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This Special Conference Issue of The URANTIAN Journal of URANTIA Brotherhood is made possible by the sincere, honest, and thoughtful efforts of many of the participants in this past summer's General Conference in Colorado. Unfortunately, time and budget restraints precluded the inclusion of all of the highly worthy talks and presentations given at Snowmass. However, we hope that those articles which follow will fully represent the spirit of the conference theme of "The Individual's Relationship With The Universal Father."

The Editors

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"But you who have been called out of darkness into the light are expected to believe with a whole heart; your faith shall dominate the combined attitudes of body, mind, and spirit." (*1733:6)

—Jesus

"This is my beloved Son; give heed to him." (*1754:1)

—The Universal Father

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FATHER'S WILL

We are taught that "One is free to choose and act only within the realm of one's consciousness." (*377:5) The sincere study of *The URANTIA Book* has produced, for many of us, a genuine expansion of consciousness, introducing new possibilities for choice and action, particularly with respect to God. The concepts we have about the Universal Father must necessarily condition our experience of relationship with him. When God is small and far removed it is difficult to rely upon him to any great extent. But the Universal Father of *The URANTIA Book* is found to be infinitely loving, infinitely powerful, and the closest and dearest friend any of us shall ever know. We are given a philosophic foundation upon which we may exercise a level of childlike trust in God which far exceeds what was previously possible for us. But philosophy is not faith. This expanded life with the Father is not automatic; we must each choose to have it. Each of us is a freewill being, at least with respect to that which is spiritual. We are not compelled to either seek or do the Father's will; it must be a matter of voluntary, genuine, and wholehearted personal choice. We are obliged to confront and answer the question: Do we really want to do the Father's will?

What do we know about the Father's will? Quite a lot really, at least in the general sense. We know that the Father's will involves such concepts as truth, beauty, and goodness; it is associated with the positive elements of relationship: love, service, devotion, mercy, kindness, loyalty, patience, sincerity, etc. We know that his will is not self-centered or self-seeking but outgoing, sharing, and giving. And we know that it utterly transcends our human conception of these values, for it is the kind of will which loves and serves even a so-called enemy. In the will of God there is no provision for human intolerance or unfairness, not to mention anger, hate, and revenge. On the contrary, the Father's will implies a devoted life of unselfish and wholehearted service which is freely given as, when, and where required. But it is not sentimental or foolish. It does not condone idleness, immaturity, or the pursuit of that which is evil. The Father's will requires real courage, persistent effort,

and above all a living and personal faith. We know it is a high ideal, a grand and inexpressibly glorious purpose, and that it can really be understood only by being lived. And we further know that it is ours for the asking, if we truly desire to have it. Whatever the specific and personal nature of the Father's will for us, it is certain to be reflective of these general qualities.

So, do we really want to do the Father's will? Do these generalities provide us with enough information to formulate a decision? Of course what is being asked may seem impossibly high; we may fear that we are not capable of living life on such an exalted level of loving service. Many of us have probably experienced enough of our own faults and failures to cause us to doubt our ability to live in such a manner, even if we sincerely wanted to. The real question, however, is not *can we do it* but rather *do we really want to do it*? Do we want to give ourselves to the Father to love and serve as *he* directs, and with all that this implies. There are two ways of answering yes to this question: partial and wholehearted. The partial acceptance of this offer is not hard to come to; we all have the desire to seek the Father's will to some degree. But the wholehearted and unstinted response is quite another matter. In the face of well-known human limitations, mind alone is likely to be of little use. Only a genuine and trusting personal faith in the amazing promises of the Father can really free us to accept the privilege of the wholehearted doing of his will. "But I say to you in all sincerity: Unless you seek entrance into the kingdom with the faith and trusting dependence of a little child, you shall in no wise gain admission." (*1536:4)

Battle doubt with faith.

Are we capable of living as the Father asks us to? Jesus consistently taught that the ability to do the Father's will could not be self-attained. He always taught that such an ability was a *gift*, a *bestowal*, or an *endowment*, freely given by the Father to each of his children who sincerely desires it and who will, in faith, ask for it (see p. 1609). The Father never asks us to do the impossible. If we really trust him and decide to do as he asks, he will provide us with all the tools we require to accomplish his assignments. Just how this can be is not mind-comprehensible; these are spirit transactions and they transcend the capacity of our minds. Nevertheless, whoever sincerely desires to live the will of God and who will, by faith, accept the Father's gift of spiritual power, is certain to experience the reality of these promises. The chief barrier to this realization is doubt. "The believer has only one battle, and that is against doubt — unbelief." (*1766:4)

While the doing of the Father's will is accomplished by the endowments of the spirit, the purpose of this bestowal of ability is not the attainment of a life of static

and blissful ease. When the power of doing God's will is given, it is for the actual doing of that will. It is certain that all who have the faith to accept this greatest of all gifts will immediately be assigned to the Father's service. It is equally certain that this service will be difficult and demanding. Yet at the same time there may also be experienced the "peace which passes understanding." Difficulty and tranquillity might seem an incompatible combination when examined by the logic of mind. But in the faith experience of those who have chosen to wholeheartedly seek and do the Father's will these elements often find an inexplicable and transforming union. There is no knowing just where the Father's leading is going to take us, except to say that it will certainly lead down vigorous paths of genuine self-forgetfulness, wholehearted loving service, and divine assurance. "In entering the kingdom, you cannot escape its responsibilities or avoid its obligations, but remember: The gospel yoke is easy, and the burden of truth is light." (*1766:3)

Again, are we really interested in doing the Father's will? It is a commonplace observation that human beings, given a choice, will focus their attention upon matters which interest them. Some people have an interest in sports, so they devote considerable time to thinking and talking about sports. Others are interested in music or movies, and they think and talk about these things. But who consistently directs attention to the Father's will? Do you observe that when students of *The URANTIA Book* gather together, whether for study or fellowship, that the frequent topic of serious inquiry is the knowing and doing of the Father's will? And in our family life, with our close friends, or with passing acquaintances, do we often consider and discuss the Father's will? Jesus was always thinking and talking about the Father's will, and we are called to follow him. Can we expect to make progress in this domain without giving regular and genuine attention to it? "Even to approach the knowing of a divine personality, all of man's personality endowments must be wholly consecrated to the effort; halfhearted, partial devotion will be unavailing." (*30:4)

Those of us who have, at this early date, been brought to *The URANTIA Book* are a truly blessed generation. We have been called out to be champions for the Universal Father - our Father - the God of all creation. We have been offered the unparalleled opportunity to live the remainder of our lives as representatives of the Father, to know and do his will. Many of our fellows sit in darkness, in near complete ignorance of even the existence of this kind of life, but for us it is an immediate possibility. We have a matchless text to inspire and instruct us, we have a multiplicity of spiritual forces to guide and sustain us, and we have each other. What more do we require? It is hoped that future days will witness a growing preoccupation on our part with the question of knowing and doing the Father's will. This inexhaustible subject sorely needs the attention of sin-

cere and interested sons and daughters. It is also hoped that we shall learn to use more of our time together to encourage one another to go forward on this endless journey, to continually grow in our willingness and ability to always say: "It is my will that your will be done."

The doing of the Father's will, then, is first a question of wholehearted desire, next of the faith acceptance of spiritual power, and lastly of continued seeking of the Father's way. The will of God can be done by anyone who truly desires to do it. Would the Father ask us to do that which we were incapable of doing? But we must be willing to seek his guidance continually and to rely upon him completely. If we truly want to love and serve, if we really wish to work for the establishment of the unseen Father's universal family, then we can and will be empowered to do so. This empowering is the rebirth of the spirit; one is born again. Everything becomes new. These are the liberated sons and daughters of God, the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the free and liberated members of the infinite family of the Universal Father.

—Steve Dreier
Teaneck, New Jersey

PRINCIPLES OF KNOWING GOD'S WILL

Ships and airplanes that move across continents and oceans have highly sophisticated guidance systems to assist them in arriving at their destinations. These systems allow the pilot to make course corrections totally without reference to land objects. Most of them work off of gyroscopes; there are inertial guidance systems, dopplar guidance systems, and stellar guidance systems. Whatever their design the purpose of these systems is to keep the ship on course.

The first principle of divine guidance is to make sure that we are inwardly certain that God has given each of us an on-board guidance system which is capable of leading us to where we ought to go. If human beings, within thirty years of the discovery of the transistor, have been able to devise guidance systems that will allow a cruise missile to travel 5000 miles and hit the dining room of the Kremlin, surely the Original Source of intelligence is capable of designing a suitable system to permit his children to know what his desires are.

God wants to lead his children. Being led is not an extraordinary event, reserved for mystics and ascetics; rather, it is the normal order of things. It is abnormal not to be led by God. The subject is so confused that most people look upon guidance, if one is ever to receive it, as an intermittent, periodic, or even spasmodic affair. Well, if a human parent wants his child to do

something, he tells him so; and, if that's a fair principle in human relations, it is also fair in divine relations.

There is a perfect will which God has for each of us. *The URANTIA Book* teaches that the Adjusters come to indwell us, bringing with them, "... the model careers, the ideal lives, as determined and foreordained by themselves and the Personalized Adjusters of Divington. . . . Thus they begin work with a definite and predetermined plan for the intellectual and spiritual development of their human subjects. . . ." (*1204:5)

Things run well when they are run in accordance with the designer's original intent. If I had a Corvette, and hitched an eight row plow behind it, and took it out to the fields to cultivate, I shouldn't expect it to perform as well as it does where it was intended to be operated, namely, on the highway. If I tried to use water instead of gasoline to fuel it, it wouldn't get far. Likewise, we are happiest and most successful when we operate according to our Designer's original plan. Therefore, we search for God's perfect will for us, knowing that his will is our place of ultimate success and pleasure. Similarly, if we live contrary to God's design, we heap onto ourselves unhappiness, guilt, and frustration.

Do we trust God's goodness? If we don't, we won't be able to accept the guidance he has for us, because we will not believe that it is in our best interests to do so — somebody else's best interests possibly, but not ours; and so we begin to search for a rationale not to do what we know is right. We must believe that God is a good God, not filled with the malice, vindictiveness, or shortsightedness which actuates human beings, as the ancient Greeks believed their gods to be motivated by. As we progressively understand the nature of God, we learn that he would never do anything to harm us. Neither does God ever deprive us of anything that might be essential or needful for our well-being.

The Grace of God

God's will is good: it's what we would want for ourselves if we could only see the larger picture. When we are held back from a possession, or an experience, it is invariably for our own good. How many times have each of us longed with all our hearts for something, not received it, and a year or so down the pike been thankful that it didn't work out? The most dramatic example of that experience for me happened while I was in college. I went to Panama with my father, who was negotiating the purchase of a large tract of tropical timberland there, bounded by the Pacific on the south, two rivers east and west, and a mountain range to the north, consisting of about 125,000 acres. They were only asking \$12 per acre, and the trees in that forest, never having been cut, averaged more than six feet across. We were both very disappointed when he couldn't arrange financing for the purchase of the property, in spite of expropriation insurance

from AID, in that we had visions of setting up a big timber operation which would export logs to Japan. Some seven or eight years later, I learned that the sellers had been making a living for years by selling that tract at what looked like a bargain price to buyers, accepting a large down payment, taking back a purchase money mortgage and then murdering the buyer. After receiving the down payment they would take the buyers to the property, ostensibly for a further tour, and abandon them to the tender mercies of the murderous Choc Indians who lived nearby, whom the settlers had previously incited. With the buyers dead, payments would cease to be made on the purchase money mortgage and the tract would revert to the sellers who would then repeat the process. We couldn't understand at the time why we hadn't been successful, but in retrospect it was by the grace of God.

God's will is always best for us, but it often isn't the easiest or most comfortable way, at least initially. He might put us through a course of training that is grueling, but nonetheless necessary. The high school football coach runs his players in summer training to the point of dropping in the August heat, but without toughening up the players, they would stand no chance of winning games.

We shouldn't think that God is holding something back from us. That was what Lucifer told his associates, namely, that God was depriving them of total liberty and self-rule NOW. If anything is being withheld from us by God, it is for our own good.

God causes all things to work together for good, and not just for those who love him and who are called according to his purposes, as the Bible says. He causes circumstances to work together for good for all of his children, regardless of whether they love or serve him. This doesn't mean that the circumstances are necessarily good in themselves, but that he can *make* them into good. We allow him to make circumstances good by submitting to his will, which is our best possible alternative in any given situation. We must recognize that God is active and alive in our lives and seeking to help us to the maximum extent. Situations arise which require choice: we come to a fork in the road, which way do we go? Now there isn't any teaching of *The URANTIA Book* that tells us it would be better to work for IBM rather than Xerox or that we should move to Des Moines rather than Dubuque. Let's say that God has something for me to do in Des Moines, but I go to Dubuque instead. If I have sincerely sought the Father's will in the matter, and honestly chosen what I believe his will to be, he will make my errors right. He will create in Dubuque the opportunity which will work to my highest good, and capitalize to the maximum extent on my being there even though according to his perfect will, I should have been in Des Moines, and mistook what I believed his will to be. If our decision was made in sincere faith, we grow

regardless of whether the decision itself is right or wrong. We can learn as much from our mistakes as we can from our successes, if we approach them in faith. In fact, deep wisdom seems to be more effectively learned in failure, rather than success. *The URANTIA Book* teaches that "Defeat is the true mirror in which you may honestly view your real self." (*1740:5)

When we truly know in our innermost being that God is good, we offer him our lives; we become willing to go anywhere, do anything, be anything in his service. Knowing that God shapes every circumstance for good gives us enormous confidence, for whatever happens, we know that God will make it good for us. In his will, we can't lose. We cease trying to fight life or to engineer some particular personal result by our activities, rather saying, "Father, what pleases you?"

This leads to another principle of receiving clear guidance, which is to avoid having set, preconceived opinions about how we expect events to turn out. We must cease having a mind of our own in the matter before us. We must not come before God as an advocate of any particular position. The object is not to get what we want, but what he wants. What would we be accomplishing anyway, if hypothetically we were successful in persuading God to do other than his perfect will? The only result would be lessened benefit or outright harm, both to ourselves and to all others involved in the situation. Our desire should be to find that which is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, whatever path it takes us down, and whatever the consequences to our self-concept or pride.

If I already have my mind made up that what I need is the job, the house, the money, then I'm not really asking God for his will to be done, but for permission from him to do what I want to do anyway. Instead of trying to talk God out of something, we should aspire to live in conformity with his plans.

Wholehearted Trust

We must trust God completely, and accept his will in full. He doesn't lay his will out like food on a cafeteria line, from which we can choose the spinach, skip the beets, take some corn, but not the asparagus. When he reveals his will to us, he expects us to act on that revelation. In fact, if he were to reveal to us aspects of his will which in his omniscience he knew that we were not going to live up to, he would be heaping condemnation on our heads, for as *The URANTIA Book* teaches, to know and not to do is sin. Obviously, not desiring to create a condition of sin in us, he reveals his will to us only in amounts which he knows that we are capable of successfully carrying out. The sin of Adam and Eve was the mixing of good and evil, the mixing of God's will with their own desires. Our following of God must be 100%. To follow him 99% of the time is not obedience, nor sur-

render, and is different only in degree from following him only 1% of the time. *The URANTIA Book* teaches that God is a God of supreme loyalties, who desires either all of our loyalty or none. We either follow and obey him, and have our lives dedicated to him, or not. I might emphasize that I'm not talking about eternal survival here, where only the faintest flicker of faith can save us, but about the full walk with God, which is the vocation to which we are all called.

