



THE URANTIAN®

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The following speech was given by David Schlundt at the URANTIA Brotherhood Workshops in Lake Forest, Illinois on August 4, 1980.

PROLOGUE — A METAPHOR ON HOLY BOOKS

They lay in the meadow
between the city and the sea
nearly every one of them
staring at the sun,
all lying in its incredible warmth
some lulled into quiet ecstasy
others dancing in the brightness —
heads raised in adoration
voices calling others to look up
and stare the sun
until all would join their dazzling darkness!

Some called to me,
"Why do you look aside?" . . .
"at candles and caldrons
beacons and beach fires.
They cannot light the sun!
Stare steady with us."

No, I said,
No —
for it is fitting to see the rising sun at dawn
and bless its deepest sunset flame — but otherwise
turn

and look the earth when daylight bids one walk
in the world of hamlets and cities —
or strike out upon the open sea in ships
or plunge beneath the earth
to find there the sun in smaller rays
useful to living — illuminating
penetrating — focalizing — dynamizing
in a million little ways that spell our evolution.

Look out and down and in as well
and behold the sun storing in a blade of grass
transforming in the stomach of a cow
sleeping for epochs in the lump of coal
that leaps to life
that drives the wheels

that carry the lives like yours and mine
forward in space and time.

It is ALL the sun, my friends —
green in grass upon which you lie
ticking in clocks that keep your time
humming in wheels that spin cities into motion —
blowing in winds that bring the clouds and bend the
grain

And most of all it is the sun
pulsing in our bodies making real our minds
that channel spirit-flames
invisible
all-powerful

behind the sun — yes, *behind* the sun
your eyes in their dazzled darkness
in their bright blindness
do not see beyond!

In their bright blindness
do not see beyond!

Come with me instead
and look with width
and breadth
and depth

into the multiplicity of sunlight spangled everywhere
rainbow colored
creative fragmentation, even more creative
integration —
sunlight weaving into the Supreme fabric
of evolutionary synthesis.

Behold the sun
then run with me to the sea
or join in the precious labor of the city
forming and reforming in currents of time and space.
And when the evening falls
and lights come on

it is the sun in yet another form.
And do not forget to walk the countryside in deeper
night

and bask in awe beneath the countless suns
whose distant starshine
points to fields of light transcending
ALL FINITE VISION

PART TWO: THE ALBEDO CONNECTION

Every planetary body is measurable in relation to its reflective light, its "albedo." Earth (Urantia) has an albedo of 0.39, which is to say 39% of the light it receives from the sun is reflected back into space, with 61% received and absorbed. Planets differ greatly in their albedo ratings. Our moon has an albedo of only 7%, bright in the night sky though it may appear. The volcanic Jovian moon, Io, is seven times brighter than our lunar orb! The metaphor is compelling. A revelation is meant to reveal, to illuminate, to make visible and clearer that which is obscure. But revelation of ANY kind is communicated only through an evolutionary "carrier wave." The PRIMARY PROCESS in a revelation derives from a person (usually) — Jesus the archetypal example, and in his case with a high (the highest possible?) albedo factor that reflected, therefore, not upon himself (in any egoistic sense) but back upon others to illuminate their lives in the light of the Father's Way — lives immersed in the totality of existence. Revelation may be a prophet or a child — or even an event in nature pointing beyond itself. If persons or events lead to a book, such as *Bible* or *URANTIA Book* despite differences of transmission and actualization, a SECONDARY PROCESS (at best) takes place, and the albedo will tend to drop. The "carrier wave" (book, now) tends even more than in the case of a visible person to be revered for its own sake — absorbing (to human perception) rather than reflecting light. Of course, this is partly a function of the perceiving person, but also an inherent function of the limitations of the nature of the "carrier wave." Can we believe for a minute that Jesus-as-living-

person was a lesser "carrier wave" than *The URANTIA Book*? Hardly! Yet how difficult it was for people to look and walk with him in his reflective light. To look AT him, revere him, was relatively easy — but that was not the purpose of his illumination. His "reflecting" light for our benefit (in spite of his efforts to orient us correctly) was and is easily ignored.

