To the primitive mind fear and worship were virtually synonymous. (994, 948:8)
- b. Worship should not be confused with psychic or mystical experience. These unusual experiences are often triggered by extreme, intense, rhythmic, repetititive, or hypnotic physical or mental conditions and are largely phenomena of the subconscious mind. (100:2)

2. Communion with God.

- a. Worship is spiritual communion with God; it is the part identifying

with the whole. True worship is contact with Reality. (2095:6)

- b. The greatest opportunity, challenge, and adventure of man is to achieve God-consciousness - contact with the indwelling Spirit of God. (2097:2)

3. Accompaniments of worship.

- a. The atmosphere of simple beauty or nature and the structure of appealing ritual can be conducive to worship. (1076:4, 1840:6)
- b. Worship should alternate with service. (1616:5)

4. The effect of worship.

- a. Worship is the most creative activity of man. It renews the mind, stimulates soul growth, eliminates insecurity and personality isolation, and greatly increases the total resources of the individual. (192, 1095, 1616, 1774, 1777)
- b. Worship is ancestor to the highest joys of man. As our knowledge of God in the universe increases, worship becomes our highest privilege and greatest pleasure. (303:6)

D. Summary.

- 1. There is much good literature on prayer and worship. The URANTIA Book reinforces the best of these writings. Its teachings are mature, balanced, and reality oriented. In addition the book clarifies the many facets of spiritual ministry which, heretofore, have been only vaguely sensed. The URANTIA Book makes the spiritual world conceptually tangible and real, not just a vague, largely formless mythology.
- 2. It takes the magic out of prayer and separates psychic and mystical states from worship. At the same time it makes prayer, worship, and service, central in religious living. These teachings reinforce what is generally recognized as the best views and practices of prayer and worship in the religions of the world.

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