We shouldn't ever think that we are confronted with a situation which requires a departure from God's will; that somehow his ways do not apply in a particular case, or that we, being closer, see aspects of the problem that God doesn't see. His will is always perfect. We must not compartmentalize God, and leave him out of any aspect of our lives. His will is as valid in our business life as it is in our family life.

Neither should we worry that God is unable to get through to us. The one who created intelligence in the first place can come up with a way to make his will known to his children. God is not limited in any way. He can use any of the resources available to him (which is everything) to get through to us. In a more spectacular vein, he might send an angel to see us; he might cause a friend to give us important advice; he might cause a particular part of *The URANTIA Book* or the Bible to come alive in our souls; he might send a stranger to deliver us a message. He might even call us on the telephone, and if that sounds strange, is it really any stranger than him giving us a 2000 page book. He could place an ad in the local newspaper. He can speak to us through circumstance, or the still small voice. God is absolutely unlimited in his ability to get through to us, and we should put our minds at rest concerning his ability to do so. He knows us, where we live, what clothes we have in our closets, what cars we drive, who our friends are, and what our problems and opportunities are. Even though from time to time he may choose to communicate with us through exotic means, ordinarily all of the basic guidance we need we can find in *The URANTIA Book*. There, guidance is objective. Even though readers sometimes debate interpretations of certain parts of *The URANTIA Book*, at least it is there in black and white, and, generally speaking, long-time readers interpret passages about the same. I can't imagine God ever leading any of us contrary to his teachings in *The URANTIA Book*, and for that reason it should be our least suspect form of guidance. All other forms of leading are more subjective and hence open to interpretation, being colored by the psychological pressure of the clamoring of our insistent human wills. What somebody else tells us may be wrong; we may misunderstand circumstances; the tingles up our spine may have come from a draft, rather than spiritual leading.

For that reason, in searching for a knowledge of God's will, we should all have a systematic program of

URANTIA Book study. If we were studying a technical course such as mathematics, we would obviously not want to concentrate on multiplication to the exclusion of subtraction. Likewise, if we believe that *The URANTIA Book* is the word of God to us, we should spend a lot of time learning what it says about things. We must make sure that as the years pass, we make definite progress in our spiritual understanding. *The URANTIA Book* will never disappoint us. What it tells us to do won't necessarily be the easy way, but it will always be the right way, which ensures, in turn, that it will be the most pleasant and profitable way for us in the long run. It will always be the way of wisdom and success when seen from the downstream side of the situation. And what is wisdom but being able to see the long-term perspective of events, thus being empowered with foreknowledge as to how to act so as to bring about the desired result?

Jesus gave us a Law of Use, namely, that to those who have, more shall be given, but from those who have not, even that which they have shall be taken away (*1876:5). What we don't exercise, we lose. By the end of my high school years, I was fluent in French and German, but guess what has happened to them after 15 years of disuse? We gain our spiritual growth by practice, just as we gain our mastery of a foreign language, and that practice is the practice of the presence of God; sharing our inner life with God and making him a part of all that we do.

All of us have been given the ability to know the will of God because God himself lives within us. The kingdom of heaven is within. There is no possible deprivation of environment which will impede the success of a soul dedicated to the doing of the Father's will. It is the desire of our heavenly Parent to guide us, and the possibility of receiving that guidance is our birthright.

No Shortcuts

Our decision-making should not be skewed on the basis of what our minds think of as the most pleasant alternative. What God wants is good, and what he doesn't want represents degrees of evil. If we want to do his will we must learn what *he* thinks is good, and what *he* thinks is not good. His value system is totally different than that of the world. The world says, "Go after riches, power and fame." Jesus taught us to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and all things needful will be added to us. There aren't any shortcuts; we must submit ourselves to God and begin the process of learning to do his will.

There is a general guidance available to all of us, which is, and ever will be, true; such as is found in the spiritual teachings of *The URANTIA Book*. It will never be right to steal, and if our supposed divine inspiration tells us to do so, we deceive ourselves. In addition to that general guidance, there is a specific guidance which

God has for each of us, uniquely intended for the person concerned. Honesty, mercy, and love, for example, are not normally guides to whether we should move to Des Moines or Dubuque. Specific guidance gives us course changes on a very intimate basis. The steps to receiving this guidance are: first, that we believe that God is actively involved in our lives; second, that he has a will for us; third, that his will is the best thing that could happen to us; fourth, that he is capable, in the manner of his choosing, of making his wishes known to us; and fifth, that he has endowed us with the ability to do his will. Ordinarily, the measure of the refinement of our guidance will be the measure of the refinement of our walk with God. If we are coarse towards him, our leading will be coarse; but, if we are refined in our attempts to follow his ways, if we are tender toward God and compassionate toward our brothers and sisters, our leading will likewise be refined.

One of our best inner guides to knowing God's will as it relates to a particular situation is whether his peace is resting with us, that peace which Jesus described as the peace that passes all understanding. This is peace that doesn't depend on whether the sun is shining, or whether we got the raise, or whether the landlord raised the rent, or on whether we seem to be successful or not. His peace is inner; we are being led, motivated, and guided from within. One of the main characteristics of this peace, once we have experienced it, is that we are highly uncomfortable when we lose it. It functions like physical pain. Individuals born without the ability to feel pain stay in jeopardy of fatal injuries, because they don't know when their bodies are being hurt. God's peace is our gyroscope, telling us when we get off course. When we walk in the light as he is in the light, we experience his peace, but if we sin, the peace at least temporarily leaves us. When we return to the Father, when we renew a right relationship with the universe, his peace returns. To continually experience this inner peace, we must maintain a conscience void of offense. Is there *anything* worth disrupting our relationship with God? *The URANTIA Book* teaches that Jesus made such extraordinary progress in the conquest of his mind in one short life because of his singleness of purpose and unselfish devotion. He was wholly consecrated, unreservedly dedicated to the doing of his Father's will. "In his devotion to the cause of the kingdom, Jesus burned all bridges behind him; he sacrificed all hindrances to the doing of his Father's will." (*2093:2)

Jesus taught that all we have to do is live loyally today, and tomorrow will take care of itself. The things he leads us to do today will turn out to have been right somewhere down the pike, even if it takes years or generations. We don't have to have the reason for a particular course of action spelled out; all we have to do is make sure that we live loyally and abide in his peace.

We should be thankful that God doesn't always make

his will crystal-clear to us. He could send down an angel to unroll a scroll, whereon a message written in Old English script would instruct us as to what we should do in a particular situation. But that would deprive us of the adventure of finding out his will by trial and error. We would become puppetized. Instead, God teaches us by the more difficult but surer method of "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." We have to learn about his nature in order to understand his will, and in so learning we become more like him. We must be still and know that God is God. When and as we do, we will hear the still small voice, which will speak to us at every crossroads, saying, "This is the way."

Do we get our guidance from God or from the world? If Joe down the street puts in a swimming pool do we feel that we should too, even though we can't afford it? How much are we led by fashions, not only in dress, but in ideas? The world pressures people to conform to it, and sends them into what *The URANTIA Book* calls "industrial servitude" by inducing them to purchase, on credit, goods they don't really need. Our guidance should come from God, not Gucci.

Occasionally, we become faced with big decisions: to move to another town, to change our employment, to go into a new business, to marry, and so forth. In such cases, we don't want any possibility of error; we want to be certain that we have a correct reading of the Father's will. In such situations we can expect God to confirm his guidance to us by repetition. Different episodes of his guidance will complement and intersect with each other. We get an inner feeling on the matter, then we ask the counsel of spiritually-minded friends. From the human perspective, we see that the decision makes good common sense. We feel at peace with God about it. Finally, circumstances may open up in such a way as to facilitate the endeavor. We are not out of line to ask God for his clear, unmistakable guidance before we make a radical change in our lifestyle, and we should not be in a hurry about it. He will use different witnesses to confirm his will to us.

Seek Spiritual Counsel

In seeking wise counsel concerning a spiritual problem, we need to talk with spiritual people; one of Judas's problems was that when he felt that he had to talk with someone, he sought out unspiritual people. However, many of our problems are more technical in nature and here we must seek advice from people competent in their fields. I would far rather be operated on by a competent atheist physician than by John Hales, since surgery is not his field of specialty.

Circumstances can be a witness to us. Jesus had been thinking about taking a trip through the Roman Empire, and along came Ganid and Gonod with an offer. Jesus was interested in working in an executive capacity, and

in seeing Persia, and along came an opportunity to manage a caravan going that way. Not overmuch reliance should be placed on circumstances; they can be totally misleading. The fact that things are arrayed against us may only mean that God is giving us an opportunity to overcome them. Your alarm clock doesn't go off, you sleep late, and miss the plane. Were you meant to, was it God's will that you miss the flight? Not necessarily, maybe you just need a new alarm clock. We shouldn't necessarily alter our course of action due to obstacles. More often, circumstances can be helpful in leading us by revealing opportunities. *The URANTIA Book* teaches that Jesus led his life in the channel of its natural flowing. We should not and could not avail ourselves of every situation that opens up for us, but when other conditions of guidance are met, circumstances can be an additional signpost. I used to work staking out drainage ditches in the swamps of eastern North Carolina. I would sight through the transit, and my helper would be a distance away with an arm-load of straight five foot wooden sticks, which he would drive into the ground when I waved my hat at him in a certain way to indicate that he was on course. After he had driven as many as four stakes in the same line, he no longer needed my help from behind the transit, for all he had to do was sight down the row of stakes to get a line straighter than the dragline operator was capable of digging. Coming into a harbor, the pilot often lines up the buoy lights to keep himself in the channel. In seeking spiritual guidance, we need to look for the different ways in which God guides us to line up, to confirm, and complement each other. Until we receive such confirming guidance, we should not radically change our life-style. We should keep doing what we are doing until God tells us otherwise: "Whatsoever your hands find to do, do it with all your might."

God normally discloses his will to us incrementally, step by step. We take the right step today and he shows us the right step tomorrow. In order for the step which he intends to show us tomorrow to be valid, we must have taken the step he gave us today. His will is progressively revealed as we follow what he has already given us. In practice, this means that we must live according to the principles of the kingdom; we must serve our fellows. We must give the bread of life to a hungry world; we must use all the resources at our command to help our fellows: in mind, body, and estate. When we are encased in selfishness, only concerned about our personal plans and schemes, we can hardly receive guidance; but when we help others, we find that we ourselves are helped. If we give, it will be given unto us, if we seek the good of others, good will return our way.

The Kingdom First

A key principle of guidance is humility. Since pride is the greatest sin, perhaps humility is the greatest virtue.

Pride says, "I can manage my affairs very nicely on my own without you, God." But God cannot lead a person intent on leading himself, who says, in essence, "I think I know more about the situation than God does." If we think that we have a better grasp of our destiny than God does, we are not candidates for guidance. On the other hand, if we humble ourselves he exalts us. When we humbly ask him to teach us, he rewards us by showing us his ways. We should come to God and say, "Father, I want to do it your way, for I know that yours is the best way, not just for me, but for all concerned." When we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all other things needful are added to us.

The most all-embracing principle of receiving God's guidance is to know the Guide. It is far better to understand how God does things than it is to have a specific answer to a specific question. It's better to have the Guide with us all the way than to have even a detailed roadmap. God will never lead us contrary to his nature, so the more we know about his nature, the better qualified we are to receive his guidance. The Jewish leaders, even though they had spent their lives in religious pursuits, made the worst error imaginable by crucifying Jesus, because they did not know God. God would much rather have us love one another than be precise in our doctrinal interpretations. Doctrine exists in the mind, whereas love lives in the soul.

When we know the way God acts and who he is, he guides us subtly and unconsciously, because we are responding to his nature. On the other hand, if we don't know God, we stand an excellent chance of misunderstanding whatever guidance he might give us, because we won't be capable of interpreting what we hear. As we practice the presence of God, his nature becomes grafted onto ours. We become more like him, and following his will becomes more of an outflowing of what we have become. The deepest part of each one of us must become wrapped up in God himself: there must be implicit trust of the Father, without even a shadow of suspicion that he isn't there, or that he doesn't care, or that he's not able to help.

Finally, we must remember that guidance, and the ability to follow it, is a gift of God, which we cannot psych ourselves into on our own. We receive these gifts, we don't generate them on our own. The ability to hear and follow God is an endowment. As *The URANTIA Book* teaches, "By the old way you seek to suppress, obey, and conform to the rules of living; by the new way 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 so are you endowed with the power of the certain and joyous performance of the gracious, acceptable, and perfect will of God." (*1609:6)

—Harry McMullan III
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

THE INDIVIDUAL'S RELATION TO THE THOUGHT ADJUSTER

I see before me today a rather representative group of Andon and Fonta's descendants. You have come from practically every state of these United States and from several foreign countries. Each one of you is indwelt by a Thought Adjuster and each one of you has the gift of Jesus' Spirit of Truth. Each one of you is engaged in the tremendous adventure of knowing and doing the Father's will. Each one of you has traversed part of the course or life plan prepared for you by your Adjuster and continually illuminated by him for you. With your consent and by your decisions he is gradually unraveling it before your eyes of faith. Already, by loving service, you are adjusting the ancestral tendencies of living to the demands of the spiritual urges initiated by the divine presence of the Mystery Monitor.

Because you have learned to yield spiritual allegiance to but one master and are making a devoted effort to realize eternal destiny - you have found that you can enjoy a light-hearted and joyous life and an honorable and successful career on earth. You have to thank your Adjuster for this because besides improving, modifying, adjusting, and coordinating your thinking processes he has been building up a spiritual counterpart of yourself, a morontia transcript of your true advancing self—your soul. Because of your decisions, determinations, and steadfast faith he has been piloting you through this mortal life toward the shores of eternal survival. The courtship which you are now engaged in has, like almost all courtships, had its ups and downs, not because of Him but because of your own intellectual and emotional difficulties. But you are persevering in the courtship. He is assisting you in ceasing to resist and if you prove faithful to the trust reposed in you by the Divine Spirit who seeks your mind and soul in eternal union, there will eventually ensue that morontia oneness, that supernal harmony, that divine attunement, that celestial fusion, that never-ending blending of identity, that oneness of being which is so perfect and final that even the most experienced personalities can never segregate or recognize as separate entities the fusion partners — mortal man and divine Adjuster.

The new being that ensues is of the eternal past as well as for the eternal future. And it will require an eternity of the future for your Adjuster ever completely to endow the personality partnership with the meanings and values which the divine Monitor carries forward from the eternity of the past. What a romance! What a life! What an adventure! The life that you are now living on earth is almost as if you had already died, attained an audience with the Father on Paradise, and had volunteered to return to the earth for a few days, a few

months, or for a few years to spread the good news and to help out.

How did you arrive at this happy estate? What has happened during the past one million years and your own lifetime to bring this about? What are you? Who are you? Where do you go from here?