Now *The URANTIA Book* for all its brightness has a lower inherent albedo than Jesus, than Christ Michael, Creator Son of our local universe! As a carrier of waves of potential revelation (it is *not* revelation per se) the book cannot flex and feedback on personal dimensions as a person can. Therefore, we more easily project our own "darkness" into it as we interact with its symbols, all the while simultaneously revering the book itself rather than allowing it to "reflect" upon us. So-called written revelations are notorious for this trending toward "perceptual idolatry." Even while we learn the Kaaba is empty of the visible and finite, we proceed to fill it with "holy persons" or "holy books" — especially the latter!

There are over the years increasing indications that *The URANTIA Book* itself rather than its reflective light and consequent illuminated lives is taking center stage among many in the Brotherhood. Along with and very much related to this "perspective distortion" comes a dogged refusal to be appropriately self-examining, individually or collectively. Over-indulgent book-study, the confusion of "knowledge" of contents with true self-mastery, and other unhappy trends are therefore easily overlooked. Necessary ego-deflating critical awareness (reflexion) is resisted with defensive sophistries.

What I speak of here is analogous to "watchdog" or monitoring devices and methods within a business or scientific organization the purpose of which is to check procedures and evaluate actual behaviors. We must realize that no system ever does "just one thing." Unintended consequences, directions, and spin-offs are usually if not invariably hard to detect *from within the system*. Monitoring is, therefore, in large part observing from a position outside the system (or subsystem) under examination. An outside agency is called in to "audit the books." In like manner, URANTIA Brotherhood and related activities require "auditing" from many evolutionary and revelatory positions outside of the brotherhood or book per se. In no way does this imply morbid or narcissistic introspection. I refer to, as a proper aspect of high albedo, acts of conscious reflexion, examination, and control made possible by the reflective light thrown back from the book upon our lives, but also in the various lights of ambient illuminations from many different sources. I am convinced that even Thought

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Adjuster "control" is predicated upon just this kind of self-initiated, responsible monitoring.

In neglecting to carry out these appropriate behaviors "in the reflected light," we in turn are most likely to reflect back upon persons and society the very "darkness" that is repressed, suppressed, and in general denied the light of consciousness. Even while avoiding morbid self scrutiny and narcissistic psychological indulgence, there remains a vital need (especially under the brightness of *The URANTIA Book*) for honest doubt and both personal and social self-criticism, understood, of course, as constructive reflective consciousness. In other words, we must be not only free but motivated to think, reflect, evaluate, compare — see ourselves and our social groups as others see us, and reflect thereon in the humble recognition that we are no wiser than others simply because we trustee an (not "our") epochal revelation. On the contrary, with so beautiful a book in our hands and such a tendency to idolize in our hearts and heads, we run greater risks than others of making utter fools of ourselves! How challenged we are to discover and live in everyday ways the deep, inner, living messages pointed to by the book, not to mention the spiritual realities behind it all — and begin to do this without getting hung-up on the "carrier wave," the book itself.

There is a Sufi tale of the wise and venerated teacher who always kept a very large book on his office shelf, but which he would never allow his followers to look into. Upon his death, however, he left in his will the permission for them to examine it at last. Upon opening it, they discovered all the many pages to be blank except the very first upon which was written, "When you have at last learned the difference between the container and the contained, then you shall have wisdom."

—K. David Schluender
Urbana, Indiana

THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION IN PRAYER AND WORSHIP

"The manner in which the Universal Father sojourns with the creatures of time is the most profound of all universe mysteries; the divine presence in the mind of man is the mystery of mysteries." (*26:3) The technique whereby the Thought Adjuster is able to make his eternal presence known to the material mind is a mystery. The method in which the spirit registers the *reality of eternity* in the material mind as an *experience* of "the everlasting now" is a philosophic miracle beyond our understanding. (*1295:1) However, the technique used by the material mind in its reach upward and inward for the experience of the presence of God, the psychological be-

havior of the human mind in fostering its own spiritualization, is not completely beyond our grasp.

Without intention of intruding upon the supremely personal and sacred domain of spiritual experience, this essay will attempt to outline the psychological evolution of religious experience as it is revealed in the progressive development of prayer and worship with a special regard for the role of the creative imagination in the spiritualization of the mind of man. Philosophical discussion and description of spiritual experience reduces such living experience to the levels of psychology with the intention of enlightening thought and with the hope that this enlightenment will contribute to the further growth of spiritual character. "While the mind is not the seat of the spiritual nature, it is indeed the gateway thereto." (*1733:2)

The Alter-ego Concept

"Children, when first learning to make use of language, are prone to think out loud, to express their thoughts in words, even if no one is present to hear them. With the dawn of the creative imagination they evince a tendency to converse with imaginary companions. In this way a budding ego seeks to hold communion with a fictitious *alter ego*. By this technique the child early learns to convert his monologue conversations into psuedo dialogues in which this alter ego makes replies to his verbal thinking and wish expression. Very much of an adult's thinking is mentally carried on in conversational form." (*996:8)

"In time the alter-ego concept is exalted to a superior status of divine dignity, and prayer as an agency of religion has appeared." (*997:1)

"It is altogether fitting that man, when he prays, should strive to grasp the concept of the Universal Father on Paradise; but the more effective technique for most practical purposes will be to revert to the concept of a near-by alter ego, just as the primitive mind was wont to do, and then to recognize that the idea of this alter ego has evolved from a mere fiction to the truth of God's indwelling mortal man in the factual presence of the Adjuster..." (*997:6)

The conversational form of language is the dominant form of thought: to think reflectively usually means to think in the verbal forms of conversation. With the dawn of the creative imagination the child then begins to converse with an alter ego. And this alter ego, the son of the creative imagination, may evolve toward a status of divine dignity, eventually becoming the experiential fact of the eternal presence of God in the temporal mind of man. The divinely ordained (but not necessarily inevitable) destiny of the alter ego from its moment of

conception can only signify the direct intervention of spirit influences, circuits, and entities in the creative imagination and upon the concept of the alter ego.

Adjuster Communication Through the Creative Imagination

It is the action of these spirit forces in the creative imagination which is partially responsible for the mysterious, vital, and dynamic power of the creative imagination. Psychologists are usually prone to declaring that unconscious levels and phases of mind find expression in the self-conscious mind through the imagination. This is the modern explanation for dreams, compulsive behavior, and other psychological behavior. Our spiritual teachers confirm this conclusion, as far as it goes, but make some additional comments regarding the creative imagination.

"Supreme and self-acting Adjusters are often able to contribute factors of spiritual import to the human mind when it flows freely in the liberated but controlled channels of creative imagination." (*1199:3)

"Certain abrupt presentations of thoughts, conclusions, and other pictures of mind are sometimes the direct or indirect work of the Adjuster..." (*1207:3)

"The races on some worlds have one gland, on others two, as do Urantians, while on still other spheres the races have three of these unique bodies. The inherent imagination and spiritual receptivity is definitely influenced by this differential chemical endowment." (*566:7)

"The volunteering Adjuster is ... interested in ... *Spiritual perception*. The prospects of reverential development, the birth and growth of the religious nature. What is the potential of soul, the probable spiritual capacity of receptivity?" (*1186:2)

"We do observe that the more experienced Adjuster is often the indweller of the higher type of human mind; human inheritance must therefore be a considerable factor in determining selection and assignment." (*1185:3)

"True religious worship is not a futile monologue of self-deception. Worship is a personal communion with that which is divinely real, with that which is the very source of reality." (*2095:6)

"Worship is the act of the son's personal communion with the divine Father, the assumption of refreshing, creative, fraternal, and romantic attitudes by the human soul-spirit." (*1616:10)

"The human Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful, and good. All of these attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as the will of the Father in heaven." (*2087:2)

The Thought Adjuster does attempt to communicate, however obliquely or subtly, with the material mind through the creative imagination. This, in fact, seems to be the primary channel of communication with the material mind, since one of the mind attributes in which the Adjuster is very interested is the capacity for spiritual receptivity, which is definitely linked to the human imagination, and which, in turn, is directly influenced by the chemical function of genetic endowment. Worship is not a delusion of the imagination, but a communion with a divine alter ego which is actually indwelt by the spirit of God, the loving gift which the Father makes of himself to the least of his children. Although this spirit may be more or less invisible beneath the surface of the various forms of this divine alter ego, nevertheless, "...the faith-grasp of the God-knowing mortal can achieve the philosophic miracle of the recognition of the Infinite by the finite, the discernment of the eternal God..." (*27:3)

Combined Psychologic and Spiritual Techniques

While we do not understand the spirit technique that directs and adjusts the directionization of the growth of the alter ego towards the actuality of the presence of God, we know that this growth does take place in the creative imagination as far as self-conscious experience is concerned, and in the morontia soul as far as super-conscious experience is concerned.