About one million years ago a relationship between an individual on this planet and a Thought Adjuster became possible. Because at that time, human, self-conscious mind suddenly appeared for the first time on Urantia. It appeared in twins born to primate parents. After deciding at about nine years of age to live with and for each other they finally decided to flee from their inferior animal associates and to journey northward. This human mind functioning was the result of the seven adjutant mind spirits assigned to Urantia culminating now with contact upon their minds by the spirit of worship and the spirit of wisdom. And so the first message from Salvington over the newly established mind circuit of the planet that the first decision of mind — the human type of mind — had been noted on Urantia. Thus was the stage set with the opportunity for the first possible relationship between a human individual on this planet and a Thought Adjuster. We do not know exactly when Thought Adjusters came to the twins but it was undoubtedly at the time of one of their momentous decisions either to live together and to take care of each other or to flee northward from their animal associates. The Life Carrier resident on Urantia says that their vague feeling of being something more than animals was due to the possession of personality and was augmented by the indwelling presence of the Thought Adjusters.

Dual mind, one will

Your relationship with your Thought Adjuster has to do with your mind and your free will. Since the object of your mind is truth and God is the essence of truth a relationship between your mind and the Thought Adjuster is easily and naturally developed once he comes to you. The Adjuster is not trying to control your thinking, as such, but to spiritualize it, to eternalize it. Adjusters are not devoted directly to influencing human thought; that is your exclusive personality prerogative. The Adjusters are dedicated to improving, modifying, adjusting, and coordinating your thinking processes. Crudely put, the Adjuster's action for the mind might be compared to the action of the little black box for the computer — it is programed by man to improve, modify, adjust, and coordinate the computer's functions. Beyond that the example falls completely short because the Adjuster is a particle of God the Father and is God's will. Mind is not only the arena in which the Adjuster operates but is also the very partner of the Adjuster in the formation of the soul. The two realities which im-

pinge upon and are centered in the human mind circuits are as a mortal self evolved from the original plans of the Life Carriers, and as an immortal entity from the high spheres of Divinington, an indwelling gift from God. You, as a personal creature, have mind and will. The Adjuster, as a prepersonal creature, has premind and prewill. If you so fully conform to the Adjuster's mind that you see eye to eye, then your minds become one, and you receive the reinforcement of the Adjuster's mind. Subsequently, if your will orders and enforces the execution of the decisions of this new or combined mind, the Adjuster's prepersonal will attains to personality expression through your decision, and as far as that particular project is concerned, you and the Adjuster are one. Your mind has attained to divinity attunement, and the Adjuster's will has achieved personality expression. To the extent that this identity is realized, you are mentally approaching the morontia order of existence. Morontia mind is a term signifying the substance and sum total of the co-operating minds of diversely material and spiritual natures. Morontia intellect, therefore, connotes a dual mind in the local universe dominated by one will. And with mortals, this is a will, human in origin, which is becoming divine through man's identification of the human mind with the mindedness of God.

The Thought Adjuster, being the closest approach of God to the human person, becomes intimately associated with both man's mind and man's will. The will, once deliberately activated by man, might be likened to a system of electrically operated doors or sliding panels which give the Thought Adjuster easy access to all areas and compartments of your mind. Can you imagine the Adjuster's delight when you finally open all the compartments of your mind to him? Can you imagine his joy when he is finally able to change, adjust, and control the contents of all the compartments for the good of the whole and for the highest welfare of the individual? Now the submarine that we call the human person is not only directed toward God, but also, the harmony and unison between all of its parts becomes a rhythm and a pulse marvelous to feel and to behold. Gone are wasted and counterproductive vibrations. Gone are sounds to discord and strain. Gone are hesitations in the person. With the recognition of God in the universe and in the individual person, *loving service* becomes the joyful fulfillment and the necessity of one's life. The love affair between man and God has really begun because man is at last beginning to reciprocate God's love. Man's devotion becomes unselfish because his self is submerged in God. Man's *loyalty* becomes courageous because now he fears nothing and sweeps over the crags and precipices on eagle wings. Man's *fairness* becomes sincere without the clutter or cover of other motivations. Man's *honesty* becomes enlightened, illuminating, and far-seeing in the brilliance of God's light. Man's hope

becomes undying and even begins to thrive on the uncertainties and depressions that used to cause it to falter. Man's *trust* becomes confiding and communication with God, a joy. Man's *ministry* becomes merciful as compassion is added to love of one's fellows. Man's *goodness* becomes unfailing as his true love life gains momentum. Gone are the hesitations of a poorly coordinated personality. Man's *tolerance* becomes forgiving as he sees and understands the Adjuster-founded motivations of each individual and appreciates the individual's struggle from imperfection to perfection in a confused and troubled world. Man's *peace* becomes enduring and covers and comforts him like a glorious mantle from God. Man becomes conscious of a profound sense of *spiritual joy, security, and confidence* which no amount of pain or tension can lessen or eradicate. In fact the joy, security, and confidence begins to sweep pain and tension away as light does darkness coming into a room through a suddenly-opened door. The honeymoon has begun! Man and God are united! An eternal relationship is in the making! The joy of exploratory knowing has begun! Man and the Adjuster rest in the knowledge that their journey together will last long enough for them to become completely attuned and acquainted with each other. What a love story! What a life! What an adventure!

At the present time each one of you is known on the local universe capital by your Adjuster's number. In the future, when you are fused with your Adjuster, your guardian seraphim will give you a new name. Until you receive that name you must continue to desire to be Godlike and to be willing to do and be any and all things which are essential to the final attainment of that overwhelming desire. Your motives, decisions, faithful determinations, and supreme desires constitute real and effective cooperation with your Adjuster. These may be unconscious, but you can consciously augment Adjuster contact by:

1. Choosing to respond to divine leading; sincerely basing the human life on the highest consciousness of truth, beauty and goodness, and then coordinating these qualities of divinity through wisdom, faith, and love.
2. Loving God and desiring to be like him — genuine recognition of the divine fatherhood and loving worship of the divine parent.
3. Loving man and sincerely desiring to serve him — wholehearted recognition of the brotherhood of man coupled with an intelligent and wise affection for each of your fellow mortals.
4. Joyful acceptance of cosmic citizenship — honest recognition of your progressive obligations to the Supreme Being, awareness of the interdependence of evolutionary man and evolving Deity. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty.

Finally, before leaving, I have to tell you in the words of *The URANTIA Book* that it is sometimes possible to have the mind illuminated, to hear the divine voice that continually speaks within you, so that you may become partially conscious of the wisdom, truth, goodness, and beauty of the potential personality constantly indwelling you — the Divine Thought Adjuster.

—Robert Schuer
New Lexington, Ohio

SPIRITUAL MIND RECEPTIVITY

I want to share with you some observations concerning the spiritual aspects of mind and the states of mind that are most conducive to spirit reception. As I embark upon this topic and this endeavor, I invite each of you to join in an experiment designed to use your mind, and our collective mind, as a laboratory in which is to be tested some of the ideas to be presented. In this gathering of active and versatile minds, it should be possible to explore multi-levels of this topic concurrently; that is, in some sense to manifest and experience that which is being said in words. One way to accomplish this is to modify the usual pattern of active-speaker and passive-listeners. Now, I don't intend to ask you to speak; rather, I want to make some suggestions as to how you listen.

In particular, I request that you relax your *thought process* as you listen and that you give primary attention to your inner awareness, which I will refer to as your *intelligence*. Thus, for this talk, I wish to make a distinction between *thought* and *intelligence*. I will regard *thought* as the mechanical process of our brain-mind—recording, organizing, evaluating, recalling, and so forth. In a sense, this function or activity includes everything our brains are involved with in the material realm. So thought, in this context, involves at any particular moment only information from the past, stored in memory. This leaves, in the category of *intelligence*, those special insights that are truly original as opposed to being simply a product of thought patterns. Intelligence, then, is personal understanding from an inner source that is spiritual. One must be highly attentive to bring mind into a state of harmony with intelligence; in fact, this must be equivalent to cooperation with one's indwelling Thought Adjuster. And while we are informed that such cooperation is not a particularly conscious process, we are told further that there are real and effective ways to augment Adjuster harmony. Thought is a marvelous mechanical aid; but it should not interfere with the delicate contact that can be experienced as intelligence. Each person uses will to direct mind; and only that will and that mind know how best to touch the inner source and flow along with it.

I propose that we exert an individual-collective effort to do this for the next twenty minutes or so, a sort of group harmony with the cosmic-mind circuits. I believe that if you do what is more common in this situation - namely, try to think, analyze, decide whether you agree and so forth - you will have a very different experience than if you try this alternative approach. Be free of conflict, of anxiety, of distracting external stimuli - all of which result from thought. Close your eyes if you prefer, meditate, stand on your head, lie down in the aisle - whatever suits you best. Close the distance between you and me, between yourself and all the others in this room. Cease to be an observer - be one with the observation. The separation is an illusion, as modern science is beginning to recognize in fascinating ways, some of which I will refer to shortly. Let us, during this brief time together, seek unity of mind - both individually and collectively.

Seek Mind Unity

I am suggesting this in order to stimulate an active involvement with the concept of spiritual mind receptivity. Our group attention-concentration has the potential of enhancing our present experience together. The concepts I will present, am now presenting, seem to warrant such an exercise. A Perfector of Wisdom informs us, in *The URANTIA Book*, that "... experiential spiritual presence is in accordance with the underlying conditions or states of spiritual receptivity inherent in the individual minds of the realms." (*150:3)

Right now, there is a lot of thinking going on. You're thinking about what I've just said, trying to decide what to make of it, coordinating it, reacting to it, all the usual thought activities. Some other things are also humming along on the periphery, no doubt. Better check the time; make a mental note on the children's whereabouts; think ahead to plans for lunch. Go ahead - run those things by. We'll all do it together.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, in response to the question "How can one quieten the mind?", says "You absolutely cannot make the mind quiet because *you are the mind*." His point, as I understand it, is that one does not still one's thoughts by an exertion of effort which itself requires thought. Rather, it is desirable to drop the distinction between the thinker and the thought, the observer and the observation - and simply be attentive. Krishnamurti says that "to be attentive means to listen without any interpretation, without any judgment - just to listen. When you are so listening, there is no boundary, there is no 'you' listening. There is only a state of listening. And when you *look* without the observer, without the 'me', then you will truly *see*. And seeing is an act of love. Look for yourself at a tree, a flower, the face of a person... and so look that the space between you and

them is nonexistent. You can only look that way when there is no love."

David Bohm, an eminent Professor of Theoretical Physics at the University of London, observes that "the brain doesn't create intelligence but is an instrument which helps intelligence to function. And the quietness of the brain is the operation of intelligence."

Some may wish to link these ideas to worship. On page 1123:6 of *The URANTIA Book*, a Melchizedek of Nebadon tells us that: "The reflective powers of the mind are deepened and broadened by worship." And we are told, on page 1641:1, that "Jesus taught his followers that," after prayer, "... they should remain for a time in silent receptivity to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul." He went on to say that: "The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in an attitude of true worship."

The human brain, with all of its intriguing capabilities, is basically a bodily organ that is concerned with a broad spectrum of functions. Our brains are involved with some activities that are simple and others that are complex, with some responses that are automatic and others that are voluntary. The subject of both scientific research and philosophical speculation, this physical entity provides an inexhaustible source for both empirical and speculative investigation. Modern discoveries concerning the differing functions of the left and right brain hemispheres have answered many questions and raised others yet to be explored. *URANTIA Book* readers have been informed of the existence of mortal species with a third brain that serves as a spiritual counterpart for Thought Adjuster activities (page 566). A Life Carrier of Nebadon resident on Urantia observes: "The physical brain with its associated nervous system possesses innate capacity for response to mind ministry just as the developing mind of a personality possesses a certain innate capacity for spirit receptivity and therefore contains the potentials of spiritual progress and attainment." (*738:3)

Let me elaborate a bit on the distinctions between thought and intelligence. Thought is a function of time and exhibits a form of motion or growth in time. But nothing is ever new or original in this thought realm. There may be novel arrangements or juxtapositions or linkages of thoughts; however, these cannot be truly original for they are built from pre-recorded material that has only finite content, namely the base of data our brain has accumulated from our birth to the present moment.

With this delineation of meaning, it is clear that there are limitations inherent in the process of thought. Nevertheless, thought is not to be dismissed as something shallow or superficial even though certain thought patterns may exhibit these tendencies. Our cumulative body of thought has unlimited capacity for expansion, growth, and refinement. Properly nourished and exer-

cised, thought is, in the material realm, a great ally in confronting life's circumstances. At the same time, while thought is vital to our being, it is not the whole of our being. Thought must be balanced with other factors if life is to be a fulfilling and harmonious experience. There must be another ingredient to this formula of life and this other vital element is what I am referring to as intelligence. As thought is both the process and product of our brain, intelligence functions through our mind. Thought has a finite source and is a function of time. Intelligence comes from an infinite source independent of time and space. These contrasts are noted by a Mighty Messenger who speaks of "the meaningful ideas of thought" and "the valuable ideals of spiritual insight." (*1306:2) Physicist David Bohm observes that thought, in both process and content, deals with fragments of information or static images while mind senses an undivided process of flow. For example, when we listen to music, there is a flowing quality that is continuous and smooth. However, if we analyze the music with our thoughts, it becomes separate notes such as we observe on a written musical score. The melody and harmony are a function of our mind. This is similar to the phenomenon of the flow of time and its corresponding succession of moments.

Mind is that reality which connects thought and intelligence. Mind is in touch with both the physical brain and the infinite source. Mind is both practical and spiritual and is capable, under the right circumstances, of reflecting into the thought stream intelligence whose content is truly original, new, and timeless. Intelligence is everything that thought is not, although thought is the means by which intelligence is recognized, understood and transmitted. An understanding of the distinction between these two dissimilar but interrelated phenomena is critical to spiritual growth. A Mighty Messenger, on page 638:7 of *The URANTIA Book*, states: "Mind is the indispensable channel of communication between spiritual and material realities." A Perfector of Wisdom refers to the mind as "... a personal-energy system existing around a divine spirit nucleus and functioning in a material environment." (*142:1)

For mind to be receptive to spiritual energy, thought must subside from its usual prominence. But this should occur calmly, not forcefully, through choice, not conflict. The experience may be fleeting, it may be sustained; it may produce stimulating growth; it may bring inner peace. In any case, it is fresh and not dependent on material considerations. Accordingly, thought can be primarily an obstacle if not observed carefully and understood as distinct from and secondary to spiritual insight. One of the most unequivocal statements in *The URANTIA Book* along these lines is made by a Solitary Messenger of Orvonton: "Trust all matters of mind beyond the dead level of consciousness to the custody of the Adjusters." (*1207:4)

Seek Within

Clarity of mind and receptivity of insights have been acclaimed and sought through the ages in every culture. From ancient to modern times, humanity has yearned for what Jesus called the "... peace which passes all human understanding" (*1663:1) and which is further described in *The URANTIA Book* as "... a peace which passes the understanding of mortal mind, but which can be enjoyed to the full by the believing human heart." (*1955:2) We can find striking references to this theme in a multitude of sources and in the works of a host of writers, philosophers, scientists, and religionists. The general concepts of spiritual mind receptivity form a common thread in all the world religions, in many current publications, and in a variety of forms of meditation and other types of personal and group practices. There are descriptive materials and prescriptive methods as diverse as the people that are seeking to experience the fullness of a dimension of life that they sense is possible. In the final analysis, however, the richest and most dependable source is within the seeker. Of the many paths available, surely those are the most secure that recognize this simple, but sometimes elusive, truth. We are informed by a Solitary Messenger of Orvonton that: "Meanings and values are only perceived in the inner or supermaterial spheres of human experience. The advances of true civilization are all born in this inner world of mankind. It is only the inner life that is truly creative." (*1220:2,3)

During the past two and one-half years, Bob Dylan has written a number of powerful religious songs. In one of these called "Pressing On," the refrain of which is "I'm pressing on to the higher calling of my Lord," he writes: "Many try to stop me... Shake me up in my mind, Say, 'Prove to me that He is Lord, show me a sign'... What kind of sign do they need... When it all comes from within... When what's lost has been found... What's to come has already been?"