"Prayer ever has been and ever will be a twofold human experience; a psychologic procedure interassociated with a spiritual technique. And these two functions of prayer can never be fully separated." (*997:5) The psychologic procedure is the intentional focusing of the creative imagination on the reality of God, which faith identifies as the concept/ideal of the divine alter ego. The spiritual technique results in the gradual and evolutionary exaltation of this ideal alter ego in the creative imagination towards ever-ascending levels of perfection — even to the very presence of God. And these two functions can never be fully separated any more than water can be separated from the cells of a living organism. The psychologic procedure and the spirit technique are unified in the creative imagination, in the inner life, in the heart of man, in a living and growing experience.

This is why Jesus always endeavored to teach others to pray from the heart instead of reciting set prayers. Only reluctantly did he teach his apostles formal prayers. Ritual may stimulate the creative imagination in a religious direction initially, but religious formalizations inevitably stagnate and lose their vitality unless the religionist discovers the factual presence of the Father in

personal experience. "It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to *feel the presence of God*." (*1733:1)

This living and personal conversation/communion between the mind of man and the spirit of God through the channel of the alter ego in the creative imagination is entirely dependent upon the choosings of the mortal will. And when an individual chooses to enthrone God in the center of his or her inner life, that individual chooses the will of the Father.

"The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God — with the very God who has made such a creature life of inner meaning-value possible. Sharing is Godlike — divine." (*1221:3)

To know the idea of God is one thing. To worship the ideal of God is another. And to share the temporal, experiential, finite reality of God with the eternal, existential, and absolute Thought Adjuster is still another thing altogether.

—George L. Park
Hampton, Connecticut

UNITY AND HARMONY

The *URANTIA* Book says that, "Harmony is the keynote of the central universe, and detectable order prevails on Paradise." (*301:4) The word harmony is taken from the Greek word "harmos," meaning a fitting, a joining. Interestingly, a synonym for harmony is "unison." As a musician, I have often pondered this association between harmony and unity and have spent much time dealing with the creative experience that leads toward these ideals.

For example, it's intriguing to note the similar patterns existing between the development of civilization on our planet and the evolution of music from around the 6th century to the present. When Andon and Fonta were rearing their family, they "...evinced a very marked clannish spirit; they hunted in groups and never strayed very far from the homesite. They seemed to realize that they were an isolated and unique group of living beings and should therefore avoid becoming separated." (*713:4) The words clannish, isolated, and unique remind me of the monks living and working in the monasteries of medieval Europe. Listening to the Gregorian chants composed and sung then, I imagine a life of simplicity, plainness, a gentle flow of communication between the singer and the listener, the creator

and the created. So it is between the newborn infant and his parents, a pure sharing, a sympathetic unity, a harmony. Food and shelter are necessary for physical sustenance, but in order for the soul to flower — love, guidance, and support must always be present. These elements fit together, harmonize, very efficiently as long as there is cooperation; cooperation between parents and children, between families, between God and man.

Cooperation Must be Learned

"But co-operation is not a natural trait of man; he learns to co-operate first through fear and then later because he discovers it is most beneficial in meeting the difficulties of time and guarding against the supposed perils of eternity." (*764:1) Early musicians learned through experimentation that some intervals such as octaves, fifths, fourths, and thirds were consonant to the ear; that melodies cooperating with each other were more expressive than monody. Music developed from the unified undulations of Gregorian chant to two and three part songs and accompanied melodies. Music-making encouraged socialization simply because the songs required more than one person to perform. The composer worked with the performers who, in turn, communicated the musical ideas to an audience. The development of music and civilization progressed from the state of exclusion to the stage of inclusion.