What a blessing and a comfort to know from *The URANTIA Book* specifically and in awe-inspiring detail of our Mystery Monitors, the ever-present, always reliable Thought Adjusters who have, "... assumed the task of existing in your minds, there to receive the admonitions of the spiritual intelligences of the realms and then to undertake to dictate or translate these spiritual messages to the material mind..." (*1191:3)

It seems to me, then, that our task is to provide the spiritually receptive state of mind commensurate with the superb gift of our Father fragments. The potentials inherent in manifesting appropriate levels of awareness are equivalent to the richness of the plan. In fact, "It is sometimes possible to have the mind illuminated, to hear the divine voice that continually speaks within you, so that you may become partially conscious of the wisdom, truth, goodness, and beauty of the potential personality constantly indwelling you." (*1199:4)

In considering the connections between mind and spirit, it may be instructive to take note of Jesus' own personal experience in these matters as related in *The URANTIA Book*. It's a most fascinating account.

—The Seventeenth Year, A.D. 11 - "This year Jesus made great progress in the organization of his mind. Gradually he had brought his divine and human natures together, and he accomplished all this organization of intellect by the force of his own decisions and with only the aid of his indwelling Monitor..." (*1398:5)

—The Eighteenth Year, A.D. 12 - "Jesus possessed the ability effectively to mobilize all his powers of mind, soul, and body on the task immediately in hand. He could concentrate his deep-thinking mind on the one problem which he wished to solve..." (*1400:8)

—The Twenty-Fourth Year, A.D. 18 - "He communed much with his Father in heaven and made tremendous progress in the mastery of his human mind." (*1414:4)

—The Twenty-Fifth Year, A.D. 19 - "His mind was active, keen, and penetrating..." (*1415:2)

—The Twenty-Seventh Year, A.D. 21 - "This year Jesus made great advances in the ascendant mastery of his human mind and attained new and high levels of conscious contact with his indwelling Thought Adjuster." (*1421:5)

—The Twenty-Ninth Year A.D. 23 - "On this Mediterranean journey Jesus made great advances in his human task of mastering the material and mortal mind, and his indwelling Adjuster made great progress in the ascension and spiritual conquest of this same human intellect." (*1424:5)

On page 1484 - The Thirtieth Year, A.D. 24 - "This was one of the more unusual years in the inner experience of the Son of Man; great progress was made in effecting working harmony between his human mind and the indwelling Adjuster. The Adjuster had been actively engaged in reorganizing the thinking and in rehearsing the mind for the great events which were in the not then distant future." (*1484:5)

—The Thirty-First Year, A.D. 25 - "The indwelling Thought Adjuster now led Jesus to... finish his work of mastering his human mind..." (*1492:7)

—On Mount Hermon - "...he finished the mortal task of achieving the circles of mind-understanding and personality-control." (*1493:4)

And on page 1511 - "When Jesus... went down into the Jordan to be baptized, he was a mortal of the realm who had attained the pinnacle of human evolutionary ascension in all matters related to the conquest of mind and to self-identification with the spirit... Perfect synchrony and full communication had become established between the mortal mind of Jesus and the indwelling spirit Adjuster..." (*1511:2)

I have been following some intriguing activities in science that are pertinent to this discussion. Some particularly fascinating theories are emerging from the

work of physicist David Bohm, who has already been mentioned, and neuroscientist Karl Pribram from Stanford.

Bohm finds a useful model for some of his ideas in the area of holography. In the process of holography, the wave field of light scattered by an object is recorded on a light-sensitive plate as an interference pattern. When the plate, called a hologram, is placed in a coherent light beam such as that produced by a laser, the original wave field is regenerated and a three-dimensional image appears. Upon close examination, the hologram appears to be a blurred pattern of swirls. However, each point of light diffracted from the object is spread over the entire surface of the film and so is each neighboring point. The blurs actually represent an orderly pattern that is recorded and preserved in every part of the surface of the plate. Thus, any piece of the hologram can be used to reconstruct the entire image. *The whole is contained in each of the parts.*

The scientific studies of Karl Pribram have shown that memory storage in the human brain has this same amazing characteristic. That is, memory is distributed in such a way that sensory input is not associated with specific areas of the brain but is present in all areas. Removal or injury of a portion of the brain does not cause the loss of or excise a particular memory or a set of memories.

Transcendence

Based on their combined research, Bohm conjectures the presence of a higher order which he calls the enfolded or implicate order as contrasted with classical reality which is the unfolded or explicate order. The explicate focuses on secondary manifestations rather than their source. Pribram sees that the fundamental properties of the universe are mental rather than material. The construction of images is a process involving the brain and involves a reciprocal transformation into the frequency domain which is also characteristic of light waves. Mind reflects the basic organization of the universe. Pribram observes that the term 'transcendence' may prove a literal description, indicating some sort of phase relationship between one brain process and another.

The combined theory of Bohm and Pribram, as described in a special issue of *Brain/Mind Bulletin* in 1978 and reprinted in *Re-Vision Journal* the same year under the heading "A New Perspective on Reality" is this: "Our brains mathematically construct 'concrete' reality by interpreting frequencies from another dimension, a realm of meaningful, patterned primary reality that transcends time and space. The brain is a hologram interpreting a holographic universe."

In closing, I thank you for your attention and the energy that you have generated as listener-participants. I wish to finish with these quotations from *The URANTIA Book*:

"Man's natural endowment of talent and ability should be chiefly devoted to the development and ennoblement of his higher powers of mind and spirit." (*1519:3)

"Human consciousness rests gently upon the electrochemical mechanism below and delicately touches the spirit-morontia energy system above. Of neither of these two systems is the human being ever completely conscious in his mortal life; therefore must he work in mind, of which he is conscious. And it is not so much what mind comprehends as what mind desires to comprehend that insures survival; it is not so much what mind is like as what mind is striving to be like that constitutes spirit identification." (*1216:7-1218:1)

This is followed by a poetic and beautiful mind metaphor: "The material mind of mortal man is the cosmic loom that carries the morontia fabrics on which the indwelling Thought Adjuster threads the spirit patterns of a universe character of enduring values and divine meanings. . . ." (*1217:7-1218:1)

And, finally, from a Mighty Messenger temporarily sojourning on Urantia, "Man's great universe adventure consists in the transit of his mortal mind from the stability of mechanical statics to the divinity of spiritual dynamics, and he achieves this transformation by the force and constancy of his own personality decisions, in each of life's situations declaring, 'It is my will that your will be done.' " (*1303:1)

—Bob Hunt
Arcata, California

THE HUMAN RESPONSE

The Father's Love: The Pattern Relationship

The title of this talk is "The Human Response" and through it I'd like to explore some of the ways in which we, as individuals, respond to God. I say "some of the ways" because this is by no means intended to be a complete survey of the topic, and if, at the end of this session, I leave you either challenged, perplexed, or inspired to think more about the subject, then I will have achieved my goal for the day.

Let me first establish the stimulus for the human response — the Father's love, the pattern relationship. It seems to me that one of our major problems is having to reconcile God's absolute reality with the reality which we perceive in human terms. In other words, the meaning we give to the reality that we perceive is strictly our interpretation of the absolute pattern, based on our personal experience and that which others share with us. A good example is the difficulty we face in attempting to deal with God's relationship to mortal creatures, the relationship which is symbolized by the term "love."

To help describe this absolute pattern *The URANTIA Book* tells us that "... love is the greatest relationship in the world — in the universe — just as truth is the greatest pronouncement of the observation of these divine relationships." (*1615:5) "Love is the greatest of all spirit realities. Truth is a liberating revelation, but love is the supreme relationship." (*1608:1) "Love is the ancestor of all spiritual goodness, the essence of the true and the beautiful." (*2047:5) "... love is all-embracing of truth, beauty, and goodness." (*67:5) These concepts of "... truth, beauty, and goodness — man's intellectual approach to the universe of mind, matter, and spirit — must be combined into one unified concept of a divine and supreme ideal. As mortal personality unifies the human experience with matter, mind, and spirit, so does this divine and supreme ideal become power-unified in Supremacy and then personalized as a God of fatherly love." (*647:7)

"Mortal man cannot possibly know the infinitude of the heavenly Father. Finite mind cannot think through such an absolute truth or fact. But this same finite being can actually *feel* — literally experience — the full and undiminished impact of such an infinite Father's LOVE. Such a love can be truly experienced, albeit while quality of experience is unlimited, quantity of such an experience is strictly limited by the human capacity for spiritual receptivity and by the associated capacity to love the Father in return." (*50:5)

"Finite appreciation of infinite qualities far transcends the logically limited capacities of the creature because of the fact that mortal man is made in the image of God — there lives within him a fragment of infinity. Therefore man's nearest and dearest approach to God is by and through love, for God is love. And all of such a unique relationship is an actual experience in cosmic sociology, the Creator-creature relationship — the Father-child affection." (*50:6)

"God is the Father; man is his son. Love, the love of a father for his son, becomes the central truth in the universe relations of Creator and creature. . . ." (2018:1) "The Father loves *each* of his sons, and that affection is not less than true, holy, divine, unlimited, eternal, and unique — a love bestowed upon *this* son and upon *that* son, individually, personally, and exclusively. And such a love utterly eclipses all other facts. Sonship is the supreme relationship of the creature to the Creator." (*454:3) "God loves each creature. . . throughout all time and eternity." (*1304:7) "The infinite love of God is not secondary to anything in the divine nature." (*2017:3)

Thus, love is the pattern relationship, an absolute pattern emanating from the source of all reality. When the creature first feels the stirrings of this inspiration in his own emerging capacity to respond, the outcome is an inevitable blend of the human and the divine — the divine pattern of love constrained by the human re-

sponse. This response has taken so many diverse forms through the course of its evolution that the term "love," as we have come to apply it, falls far short of adequately symbolizing the relationship of God to his creation. A Divine Counselor has expressed his frustration at the limitations of our symbolism by saying, "At times I am almost pained to be compelled to portray the divine affection of the heavenly Father for his universe children by the employment of the human word symbol *love*. This term, even though it does connote man's highest concept of the mortal relations of respect and devotion, is so frequently designative of so much of human relationship that is wholly ignoble and utterly unfit to be known by any word which is also used to indicate the matchless affection of the living God for his universe creatures!" (*40:4)

Let's take a look at the development of some of these aspects of the human capacity to love.

Evolutionary Love: The Human Response

The device which stimulates the earliest creature response to our Creator's love is predictably biological in nature. While the urgings of food hunger lead us to survive in the flesh, that which impels the dawning of a will creature's capacity to love another human being is the instinctive desire to reproduce. The fifth epochal revelation tells us that "It is because of the sex urge that selfish man is lured into making something better than an animal out of himself. The self-regarding and self-gratifying sex relationship entails the certain consequences of self-denial and insures the assumption of altruistic duties and numerous race-benefiting home responsibilities. Herein has sex been the unrecognized and unsuspected civilizer of the savage; for this same sex impulse automatically and unerringly *compels man to think and eventually leads him to love.*" (*922:3)

The social repercussions of this biological genesis of the capacity to love apparently run through an evolutionary process which, during the course of eternity, progresses toward the ideal and original pattern. According to the midwayers, "Love, unselfishness, must undergo a constant and living readaptative interpretation of relationships in accordance with the leading of the Spirit of Truth. Love must thereby grasp the ever-changing and enlarging concepts of the highest cosmic good of the individual who is loved. And then love goes on to strike this same attitude concerning all other individuals who could possibly be influenced by the growing and living relationship of one spirit-led mortal's love for other citizens of the universe. And this entire living adaptation of love must be effected in the light of both the environment of present evil and the eternal goal of the perfection of divine destiny." (*1950:6)

Such affection must be played out on the stage of finite reality before it can achieve the heights of perfection. As

we come in contact with others, and as our relationship with God is gradually redefined, our expressions of love are continually influenced by Supreme values. The midwayers go on to say that "Love is the highest motivation which man may utilize in his universe ascent. But love, divested of truth, beauty, and goodness, is only a sentiment, a philosophic distortion, a psychic illusion, a spiritual deception. Love must always be redefined on successive levels of morontia and spirit progression." (*2096:6)

The human response to God, the evolutionary capacity to love, is initially stimulated by the biological sex urge and progresses, "automatically and unerringly," to the acquisition of social responsibility and eventually to the stirrings of affection for another human being. Before it can be redefined on morontia and spirit levels, love must transcend the mortal breeding ground within which it takes a variety of forms that are colored by our receptivity to Supreme values. It is my central purpose in this discussion to propose that we, as mortals participating in the development of our relationship with God, inevitably go through varying stages in that relationship which are reflective of our current capacity to love as the Father loves, and that the primary indicator of the quality of that love is both drawn from, and illustrated by, the nature of our relationships with fellow mortals. As Erich Fromm expresses it in his classic work *The Art of Loving*, "... the nature of (any individual's) love for God corresponds to the nature of his love for man..." (p. 69)

Human Affection: The Importance of Romance

Human awareness of the existence of God is prompted by the sixth adjutant mind spirit, who leads us to worship that which is greater than ourselves. When we cross the threshold of understanding the fact, and feeling the truth, of sonship, worship becomes a very personal matter, but the form that it takes is largely determined by the human condition. The midwayers, in summarizing Jesus' words, say that "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)

Let's focus for a moment on the word "romantic." Romance is defined by one dictionary as "the tendency of the mind toward the wonderful and mysterious." When human affection reaches the level where it imbues its object with qualities which are wonderful and mysterious, this condition may be described as romantic love. The condition itself forms the basis for an overwhelming proportion of contemporary literature, yet the characteristics of the romantic relationship have escaped serious study until fairly recently. Since romantic love may well be one manifestation of the human response to God's pattern relationship, and since this con-

struct could possibly describe the form which worship takes for any individual at a particular stage of his or her development, it might be worth while to learn just what qualities this relationship appears to possess.

Now, don't get upset. I'm not suggesting that there is a sexual aspect to worship (although at certain periods in human history the blending of these two elements apparently took place), but I do feel that the romantic relationship is definitely one stage in the human interpretation of absolute love, and therefore deserves our attention.

The most comprehensive study of romantic love that I am aware of was done by Dorothy Tennov of the University of Bridgeport, and was published in 1979 under the title *Love and Limerence: The Experience of Being in Love*. As I read to you her short preface to the book, see if you identify at all with this state of mind.

"You think:

"I want you.

"I want you forever, now, yesterday, and always. Above all, I want you to want me.

"No matter where I am or what I am doing, I am not safe from your spell. At any moment, the image of your face smiling at me, of your voice telling me you care, or of your hand in mine, may suddenly fill my consciousness rudely pushing out all else.

"The expression 'thinking of you' fails to convey either the quality or quantity of this unwilling mental activity. 'Obsessed' comes closer but leaves out the aching. A child is obsessed on Christmas Eve. But it's a happy prepossession full of excitement, curiosity, and expectation. This prepossession is an emotional roller coaster that carries me from the peak of ecstasy to the depths of despair. And back again.

"I bear the thought of other topics when I must, but prolonged concentration on any other subject is difficult to tolerate. I must admit that it has happened on occasion that some entertainment or distraction overwhelmed thought of you, and I was suddenly freed from my pain and for an instant viewed you from a new perspective. (On those occasions I glimpsed reality usually closed from my view.) I don't seek 'distractions.' I'm too afraid that they won't distract after all and I'll be imprisoned somewhere saying polite nothings while I long to give myself up to desiring you with all my passion; to Tin Pan Alley's 'burning desire.'

"Everything reminds me of you. I try to read, but four times on a single page some word begins the lightning chain of associations that summons my mind away from my work, and I must struggle to return my attention to the task at hand. Often I give up easily, leave my desk, and throw myself down on my bed, where my body lies still while my imagination constructs long and involved and plausible reasons to believe that you love me."

This is one description of the feeling of romantic love for another human being. Obviously the relationship

entails much that is limited to nonspiritual levels, but if we can feel this way about a fellow creature — does it make sense that the expression of our love for the inexpressible beauty of the personality of God can be any less? Does the thought of God so fill our minds that the ability to concentrate on anything else is lost? Are the wonderful and mysterious qualities of another fragile and imperfect being more deserving of this overwhelming feeling of affection than the qualities of the Father of all? True worship is described by the revelators as "... a natural and spontaneous reaction to the recognition of the Father's matchless personality and because of his lovable nature and adorable attributes." (*65:6) In light of this statement, the romantic attitude might very well fit somewhere into a useful model for a natural and legitimate response to God.

Tennov, in her study, looked for regularities in the expressions of romance given to her by over a thousand people on questionnaires, in diaries, and in individual interviews. The resulting pattern of behavior she identified by the term "Limerence," which stands for the condition of being in love. Its first and foremost characteristic is described by her in a quote from Stendhal, in which he states, "The most surprising thing of all about love is the first step, the violence of the change that takes place in the mind. . . . A person in love is unremittingly and uninterruptedly occupied with the image of the beloved." (p. 33) According to Tennov, "... when your limerence for someone has crystallized, all events, associations, stimuli, experience, return your thoughts to (the limerent object) with unnerving consistency. At the moment of awakening after the night's sleep, an image of (the limerent object) springs into your consciousness. And you find yourself inclined to remain in bed pursuing that image and the fantasies that surround and grow out of it. Your daydreams persist throughout the day and are involuntary. Extreme effort of will to stop them produces only temporary surcease." (p. 34)

"The 'moment of consummation,' the goal, the climax of the limerent fantasy is not sexual union but emotional commitment on the part of the (limerent object)." (p. 39) This reciprocation of feelings seems to be the most critical element in the expression of romantic love. The lover yearns most to be loved in return. Such a phenomenon is not limited to mortal feelings. A Divine Counselor confesses that "... I think we all, including the mortals of the realms, love the Universal Father and all other beings, divine or human, because we discern that these personalities truly love us. The experience of loving is very much a direct response to the experience of being loved. Knowing that God loves me, I should continue to love him supremely, even though he were divested of all his attributes of supremacy, ultimacy, and absoluteness." (*39:8-39:1) This Divine Counselor goes on to say that the Father himself "... is eternally motivated by the perfect idealism of divine love, and that

tender nature finds its strongest expression and greatest satisfaction in loving and being loved." (*59:3) "There is an infinite grandeur and an inexpressible generosity connected with the majesty of his love which causes him to yearn for the association of every created being who can comprehend, love, or approach him..." (*62:4)

The excitement of romantic feeling; the uncompromising preoccupation with the beloved; the insatiable desire to be loved in return; all of these criteria describe a condition which many of us have experienced in connection with another being. I wonder how many have gone through the process of falling in love with God. Is there anyone on earth as beautiful, as good, or as capable of loving us in return?

Beyond Limerence

And yet, the limerent condition falls short of an ideal response to God — it does not represent the highest form of worship available to man. For one thing, according to Tennov, the state of "...limerence appears to develop and be sustained when there is a certain balance of hope and uncertainty. However unappealing it may be," she says, "in a universe conceived as orderly and humane, the fact is undeniable; fear of rejection may cause pain, but it also enhances desire." (p. 54) This principle seems to be the basis for the classic game of playing hard-to-get, which on the human level has been effective for as long as anyone can remember. Based on Tennov's analysis, "Games, playacting, subterfuge, coyness, the sending of ambiguous messages and trial balloons that can be retracted or denied if such seems a wiser course: Such deviations from straightforward honesty become essential limerent strategies." Does God play games with us? I think not. Do we play games with God? That appears to be an inescapable aspect of the human condition.

Tennov agrees that limerence is not the highest form of love. She finds that limerence is a highly dependent state, where insecurity exerts a profound influence on our behavior. As she expresses it, "Is this deplorable state of affairs a necessary aspect of love? It does seem essential to *limerence*; hence the need for a new term... 'Love,' in most of its meanings, involves concern for the other person's welfare and feelings. Affection and fondness have no 'objective'; they simply exist as feelings in which you are disposed toward actions to which the recipient might or might not respond. In contrast, *limerence demands* return. Other aspects of your life, including love, are sacrificed in behalf of the all-consuming need. While limerence has been called love, it is not love."

Although every being derives the deepest satisfaction from being loved, the expression of true love, God's pattern relationship, demands nothing in return. Says *The URANTIA Book*, "Love is the desire to do good to

others." (*648:5) "Love is the outworking of the divine and inner urge of life. It is founded on understanding, nurtured by unselfish service, and perfected in wisdom." (*1898:6) "Love is the secret of beneficial association between personalities." (*141:4)

The epitome of unselfish love finds its analogy in "...the parent-child relationship, than which there is none more tender and beautiful in mortal experience." (*40:7), according to a Divine Counselor. Here again, the impositions of finite reality may tend to obscure, for many of us, the ideals inherent in the absolute pattern. Throughout *The URANTIA Book*, the parent-child relationship is extolled as the greatest expression of love in human experience. To what extent do we see, in our own lives, the unselfishness and the wisdom of the Father's love as we bestow it upon our children?

In turn, do we really look upon our earthly parents as a reflection of the infinite love of God? I suspect that most often the reverse is true. Our image of God as a father is deeply affected by the original impression we have of our human experience as children. Erich Fromm tells us that "...the love of God cannot be separated from the love for one's parents." In his words, "If a person does not emerge from incestuous attachment to mother, clan, nation, if he retains the childish dependence on a punishing and rewarding father, or any other authority, he cannot develop a more mature love for God; then his religion is that of the earlier phase of religion, in which God was experienced as an all-protective mother or a punishing-rewarding father." (p. 68-69) A Melchizedek points out that "Religious meanings progress in self-consciousness when the child transfers his ideas of omnipotence from his parents to God. And the entire religious experience of such a child is largely dependent on whether fear or love has dominated the parent-child relationship." (*1013:6)

Fromm distinguishes between generalizations of mother love and father love. "Fatherly love," he says, "is conditional love. Its principle is 'I love you *because* you fulfill my expectations, because you do your duty, because you are like me.' In conditional fatherly love we find ... a negative and a positive aspect. The negative aspect is the very fact that fatherly love has to be deserved, that it can be lost if one does not do what is expected. In the nature of fatherly love lies the fact that obedience becomes the main virtue, that disobedience is the main sin — and its punishment the withdrawal of fatherly love. The positive side is equally important. Since his love is conditioned, I can do something to acquire it, I can work for it; his love is not outside my control as motherly love is." (p. 36)

On the other hand, Fromm says that the child learns, through the early nurturing experience with the mother, that "...I am loved *because I am*. This experience of being loved by mother is a passive one. There is nothing I have to do in order to be loved — mother's love is un-

conditional. All I have to do is to be — to be her child. Mother's love is bliss, is peace, it need not be acquired, it need not be deserved. But there is a negative side, too, to the unconditional quality of mother's love. Not only does it not need to be deserved — it also *cannot* be acquired, produced, controlled. If it is there, it is like a blessing; if it is not there, it is as if all beauty had gone out of life — and there is nothing I can do to create it." (p. 33)

From the human view, which is more desirable, mother love or father love? Fromm feels that "Unconditional love corresponds to one of the deepest longings, not only of the child, but of every human being; on the other hand, to be loved because of one's merit, because one deserved it, always leaves doubt; maybe I did not please the person whom I want to love me, maybe this, or that — there is always a fear that love could disappear. Furthermore, 'deserved' love easily leaves a bitter feeling that one is not loved for oneself, that one is loved only because one pleases, that one is, in the last analysis, not loved at all but used." (p. 35)

There is an inescapable note of insecurity, however, in Fromm's description of both types of parent love, a negative aspect to each. Does this sense of insecurity creep into our response to God? Are we sure that we're doing the right thing? Will the beneficence of infinite and eternal love be removed from us? A Melchizedek assures us that "God the Father deals with man his child on the basis, not of actual virtue or worthiness, but in recognition of the child's motivation — the creature purpose and intent." (*1133:5) Jesus said that "The child, being immature and lacking in the fuller understanding of the depth of the child-father relationship, must frequently feel a sense of guilty separation from a father's full approval, but the true father is never conscious of any such separation. Sin is an experience of creature consciousness; it is not a part of God's consciousness." (*1898:5)

In summary, if our response to God's love is truly conditioned by our human experience and by our established patterns of relationship to fellow mortals, and if we, here, today, are earnestly seeking a higher form of expression for that response, then a major shift in perspective may be called for. Rodan of Alexandria understood and explained that "The lower religions shape their ideas of God to meet the natural state of the human heart; the higher religions demand that the human heart shall be changed to meet the demands of the ideals of true religion." (*1781:3)

To me this is an invitation — an appeal to render to our Creator at least the best of our human capacity to love and then to go beyond our experience by reaching for the ideals presented by his indwelling gift. As a Mighty Messenger puts it, "Men all too often forget that God is the greatest experience in human existence. Other experiences are limited in their nature and content, but

the experience of God has no limits save those of the creature's comprehension capacity, and this very experience is in itself capacity enlarging. When men search for God, they are searching for everything. When they find God, they have found everything. The search for God is the unstinted bestowal of love attended by amazing discoveries of new and greater love to be bestowed." (*1289:3)

—Peter Laurence
Armonk, New York

SHARING THE INNER LIFE— THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ADJUSTER COMMUNION

Good morning. Let's start with a moment of quiet to thank the Father for all that he has given us, and to get in touch with his presence within us.

This quote is from *1206:3: "I cannot but observe that so many of you spend so much time and thought on mere trifles of living, while you almost wholly overlook the more essential realities of everlasting import, those very accomplishments which are concerned with the development of a more harmonious working agreement between you and your Adjusters. The great goal of human existence is to attune to the divinity of the indwelling Adjuster; the great achievement of mortal life is the attainment of a true and understanding consecration to the eternal aims of the divine spirit who waits and works within your mind."

That's the topic for this morning; developing a "working agreement," "attuning" to the Adjuster. The format I'd like to use is to present a series of quotes on a theme, then present my own thoughts and reactions to these quotes, and then pose some questions and ask for your thoughts and experiences.

The first theme is: How does communion with the Adjuster happen, and how can we make it happen more effectively? These are two quotes I'd like to share.

"Jesus taught his followers that, when they had made their prayers to the Father, they should remain for a time in silent receptivity to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul." (*1641:1) So, the importance of taking time to listen, time for silent receptivity, is expressed.

Now let's explore a very rich section: "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. At such times, and sometimes during sleep, the Adjuster is able to arrest the mental currents, to stay the flow, and then to divert the idea procession; and all this is done in order to effect deep spiritual trans-

formations in the higher recesses of the superconsciousness." (*1199:3) So, our thoughts are flowing along in a free creative manner, in worship, prayer, communion, and the Thought Adjuster diverts our thought flow, adjusts, rearranges things in the mental realms above our normal level of awareness — in our higher consciousness.

"Thus are the forces and energies of mind more fully adjusted to the key of the contactual tones of the spiritual level of the present and the future." (*1199:3) So, in a sense, during communion the Adjuster programs us, sensitizes us, in the higher reaches of the mind. He tries to make us more sensitive to his spiritual tones of contact. He's trying to train us to respond to his spiritual "tones" or "value" signals later on, when we are no longer in the midst of worship or communion.

Let's take a closer look at that first sentence again. "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) What is that state of mind? How can we cultivate it? Have you had any thoughts or experiences with it? In trying to understand what this *inner listening* is like, the analogy of playing a piano comes to mind. It's as if my mind is a piano, an instrument which I use for thinking thoughts, feeling emotions, and I use that mind-instrument with my will. Usually I'm sitting at the bench playing along on the instrument of my mind. Well, in the inner listening of communion, it's as if I say to the Adjuster, "Okay, I'm going to get up off the bench for a while; you sit down at the keyboard and play some mental melodies." And I just sort of stand back and listen to what's being played on my own mind. Have any of you experienced a similar kind of thing? Any thoughts or reactions? How do our "...preconceived opinions, settled ideas, and long-standing prejudices" (*1199:5) block that free creative flow?

Let's take a couple of minutes of quiet and experiment with this inner listening process, actually try it out. Remember now, free-flowing thoughts, channeled in a spiritual direction; sort of listening to the Adjuster "playing" on the instrument of your mind.

Okay, let's look at another theme; the role of prayer and worship in Adjuster communion. I'd like to share several quotes with you.

"...the better approach to the morontia zones of possible contact with the Thought Adjuster would be through living faith and sincere worship, wholehearted and unselfish prayer." (*1099:6)

"...indirectly and unrecognized the Adjuster is constantly communicating with the human subject, especially during those sublime experiences of the worshipful contact of mind with spirit in the superconsciousness." (*1203:3)

"Prayer ... does so often dig out larger and deeper channels wherein the divine bestowals may flow to the

hearts and souls of those who thus remember to maintain unbroken communion with their Maker through sincere prayer and true worship." (*2066:1)

What's the nature of this "unbroken communion"? Can prayer and worship become constant? Is communion always a conscious function, or is it sometimes more or less going on outside of our conscious awareness? Here are some interesting quotes on that topic:

"Every mortal who is consciously or unconsciously following the leading of his indwelling Adjuster is living in accordance with the will of God." (*1176:4)

"The fact that such Adjuster activity may be unconscious to the human partner does not in the least detract from its value and reality." (*1192:5)

Can communion go on without our conscious awareness?

Let's go on to the next set of quotes on the theme of emotions and their impact on Adjuster communion.

"There exists a vast gulf between the human and the divine, between man and God. The Urantia races are so largely electrically and chemically controlled, so highly animallike in their common behavior, so emotional in their ordinary reactions, that it becomes exceedingly difficult for the Monitors to guide and direct them." (*1207:5)

"While their mortal hosts are asleep, the Adjusters try to register their creations in the higher levels of the material mind ... Your own passions, urges, and other innate tendencies translate themselves into the picture and substitute their unexpressed desires for the divine messages which the indwellers are endeavoring to put into the psychic records..." (*1208:4)

"But with the vast majority of Urantians the Adjuster must patiently await the arrival of death deliverance; must await the liberation of the emerging soul from the well-nigh complete domination of the energy patterns and chemical forces inherent in your material order of existence." (*1213:2)

"But usually, when your Adjuster attempts to communicate with you, the message is lost in the material currents of the energy streams of human mind..." (*1205:6)

So, they're using a number of different terms here to describe essentially the same phenomenon: "material currents, energy streams of human mind; chemical and electrical forces; passions and urges; emotional reactions." What real life examples or experiences can you share of this situation, where the Adjuster's leading is blocked by the electrochemical passions and urges?