"Throughout the earlier ages of any world, competition is essential to progressive civilization. As the evolution of man progresses, co-operation becomes increasingly effective. In advanced civilizations co-operation is more efficient than competition. Early man is stimulated by competition. Early evolution is characterized by the survival of the biologically fit, but later civilizations are the better promoted by intelligent co-operation, understanding fraternity, and spiritual brotherhood." (*805:4) Think of a fine chamber music group such as the Juilliard String Quartet. Each member of that august group is a superb technician, a sensitive artist. They each enjoy a brilliant solo career and have achieved a high state of the art through intense competition, but some of the finest music, specifically Mozart and Haydn string quartets, cannot be played by one instrumentalist. In order for them to function as a quartet, four individuals must be so firmly secure in their own sense of identity and technical proficiency that they have a desire, indeed an urge, to go beyond themselves to work together in creating a universe of sounds that is far beyond even the sum of their unique contributions. "The group potential is always far in excess of the simple sum of the attributes of the component individuals." (*113:4)

With the picture and the sounds in your imagination of a string quartet rehearsing together, think of the relationship between harmony (unison) and chaos. To the unschooled observer, the black marks on the page of music would appear to be unintelligible. To the neophyte listener the rehearsal would seem chaotic, often even argumentative, as the players assert their individual interpretive ideas to the group. However, to an observer who is musically literate and who has watched or even participated in a chamber music rehearsal before, the process would be perfectly clear and predictable. "The attainment of completed spiritual insight enables the ascending personality to detect harmony in what was theretofore chaos." (*1306:8) There seems to be a discernable pattern between a chamber music group playing string quartets and Paradise administration. "All Paradise conduct is wholly spontaneous, in every sense natural and free. But there still is a proper and perfect way of doing things in the eternal Isle..." (*301:5)

Music is a Universal Language

As civilization becomes more complex, as communication becomes at the same time more possible and more difficult, we continue to struggle for a common language. We yearn for a clarity of understanding on our planet. We are told that "Forever, music will remain the universal language of men, angels, and spirits. Harmony is the speech of Havona." (*500:6) Music has the power to convey ideas and emotions that are inexpressible in any other way.

"The maintenance of world-wide civilization is dependent on human beings learning how to live together in peace and fraternity." (*910:2) In thinking about this statement and James Zebedee's question, "Master, how shall we learn to see alike and thereby enjoy more harmony among ourselves?" (*1591:4), I find guidance in my experience as a singer. The vocal sounds I produce are unique to me. Through study, practice, and competition my skills have been developed and refined.

When I join with other like-minded singers to create vocal chamber music we join our individual voices to create a myriad of sounds none of us could possibly produce alone. If we work together in happiness and harmony towards a unison idea of following the intent of the composer and enhancing that intent with our unprecedented blend of sound, musicality, and intellect we are indeed creating a spiritual likeness. As Jesus said to James, "I do not desire that social harmony and fraternal peace shall be purchased by the sacrifice of free personality and spiritual originality. What I require of you, my apostles, is *spirit unity* — and that you can experience in the joy of your united dedication to the whole-hearted doing of the will of my Father in heaven. You do not have to see alike or feel alike or even think alike in order spiritually to *be alike*." (*1591:4)

Those of us who are musicians and who have worked together in chamber groups are aware that sometimes we achieve an unspeakable feeling of unity as we go about our business of making music. For URANTIA Book readers, the experience of being sons and daughters of God is very real. "The unity of religious experience among a social or racial group derives from the identical nature of the God fragment indwelling the individual. . . . A group of mortals can experience spiritual unity, but they can never attain philosophic uniformity." (*1129:4)

We have looked briefly at the relationship between harmony and unity and the creative experience of the search for, and attainment of, these ideals. How important is the attainment of this goal in our daily lives? I think it is a vital contribution to the growth of God the Supreme. Certainly in a personal, national, and global sense we have a long way to go before we achieve Light and Life; but the urge is relentless and unquenchable. As we meet and work with other like-minded individuals we have the privilege of reaching down while reaching up and out to other helping hands who are also struggling for evolutionary perfection.

—Eileen Laurence
Armonk, New York

"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." (*1293:2)