I think a very important point is that these are not mental and emotional flows over which we have no control. In one of the early papers in *The URANTIA Book* there's an important statement:

"The Father is not in spiritual hiding, but so many of his creatures have hidden themselves away in the mists of their own willful decisions and for the time being

have separated themselves from the communion of his spirit . . . by the choosing of their own perverse ways and by the indulgence of the self-assertiveness of their intolerant minds and unspiritual natures." (*64:2)

So, to some extent, we choose to divert ourselves with these emotional passions and intellectual urges. We feed these passions that block the Adjuster from reaching us. We give them more importance, energy, priority than the more subtle leading of the Adjuster.

The question then is how we gain some mastery over these built-in urges, and thus allow the Adjuster to influence us more? The answer is *decisions*; making decisions and acting on them. *The URANTIA Book* has much to say on the centrality of decisions in developing Adjuster communion.

"So few mortals are real thinkers; you do not spiritually develop and discipline your minds to the point of favorable liaison with the divine Adjusters." (*1213:2)

"Since this inner life of man is truly creative, there rests upon each person the responsibility of choosing as to whether this creativity shall be spontaneous and wholly haphazard or controlled, directed, and constructive." (*1220:9)

"You are so devoid of courageous decisions and consecrated co-operation that your indwelling Adjusters find it next to impossible to communicate directly with the human mind." (*1207:5)

"This year Jesus made great progress in the organization of his mind. Gradually he had brought his divine and human natures together, and he accomplished all this organization of intellect by the force of his own *decisions* and with only the aid of his indwelling Monitor. . . ." (*1398:5)

"Circle by circle your intellectual decisions, moral choosings, and spiritual development add to the ability of the Adjuster to function in your mind. . . ." (*1209:6)

"Every decision you make either impedes or facilitates the function of the Adjuster." (*1210:1)

"The success of your Adjuster in the enterprise of piloting you through the mortal life . . . depends . . . upon your decisions, determinations, and steadfast *faith*. All these movements of personality growth . . . help you to co-operate with the Adjuster; they assist you in ceasing to resist." (*1205:7)

"But man does not passively, slavishly, surrender his will to the Adjuster. Rather does he actively, positively, and co-operatively choose to follow the Adjuster's leading when and as such leading consciously differs from the desires and impulses of the natural mortal mind." (*1217:4)

So there's the key to controlling those emotional passions and urges. It's right at this crucial point in time, when we're struggling between the "desires and impulses of the natural mortal mind," and the Adjuster's leading, that is exactly the time when we must make the *decision* to "cease to resist," to let go of our primitive emotions

and accept the Father's will.

Here's a question: What is it about decisions and actions that clear the way for greater Adjuster contact? Here's an interesting quote on that question.

"If you so fully conform to the Adjuster's mind that you see eye to eye, then your minds become one, and you receive the reinforcement of the Adjuster's mind. Subsequently, if your will orders and enforces the execution of the decisions of this new or combined mind, the Adjuster's prepersonal will attains to personality expression through your decision, and as far as that particular project is concerned, you and the Adjuster are one." (*1205:4)

So, in a sense, you experience a minor fusion; through a decision you can actually become one with the Adjuster in a limited way.

One of the greatest of those passions that block Adjuster communion has to be fear. How can we overcome fear? These quotes give us a pretty good start: "The indwelling Adjusters . . . are virtually thwarted in their work by many of man's foolish animal fears and childish anxieties." (*1193:1) "The Thought Adjuster would like to change your feelings of fear to convictions of love and confidence; but they cannot mechanically and arbitrarily do such things; that is your task. In executing those decisions which deliver you from the fetters of fear, you literally supply the psychic fulcrum on which the Adjuster may subsequently apply a spiritual lever of uplifting and advancing illumination." (*1192:4)

Again, the importance of decisions. Let's take a minute and think of a situation that presently exists where you have been captured by some degree of fear. What decision could you make to break the fetters of fear and allow your Adjuster greater influence? How would it feel to make that decision?

The next quote focuses on a specific area of decision making — service to our fellows — and how it improves contact with our Adjusters.

"Jesus often took his apostles away by themselves for short periods to engage in meditation and prayer, but for the most part he kept them in service-contact with the multitudes. . . ." (*1000:3) The contact of the mortal mind with its indwelling Adjuster, while often favored by devoted meditation, is more frequently facilitated by wholehearted and loving service in unselfish ministry to one's fellow creatures." (*1000:2)

So to improve contact with our Adjusters, meditation is great, but service is *more* effective. Have you had any experiences where service/ministry has made you feel closer to your Thought Adjuster?

Here's another question: What benefits do we derive from regular communion? Rodan had some thoughts on that subject.

"This worshipful practice of your Master brings that relaxation which renews the mind; that illumination which inspires the soul; that courage which enables one

bravely to face one's problems; that self-understanding which obliterates debilitating fear; and that consciousness of union with divinity which equips man with the assurance that enables him to dare to be Godlike. The relaxation of worship, or spiritual communion as practiced by the Master, relieves tension, removes conflicts, and mightily augments the total resources of the personality." (*1774:5)

What benefits have you derived from communion with your Adjuster?

I'd like to close with these paragraphs:

"Why do you not aid the Adjuster in the task of showing you the spiritual counterpart of all these strenuous material efforts? Why do you not allow the Adjuster to strengthen you with the spiritual truths of cosmic power while you wrestle with the temporal difficulties of creature existence? Why do you not encourage the heavenly helper to cheer you with the clear vision of the eternal outlook of universal life as you gaze in perplexity at the problems of the passing hour? Why do you refuse to be enlightened and inspired by the universe viewpoint while you toil amidst the handicaps of time and flounder in the maze of uncertainties which beset your mortal life journey? Why not allow the Adjuster to spiritualize your thinking, even though your feet must tread the material paths of earthly endeavor? (*1223:5)

"May I admonish you to heed the distant echo of the Adjuster's faithful call to your soul? The indwelling Adjuster cannot stop or even materially alter your career struggle of time; the Adjuster cannot lessen the hardships of life as you journey on through this world of toil. The divine indweller can only patiently forbear while you fight the battle of life as it is lived on your planet; but you could, if you only would — as you work and worry, as you fight and toil — permit the valiant Adjuster to fight with you and for you. You could be so comforted and inspired, so enthralled and intrigued, if you would only allow the Adjuster constantly to bring forth the pictures of the real motive, the final aim, and the eternal purpose of all this difficult, uphill struggle with the commonplace problems of your present material world." (*1223:4)

—Marvin Gawryn
Berkeley, California

REVITALIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION WITHIN THE FAMILY

I prefer the title of this talk being the revitalization and transformation *within* the family instead of the revitalization and transformation *of* the family because it places the emphasis and responsibility of improvement on the

family itself. I believe that for any transformation to take place the initiative has to come from within — not as the result of outside forces.

In order to adequately understand how we can revitalize and transform the family we need to understand first just what family is, assess its function and value. Along with this we need to take a look at the current sickness that's plaguing the family and discuss the possible causes. Note that I refer to it as a sickness because that's exactly what I believe it to be — not a demise. Family is in a state of transition and we need to re-define it — come to understand it in the light of a new era — and answer to the challenge and responsibility required to fulfill its function in today's world.

Family, what is it? Dr. Charles Stinnette at the Graduate Seminary of Philips University in Oklahoma defines family in the following way, "It is a world of persons, a cosmos of meanings and common understanding which provides a center for unity and conflict, for meeting and withdrawal, for the shaping of identity and for the birth and nurture of our essential humanness. The mode in which family is a whole, and yet provides for diversity is the heartbeat of healthy living. Further, the family is a social organism which is propelled, not alone by physiological function, but most importantly by interpersonal events. Here is the foundational cornerstone for adequately understanding the family."

In reinforcement of that statement, *The URANTIA Book* describes the universe as a huge growing arena that is set up in such a way that it unerringly activates our individual growth — resulting mainly from the interaction of other beings — through the socialization process. We start small at first (we couldn't handle anything bigger) and gradually work our way up to larger and more diverse associations. Thus the smaller manageable unit — the family — is the primary social medium in our lives through which we grow and extend the learning it facilitates.

On page 1776 we read, "Marriage, with its manifold relations, is best designed to draw forth those precious impulses and those higher motives which are indispensable to the development of a strong character." (*1776:1) Growth requires encounters with people. Evidently we wouldn't grow much on our own, if at all, so we need the stimulation of continually bumping up against other people. And characteristically growth doesn't occur without conflict, and families, due to their intense degree of intimacy, provide the necessary rich soil. Contrary to how many of us feel and think, we're not here to simply get along smoothly, we're here to grow vigorously and deeply. That's God's chief objective in having us here and that doesn't occur in environmental ease (as *The URANTIA Book* so aptly puts it). In fact *The URANTIA Book* describes the partnership between man and woman as basically antagonistic — a pairing of opposites both complementary and necessary.

It's symbolic of nature's way to capitalize on differences — to utilize and benefit from the union of diversity. Also found in *The URANTIA Book*: "The enforced associations of family life stabilize personality and stimulate its growth through the compulsion of necessitous adjustment to other and diverse personalities." (*942:2)

Family undervalued

Ironically, though, in view of all this importance and along with being the oldest and most prevalent institution in our lives, family remains a most grossly undervalued institution. Parenting is the most important job on this planet and yet it is the least prepared for and the least appreciated profession of all. Even so, family is the most influential institution in our lives — shaping us and as a consequence, in turn, shaping through us the society in which we live. The family is our primary learning institution, where we learn about life, about the universe, and about the very nature of God. To the point: "The family is the fundamental unit of fraternity in which parents and children learn those lessons of patience, altruism, tolerance, and forbearance which are so essential to the realization of brotherhood among all men." (*941:9)

It is frightening, however, that although family is essential for the over-all benefit of individuals and society, we are witnessing what appears to be a general tide of family disintegration and with it a great deal of society's moral fiber. Why is this happening? There are many opinions but usually they only scratch the surface. For the problems of the family are not exclusive to the family but rather symptomatic of an all-pervasive cultural problem.

The single most important influence on our contemporary culture — on our lives — has been the dawning of industrialization with all of its consequent effects upon every aspect of life, from science and technology through economics, education, politics, and religion. We have time to focus on only a few key factors. It has been through the advances of science and technology that the basic function of the family has been altered in its very nature, and so its stability shattered. Not only has technology provided us with the inventions making it possible to travel farther and therefore extending our sense of personal territory, but it has also given us less reason to stay and work together.

Families had largely been cohesive because they were functional and necessary for society, controlled in turn by social norms and mores. But the functions that held families together and gave them meaning are no longer pertinent in today's culture — science and technology have largely taken care of that, cutting families free from their original or traditional working responsibilities. We, as families, are not in the same symbiotic relationship with society we once were.

All this newfound freedom is of little comfort because we're losing our sense of significance, and instead of society depending upon families any more we find families and their members hopelessly dependent upon society's larger, less personal institutions. As the family has become less and less necessary for the physical well-being of the society the individual suffers. Probably the most disastrous effect industrialization has had on the individual is this diminishing sense of significance — it's one of our greatest human needs — if we don't have that we have little reason for existing.

Although society has largely controlled the individual, it is nonetheless an invention of the individual — an extension of self-perpetuation. Society is a tool devised by the individual to assure survival; institutions were devised to fulfill certain specialized functions. In the past all institutions, including the family, were engaged in common reciprocal serving — the family served the other institutions and the institutions, in turn, served the family. This interdependence, this healthy symbiosis, has been broken as other institutions have loomed ever larger, resulting in the family becoming irrelevant as well as powerless. Since much of the family's function has been replaced an unhealthy imbalance has been created. Rather than the individual being a necessary part of a viable institution any more (whether that be a family or a small business in the community) his chief means of contributing has been reduced to that of a consumer. He has become depersonalized as institutions have grown into depersonalized giants — his own particular selfhood and personal skills unimportant.

However, industrialization itself is not the culprit. Rather we are victims of ourselves, in how we handle the new advances. For example, one invention that has radically changed the face of the family day-to-day lifestyle is the television set. It has been blamed vehemently for interfering or replacing intimately shared family activities. Howard Steing, Clinical Professor of Medical Psychiatric Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma, considers the use of the TV a symbolic expression of American culture. He maintains that TV is as much a person in the household as any real person — a person that captures our attention so totally that it obliterates reality going on around us. This is no accident, for he asserts that we actually engage TV to replace close personal contact, to escape from the commitments and sorrows existing with real associations. TV is the optimum and ideal friend, filling the void, giving us a sense of living and personal contact, willingly giving all and asking nothing in return. He maintains that in the sense that TV actually isolates us from real contact — separating us from real socialization — it's an addiction every bit as harmful as alcoholism or drug abuse. Since TV has become a cultural norm it offers one the luxury of having the ultimate sanctioned distraction. These norms make self-indulgence — rights without responsibility —

convenient and justifiable. Sadly, the irony of it all is that TV both fills the emptiness and serves to perpetuate it; it is symptomatic of the very isolation we use it to overcome, and so symbolic of a vast range of depersonalizing influences. "TV, though," he goes on to say "doesn't create or destroy relationships — it is not the villain — it is a matter instead of how the television is used in the relationships." Instead of disrupting family intimacy, for instance, it can be used as a means for family sharing — used as an extension or means of socializing." He notes: "Long before TV existed, there was plenty of generational segmentation, role specialization, fragmentation, and compartmentalization in the American family; TV simply was placed in the service of these tendencies, further disrupting interpersonal ties that were already fractured."

Looking more deeply, then, the problem has little to do with actual by-products of industrialization but rather its associated values. In an essay written by Dr. Peter Kountz and Rev. Douglas Peterson, entitled, *Marriage, Career and Disintegration of the American Dream*, the point is made: "The work/career component is the greatest danger to the American way of life — not liberation or the failure of the church to provide adequate moral guidance. With technology came a new set of values; speed and efficiency came to be valued as work was moved from home to the office and factory in order to bring workers and materials together in the most efficient way... Because of its astonishing growth and development through technology, contemporary American society has come to value progress and upward mobility as well as efficiency, productivity, and technical expertise... Americans have in this way become almost exclusively committed to the values of the technological, work-oriented American Dream... (ironically though) it is precisely the American Dream that continues to confuse and frustrate 20th century American culture and its primary institutions. It is a lure enticing us into the belief that its attainment will bring joy and pleasure. Like the fish that takes the bait, our frenzied pursuit of the lure turns into bitter disappointment, mistrust and frustration." And they make clear the effect this pursuit has on the stability of the family: "The value of family staying and playing together has been shattered by the dozens of individual interests that scatter the family members to the four corners of their community."

In the past, functional, economic, and social reasons provided the necessary cement that held families together, giving them meaning and justifying their existence. But today these reasons are no longer relevant and consequently family is floundering. It has been set free from its original purpose and is presently at a loss.

Today mores, values, and ethics are all designed for the maintenance and perpetuation of the industrial complex. Industrial survival is society's primary concern, leaving the individual and family expendable. So the ac-

tive values in our times are personally disabling. They encourage uniformity rather than individuality, dependency rather than self-maintenance or self-motivation. Corporate institutions have values other than human values. In our increasingly depersonalized society, market values or profits come before people. We have become victims of our own Frankenstein monster.

In order to offset this direction the family must once again become a viable contributor; a balance needs to be restored so that family is serving society again and in a way that only family can. The positive side of industrialization is that in many parts of the world basic survival needs are largely being taken care of by industry, leaving the family free to contribute in a new way. The stage is now set for a higher evolutionary contribution, therefore family is at a point where it has the opportunity to find deeper reasons for existing — to be as functional as yesterday's family was to an earlier era.

But the problem and solution are a matter of values and presently we lack a viable value system — what value systems we do have are either hopelessly outmoded, irrelevant, or corrupt. We are presently experiencing moral confusion. The fast pace of a radically changing world has given us little time to adjust and re-define our purpose. Consequently, we're at a point in history where we've gained freedom and don't know what to do with it; we've been socially regulated for so long that we don't know what to do on our own responsibly. Many of the standard moral codes have broken down. Margaret Mead, *Culture and Commitment*, explains that we are suffering a crisis of faith — we have lost faith in religion, political ideology, and in science, and are therefore deprived of every kind of security. She maintains that this is a world-wide problem because of what she calls the electronic network — that combined with air travel connects everyone together finally — leaving no one in cultural isolation. Everyone is now exposed to other beliefs, other norms, and mores. We are no longer limited by our small cultural scope. Our old standards and values are undermined by the awareness of other standards and values — we don't just believe blindly anymore.

Freedom with responsibility

Today we need a new ethic. We need an ethic centered around human values again, one to counter the dehumanizing values of an industrial era — values we've adopted that interrupt genuine human relating. An ethic, though, that moves forward to basics not back because it's a new world today and we need values based on a design suitable for today's world. Our boundaries have extended beyond our families, our communities, our cities, and even our nations. Carl Sagan, in his book *Cosmos*, points out the importance of adopting a global

perspective today, that is, "of broadening the circle of those we love... to include the whole human community." We need to become a world community based on a stance of cooperative unity dedicated to the over-all benefit of all humanity. For instance, Virginia Satir, in her book *Peoplemaking*, suggests that we use power with a different aim in mind. She writes, "I need to use my power for my growth and your growth. This kind of use of power doesn't exclude human values; it enhances them." We need an ethic that enables and frees people to themselves and one another — utilizing skills for the benefit of all society — of all the world. An ethic both respectful of the needs for personal freedom while at the same time affirming each individual's responsibility to the whole.

Eric Hoffer, the well known longshoreman philosopher, understands the nature of this new ethic needed today: "As things are now, it may well be the survival of the species will depend upon the capacity to foster a boundless capacity for compassion." Family, because of its close intimate associations, is the primary institution to embody this new ethic. The family is the most competent institution capable of activating a capacity for intimacy and sensitivity which in turn provides for the rounded development of character and personality. Only family generates intimately-caring individuals; it's the only institution looking out for truly individual concerns. Ultimately it's the family that's capable of freeing people to themselves, one another, and to God. In effect, other institutions are depersonalized. It's the only institution that can create love. To quote my husband, "institutions cannot love — only people love." The family institution is the sole exception, for when it functions as it should it alone fosters deep intimate, personal love!

I'm convinced that the main problem of the family today (and therefore our culture) is simply that the family doesn't appreciate itself — its importance — and fails to notice the enormity of its influence. According to *The URANTIA Book*, the family is far from being insignificant; it earns the lone distinction, in fact, of being "... man's supreme evolutionary acquirement and civilization's only hope of survival." (*943:2) Ironically, on the very institution that is least understood and appreciated rests to a very large extent the solution to the manifold problems that plague the world today. The family and its capacity for growth and change is the ultimate educator in society and finally the universe. Families are the teaching centers of real education and models for all social structures. It is the family from which we learn or don't learn individual responsibility, cooperation, love and caring, fairness, justice, compassion, forgiveness, and grace. It is from the family that we learn how to regard and finally treat our fellow man. As found in *The URANTIA Book*, the family is absolutely essential for revealing the true character of God. "The relationship of child and parent is fundamental to the essential concept

of the Universal Father..." (*516:3)

Jesus regarded the family so highly, in fact, that "the family occupied the very center of Jesus' philosophy of life — here and hereafter." (*1581:1) Jesus never underestimated the value of family — he saw family as representative of the highest levels of existence — referring even to the kingdom as a divine family. Jesus said: "... (the) Father has directed the creation of male and female, and it is the divine will that men and women should find their highest service and consequent joy in the establishment of homes for the reception and training of children, in the creation of whom these parents become copartners with the Makers of heaven and earth." (*1839:5) By what he said and how he lived Jesus elevated the union between man and woman and the subsequent family to a level far exceeding its status of that era and even today's era. He gave meaning to the statement that, "The family is man's greatest purely human achievement..." (*939:3)

Families are not only educational institutions for the members that comprise them but also educators of society. Families are essential as carriers of culture and instruments of change. In *The URANTIA Book* it's emphasized how all-important this function is: "Society itself is the aggregated structure of family units. Individuals are very temporary as planetary factors — only families are continuing agencies in social evolution. The family is the channel through which the river of culture and knowledge flows from one generation to another." (*931:2) Family is basic for passing on the cultural torch, giving continuity to social evolutionary patterns. Families are the carriers of society, without which society would stagnate. In *The URANTIA Book* it reads, "Almost everything of lasting value in civilization has its roots in the family." (*765:5)

Dr. Charles Stinnette highlights and summarizes this all-important function of family: "(Family), it is both a conservator and mediator of human value and a prophetic center which translates a cry of distress into a summons for help and change. The family is destroyed from within whenever it ignores either of these mandates. Its function as a center for prophetic change gives meaning and import to its function as the nurturing center of civilization."

Yes, far from being insignificant, the family's responsibility is indispensable. How, then, do we proceed in this vital reconstruction? Family building is at an all time low — it's becoming less and less an attractive venture for people. In their combined book *Here's to the Family*, Betty and Joel Wells analyze the dilemma this way: "The husband and wife who enter into familyhood — that is, have children — are offered little by way of preparatory education or professional training for what is surely one of the most complex and challenging jobs in the world. Nor are they offered the same sort of support which surrounding institutions used to provide. To get married, stay married, run a household, raise healthy, well-ad-

justed children to the point of incipient maturity is not the easy, automatic, natural thing it was once supposed to be. In fact, not very many people, when you take the population at large, are able to do it. Yet when they are successful, there's no Nobel or Pulitzer prize awarded; no cover story in *Time* to celebrate the achievement in the face of odds that grow longer each year."

Parenting, no doubt, is a thankless task today. Family is no longer regarded with unquestioned respect, no longer considered the pace-setter and upholder of right but, instead, is blamed for everything — blamed for the ills of both the individual and society. For that matter, Aldous Huxley, in *Brave New World*, forecasted a world where family would be entirely obliterated due to its supposed negative and immoral influence on people.

We are understandably apprehensive about entering parenthood any more. Thanks to psychology we've been made aware of the risks. We are conscientious about parenting now in a new way — having been made aware of the damage parents can inflict. We truly want to do the right thing, our intentions are right but we find ourselves so overwhelmed by the constant onslaught of diverse viewpoints on childrearing that we end up numb by the sheer confusion and ineffective by the inevitable guilt!

To complicate matters further, parental authority is increasingly being undercut today by the intervention of other institutions. We hear today of the rising apathy among parents, that increasingly parents are shirking their responsibility. I believe there are such instances but I also believe strongly that most parents are interested, extremely interested, in their children and if anything, they feel at a loss — they doubt their own competence as parents. I feel parents have to like themselves again and, therefore, like their role. Parent has become a four letter word in our society and that has to change. Furthermore, no one is more fitting for the job. Other institutions only know a portion of the child's over-all needs. It's the parents who must take their rightful place again as the chief experts in the raising of their children. In *The URANTIA Book* we read: "...any attempt to shift parental responsibility to state or church will prove suicidal to the welfare and advancement of civilization." (*941:8) Moreover, on a neighboring planet, as a positive example, children are under full control of their parents.

What this means is that today parents need to retrieve their full responsibility and authority once again, responsibility mainly as teachers. In *The URANTIA Book* we find that teaching and child-rearing are in fact inseparable. Education today, unfortunately, is regarded as only occurring in certain specified places and by certain specified people. Actually, though, learning is no more a consequence of organized education than religion is a consequence of organized religion. Learning is a part of life — it is life, in fact.

Parenting opportunity

Family is the arena for personal and interpersonal development. Family is a combination of elements that we require to grow. Even Jesus had to experience being both child and parent in family. We read: "No surviving mortal, midwayer, or seraphim may ascend to Paradise, attain the Father, and be mustered into the Corps of the Finality without having passed through that sublime experience of achieving parental relationship to an evolving child of the worlds or some other experience analogous and equivalent thereto. The relationship of child and parent is fundamental to the essential concept of the Universal Father and his universe children. Therefore does such an experience become indispensable to the experiential training of all ascenders." (*516:3) We need the opportunity to parent, not just for our children's sake but for ours as well. We need the addition that children bring to an intimate association.

It's common in our society to exclude children from our adult lives, to see them as a becoming, a "future," as Maria Montessori puts it, and therefore we segregate ourselves from them. Children, though, provide us with a necessary balance, something we wouldn't have otherwise. Children are not merely a becoming but part of our very essential and necessary socialization process. Maria Montessori further points out that by cutting ourselves off from children as we do, we are consequently severing ourselves from a necessary part of ourselves and ultimately our society. We are only functioning and growing at half our potential capacity. She explains it as follows, "There is in us, finally, a peculiar emptiness, a blindness we have built into our spirit and our civilization. Something like a blind spot in the depths of the eye, this blind spot is in the depths of life."

Dave, my husband, once said, "Children are incredibly precious because of their relative rarity in the total ascension career — but in our society they are largely cast aside. They should be our teachers; as God learns from us, so we learn from our children."

There's a beautiful book entitled: *Whole Child Whole Parent*, written by Polly Berends. Here is what she has to say about the education of parenthood: "It's an existential fact that most of us need our children. There are few people walking this earth who learn the arts of motherliness and fatherliness without children, and they are very wise. But most of us benefit from the big push our children give us toward the discovery of these qualities — qualities which are absolutely necessary to our fulfillment and of more lasting value than most of the lessons of childhood. We learn them for the sake of our children, but they benefit us most of all. Once we have learned to be truly motherly and fatherly (we need of course, to become both) we will always be much happier. The gain is not the having of children; it is the discovery of love and how to be loving. The foundation of love is

the knowledge of goodness. The qualities of this love are receptivity, patience, innocence, humility, trust, gratitude, generosity, understanding, and the desire to be good for goodness' sake." The most moving insight was when I read the following statement: "Parenthood is just the world's most intensive course in love." Not only do we disclose the true nature of our Father's love to our children as is so aptly pointed out in *The URANTIA Book* but it's within the family that we learn love. We really don't understand the full nature of love until we've had the opportunity to parent.

A perspective of love is basic, any method (for instance in childrearing) is secondary and inconsequential to love; if you don't have love any method in the world won't work, and by the same token, if you do have the love any method in the world will work. This was the wonder behind Jesus as parent; it wasn't his technique per se — his technique was love-based, love-expressed. In addition we read, "...the entire religious experience of such a child is largely dependent on whether fear or love has dominated the parent-child relationship." (*1013:6)

The ultimate goal of parenting should be to free the individual to himself and to God; to allow him to teach himself, actually, to learn from life like we all do, through the instrument of experience; to formulate his own truth. Polly Berends added a dimension to the well used quote by Jesus: "...except you become as a little child you shall never enter the kingdom." She goes on, "He wasn't talking about cute or little or helpless or ignorant; he was talking about the child's most outstanding ability, the ability to learn." It's the child's wide-eyed and open receptivity to the ongoing and ever-revealing truth that makes him a virtual sponge for truth. It's this condition of always questioning that characterizes the child so well.

I read somewhere that adults are collaborators in life with children — not experts — but fellow learners, because learning occurs always, everywhere and with everybody. Our role has to do with "...assisting the child to win the battle of life." (*941:7) Everyone in a household as equal participant, working in collaboration with one another, each empowered with his own personality and sense of responsibility is what true freedom is all about — it's the way of the universe. Jesus' family was so designed. It is true with the Father's family.

In asking ourselves how best to parent we need only look to God as our model parent. In his silent leading he offers himself as a patiently gentle guide striking a perfect balance of involvement. Always is God present but never overwhelmingly so. And by never imposing his will he sets and nurtures the conditions for the development of true inner discipline.

In conclusion, even though this is a time of great insecurity for the individual and the family, I see this as a

magnificent opportunity for all humankind. One way to view it is to see ourselves being weaned from an outer social control, to an inner greater control. This current narcissitic period we're witnessing is not only understandable but maybe even necessary before we discover something else. It's like being weaned from the bottle and resorting to our thumb for awhile. We're in a period of self-discovery — of finding our separateness. After all, that's where God ultimately finds us — alone — he relates to individuals, not groups as such. The challenge now is greater than ever before and that's really what's scary about it; the control is no longer out there — it's up to us now — we have to find the answers and direction within ourselves.

And what does this say about family? People as single individuals functioning autonomously, acting out of personal decisions motivated by choice, are far more cohesive and advantageous for the good of the group than the old family group based on necessity alone and controlled by society. Our families and therefore society is many times more solid and effective when people are committed to each other out of choice and governed by their own set of values born out of a personal relationship to God. This is what the age offers us. *The URANTIA Book* is a book of this new age — a vision of the idea of God-control.

"Families and societies are small and large versions of one another. Put together all the current existing families and you have society," says Virginia Satir in her book *Peoplemaking*. Because of this fact any changes occurring in the family have a direct influence on society. Families today have the opportunity of revitalizing with a new significance by transforming into small model communities, communities of individuals committed to growth. What a marvelous and different world we would have if everyone in it were committed to growth! People choosing to be together — embracing involvement with one another again but for higher reasons — based on the principles of dynamic growth.

Families are being called forth to be in the business of building the kingdom right here on earth. To develop and improve human quality and to act as spawning grounds by which the world learns the essential values of the kingdom. On page 1777 we read: "And thus, if you can build up such trustworthy and effective small units of human association, when these are assembled in the aggregate, the world will behold a great and glorified social structure, the civilization of mortal maturity. Such a race might begin to realize something of your Master's ideal of 'peace on earth and good will among men.' While such a society would not be perfect or entirely free from evil, it would at least approach the stabilization of maturity." (*1777:2)

And finally, family is not an end in itself but a pattern, a fundamental pattern of human relating that needs to be realized increasingly right up through the

planetary family towards universe family. Families are tiny microcosms of human relationships reflected on all universe levels — on page 369 we read of it being a reflection of the very universe structure itself. Family as pattern is the only institution that covers the entire range of evolutionary reality even to Paradise — the trinity for instance being the primary family. Its feet are in the earth but its head is in Paradise — no other institution can claim that!

—Sally Schlundt
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

SPIRITUAL REVOLUTION

In an uncommonly eventful century, the advent of *The URANTIA Book* will be recognized a thousand years from today as the most wonderful event of all. But here we are, twenty-six years into the greatest happening of the Twentieth Century and many of us are still uncertain about what the URANTIA movement is supposed to be, and further, what we, as believers in this new epochal revelation, are commissioned to do. Whether because of cultural habit or lack of spiritual courage, I think we sometimes confuse our secondary priorities with those that should be in first place.

The fellowship of *URANTIA Book* believers ought to be the most stringent religious group anyone could ever belong to. Not because of stiff requirements to join the Brotherhood, or because we would have to sacrifice our material treasures, but rather, because we would have to stop taking refuge behind the institutional facade. No more could any of us avoid direct personal spiritual interchange with other mortals. No longer would we simply cluster in societies and study groups, and allow these functions to be our only religious commitment.

Most of our individual and group religious labors are directed at people who already read *The URANTIA Book*. These habits of exclusivity and these organizational activities are going to turn us into a religion in spite of our protestations to the contrary. Some of our best thinkers are already warning about our inward-looking tendencies.

There is great concern over what the URANTIA organizations could be doing to spread *The URANTIA Book*, and not enough emphasis on what you and I can do to spread the teachings of the revelation. I believe there has been too much stress on Brotherhood activities, and not enough actual spiritual action. Instead of recreating a monolithic religious structure, we ought to be fostering monumental spiritual growth.

Relating Personally with Other Religionists

It is a safe assumption that nearly anyone you might encounter has had an association with organized reli-

gion. While it may no longer be a strong commitment, nevertheless, he will consider himself to be a Christian, a Jew, or adherent of some other religion, sect, or cult. And like Nalda at the well, most people avoid a penetrating personal spiritual discussion. It is embarrassing and revealing. It's easier to be an institutionalist. It is necessary to get around this barrier as Jesus did with Nalda, because no institution has ever saved a single soul.

David Schlundt has observed: "When we identify ourselves as members of URANTIA Brotherhood, or a URANTIA Society, we become part of an institution. Institutions cannot love. Only people love. Institutions evolve slowly; individuals evolve rapidly. Institutions put up a wall between themselves. Institutions, and sometimes churches, are a refuge for the insecure. When we try to interface with an institution, as an institution, there is little flexibility. I don't think we were meant to interface with institutions. I think we were meant to interface with persons."

Learn about their concepts that parallel those in *The URANTIA Book* and build upon their truths in a positive and constructive way. Many common truths come, either directly or indirectly, from earlier revelators. It would help the relationship to be able to use the other person's frame of reference, and even his special jargon when establishing a dialogue. Jesus always tailored his approach to the understanding of whomever he was addressing at the moment. Those who revealed *The URANTIA Papers* used our frame of reference when they imparted new truth to us.

At the same time you are searching for a common ground, you should be aware of the tenets that diverge from our own. There are elements in many religions that preclude acceptance of some of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*. Specific doctrines are being identified that are not compatible with the book. You might conclude that these are obstacles to introducing the book to devout believers of some of the religions. Make it your business to become knowledgeable about these potentially dangerous areas. Don't stumble into confrontations over issues that have secondary importance. The doctrines of most religions extend back hundreds and thousands of years, and will not be abandoned soon.

A religionist might not accept *The URANTIA Book*, but it should not necessarily interfere with your spiritual interaction with that person.

Many *URANTIA Book* readers are convinced that every time they approach another religionist, their goal should be to convert him from his religion to *The URANTIA Book*. Sharing *The URANTIA Book* can be a by-product of your contact, but it should not always be the sole purpose. Your object is to know religionists and to further enrich your life, as well as theirs, but not with any thought of luring them away from their religion. We are NOT to be scalphunters for the move-

ment. The sure indication of the scalphunter is that when he fails to recruit a convert, he loses interest in that person as a brother or sister, and moves on to greener pastures.

We should learn to tell the difference between the external displays, and the internal truth content of any religion. It would be wise, in my view, to acquire a sense of respect and tolerance for the pageants, the temples, and the sacred music of world religions. We must always assume that the forms used in religious services were designed and dedicated to the glory of God. The majority of the world's people seem to require material stimulants to spiritual growth.

It isn't fair to evaluate a religion by its outward rituals and trappings, but you can use this yardstick: "The truth and maturity of any religion is directly proportional to its concept of the infinite personality of God..." (*28:8) The best way to measure — not judge — but measure spirituality in an individual is by the fruits of the divine spirit that are demonstrated in his daily life.

Consider these two examples: First, many sects and cults claim to have their origin in a divine revelation to an individual. Some of these visitations later prove to have been hoaxes or self-deceived frauds. Nevertheless, the believers are still spiritually uplifted, and exude an aura of goodness and love. The Thought Adjuster is able to counter-part the spiritual values that are acquired for permanent registration in the soul. Another example is Buddhism. Buddhism at this time has not quite evolved a personal God concept, but yet, the book says that "Those who believe this philosophy live better lives than many who do not." (*1038:4)

One way to enhance personal relationships with other religionists is to remember that revelation has often brought "...autocratic and intolerant theologic egotism..." (*1012:4) There are millions of spiritual souls out in the world who do very well without the aid of an up-to-date revelation. In Ravensbrück Concentration Camp, Betsie, the sister of Corrie Ten Boom, prayed constantly. She even thanked God for the lice and the fleas that infested their wretched hellhole. Later the women learned the reason the guards never intruded in their barracks was because of the lice and the fleas. The women prisoners were therefore free to read their Bibles and to pray without interference.

Perhaps you do have more facts and truth than the other person; but perhaps she has more faith than you. You can become a borrower of someone else's living faith.

Religious Sensitivities

There are ways we can all avoid conflicts with other groups of religionists:

1) It has been the policy of the Brotherhood and Foundation never to pronounce judgment upon the

various religions or their beliefs. Letters written from headquarters, and letters written by persons in the field could someday find their way into print. We like to think that all correspondence would be free of religious and racial bigotry.

2) Headquarters newsletters never include anything that would offend religious groups. Many people who will never read *The URANTIA Book* are going to be reading our publications instead. *The URANTIA Book* and the movement will be evaluated by our secondary materials regardless of whether they are distributed from 533 Diversey Parkway in Chicago, or from the private homes of readers.

3) Our conferences and society meetings will someday become press and media events. Established religions will send observers. Many *URANTIA Book* readers continue their memberships in the various religions, and they are intensely loyal to their traditions. (Membership in URANTIA Brotherhood does not preclude concurrent membership in any religion.) We have ministers, priests, Sunday School teachers, and students and teachers of comparative religions. These folks know that all religious truth is not confined to *The URANTIA Book*, and they are offended by thoughtless slurs directed at world faiths.

To a greater or lesser degree, all religions are striving for the betterment of mankind. Jesus set out to enrich the religions of his time, not to downgrade them. We are not at war with any religion. Our mission is to gradually enrich the religious thought of future times, not to attack religions, and not to overthrow them by violent revolution.

Our Relationship to Christianity

Most *URANTIA Book* readers have ideas about how the book could be presented to religions, Christianity, in particular. First, let's review a little history:

The fourth epochal revelation — the coming of Christ Michael — was bestowed directly upon the group that had the most advanced concept of the One God. They were the Jews of 2000 years ago. For a while after Pentecost the believers in Jesus continued "...as a sect within the Jewish faith." (*2068:3) Then the apostles began receiving a flood of converts from among the Greeks. The apostles, who were Jewish, were faced with the question of how to deal with these non-Jewish proselytes. *The URANTIA Book* says that "...the apostles at first endeavored to impose the requirements of Judaism upon their converts." (*2064:2) Converts were forced to observe dietary laws and hygienic practices until Paul put an end to it.

The fifth epochal revelation — *The URANTIA Papers* — originally found lodgement among a group of people who not only carried on the One God tradition, but who also had the best version of the life and teachings of Jesus — the Christians. Most of the current readers of

The *URANTIA Book* are Christian, or come from Christian backgrounds. Just as the apostles grew up in Jewish homes, so did many of us grow up surrounded by Christian customs. What would be more natural than to transfer familiar usages into *URANTIA* Brotherhood and *URANTIA* Society activities? "Why not," you ask, "let the movement conform to the pattern of the Christian churches? Why shouldn't it become a branch of the Christian family of religions? After all, doesn't one third of the book consist of the life of Jesus? If we conducted ourselves more like a Christian organization," you reason, "wouldn't we be more appealing to 'other' Christians?"

Was Jesus' message of faith and salvation intended to remain exclusively in the possession of the Jewish people? Of course it wasn't! Here's a lesson from the past we can apply to today: The Greeks and Romans of the first century were ready for the One God concept. Judaism had the One God. But Judaism was not appealing to the gentiles because it consisted of a complex system of laws and customs. The simple message of the loving heavenly Father came along, carried by the early Christians. It was much more acceptable, and was quickly adopted by the Greeks and Romans. (*2073)

Modern Christianity is described in three places in the book (*1011, 1032, and 1084) as having become so Occidentalized with the cultural patterns of the white races that the Christianized version of Jesus' teachings is virtually unacceptable to the other races and religions of today.

We are commissioned (*1041 and 2090) to present this newly revealed vision of the life and teachings of Jesus to Christianity, and we must applaud any prudent efforts to bring further enlightenment to Christianity. However, this imperative also includes the injunction to take the message of Michael to Buddhism, to Hinduism, and to peoples of all faiths.

Whether we go to them, or whether they come to us, I believe that the Jews, the Muslims, or the Buddhists of today should not have to take on the coloration of neo-Christianity to join the fellowship of *URANTIA Book* readers. They should not have to hurdle our ingrained cultural patterns. The book warns that: "No revealed religion can spread to all the world when it makes the serious mistake of becoming permeated with some national culture or associated with established racial, social, or economic practices." (*2064:2) The best hope of spreading the teachings to the greatest number of people is to keep them free of any connection with any religious group. To identify *The URANTIA Book* with one system of thought will close the doors of acceptance to all others.

Possibly the most vital question we should be asking is this: What is it we should actually be introducing, or "mainstreaming" to other cultures and to world religions?

Note carefully: when they write about carrying the

message of Jesus to the religions of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and all others, they never, anywhere, imply that the entire revelation — the complete system of thought that is *The URANTIA Book* — should necessarily be introduced to those religions. They emphasize the message of Jesus; the *gospel* of Jesus. (*2086, 1041, 2090, and 1866) Too often, I think we confuse the book with the *gospel*.

Readiness for the Revelation

A few individuals are aggressively searching for new answers to age-old questions, and for these people, channels now exist that truth seekers can tune into what will eventually lead them to the book. Admittedly, we need to expand the number of channels. However, as many of us are aware, most of the people on this planet are not ready for *The URANTIA Book*. That doesn't mean they don't know and love God. It may simply mean that they lack the skills to read a complex book like *The URANTIA Book*. Many of these folks could certainly respond to small grains of truth and to sincere ministrations of love and service.

Spiritual Revolutionaries

The fifth epochal revelation has arrived during one of the most unstable periods in human history. There needs to be a new force on this planet. The forces of evil have usually been better organized than the agencies of good. The organizations of disunity are more direct than the movements of amity. There is no reason at all why this has to be. We know we must not "... make the mistake of fighting evil with its own weapons." (*1580:3) But spiritual power *can* be as invincible as the forces of corruption. Conspiracies exist to carry out assignments of anarchy. Why can't there be conspiracies to incite a spiritual revolution? Progressive spiritual reformation can be just as well planned as the designs of destruction.

A number of *URANTIA Book* readers are conducting programs in which the teachings of the book are presented in an intriguing format. The book is not mentioned as the source of inspiration. Quotations or paraphrasings are not used. Aperitifs of truth are metered out in bite-sized portions. These spiritual revolutionaries are, in effect, assuming a combined role: They are multiple Melchizedeks, patterned on the forerunner of Michael's bestowal; they are a battalion of John the Baptists, performing as did the herald of Jesus' mission. On his trip to Rome, Jesus, himself, prepared the religious leaders to receive the later-appearing fuller gospel. We are still in our trip-to-Rome stage. Those just mentioned individuals and groups that are detached from the official *URANTIA* organizations are performing wonders that the Brotherhood and societies would not dare to attempt today. They are laying the groundwork for the later appearing fuller revelation. There is room for

many more workers in this field of endeavor. When the world settles down and begins the search for higher values, it will surely recognize the revelation, if we all do our work today.

Spiritual Initiative

I recently surveyed the teachings of Jesus and counted 134 separate discourses recorded in the Jesus papers. Of the 134 talks, only 24 were delivered to large groups of people. All the rest — 110 out of 134 sermons, lectures, speeches, and parables — were spoken to single apostles or to very small clusters of people. As a rule, the most explicit sermons were delivered to the smallest number, usually no more than one or two at a time. When appearing before a large audience of non-URANTIA Book readers, one might wish to keep this in mind: To the multitudes, Jesus said the simplest things. To the large gathering he simply built upon already familiar scriptural passages. He never tried to awe the masses with descriptions of the hosts of unseen beings or tales of the mansion worlds.

He sent the apostles out two and two. They were instructed to knock on doors, to talk to people personally, to minister to them, to comfort the sick and dying. They were to proclaim the love of the Father and the joys of sonship with God.

The key to the spread of the revelation rests primarily with you. The world has never been particularly moved or changed by observing examples of exclusive idealism. It is possible to become a fount of ideals in your normal work setting or your home community.

Beyond every other consideration, your mission is to introduce the Father to those who do not know him. Your imperative is to comfort them with the assurance of his watchcare and his desire to have them succeed in every worthwhile goal throughout eternity. In fact, if you don't make these courageous efforts to minister to your fellow men and women, history will look back and call you GOD'S FROZEN PEOPLE!

Heed Jesus' advice to "...ever be wise in your choice of methods for presenting the good news to the different races and tribes of mankind." (*2042:2) Tailor your ministry. Individualize your approach. Become sensitive to spiritual cravings. When you encounter someone in personal difficulty, don't simply give him a list of quotations, or even *The URANTIA Book*, without another word of cheer. Seize every opportunity for personal service.

Handing someone a brochure is not the same as preaching the gospel. *The URANTIA Book* is very important; it is here to save souls. Read and study and learn the book, but the "gospel" is not a 2000 page book. The "gospel" is not that the book has arrived. In Jesus' own words: "The fact that the dead rise is not the gospel of the kingdom." (*2054:4) The "gospel" is not

that the universe is a gigantic ellipse, with Paradise at the center. The "gospel of truth" is not that the planet Urantia evolved through the vegetable and animal stages, had nine races, etc., etc., etc.

The world will be ready for all of these facts in due time, but meanwhile, mankind still cries out to hear these truths: The "gospel" is that God is the Father of all mankind; that all men and women are the sons and daughters of the Father in heaven. They need have no more anxiety about their eternal future, because the "good news" is that right here on earth they are really beginning their ascent through the universe toward the goal of the Father on Paradise.

—Carolyn Kendall
Wheeling, Illinois

THE COMMISSION TO MINISTER

The Way Jesus Taught Us to Relate to the Father

I can think of no better way of learning how to relate to the Father than through the guidelines given to us by Jesus and our own personal experience. Jesus demonstrates and teaches us to seek a first hand, personal relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Both Jesus and the authors of *The URANTIA Book* point out that anyone who has experienced a dynamic personal relationship with God and has dedicated himself to the demands of this relationship must do something about it. Genuine religion always motivates action and changes lives. Many of us have received just enough of an inoculation of religion to have developed an immunity to the real thing. We can comfortably intellectualize and emot about it endlessly and thereby escape the fruit-bearing demands of action. Neither high sounding words, grandiose plans, nor good intentions are substitutes for service, for actually doing the Father's will.

Jesus constantly emphasizes the centrality of service and fruit-bearing in our relationship with the Father. Religionists have often side-stepped the demanding discipline of spiritual ministry by engaging in religious substitutes such as theologizing, cult cultivation, rule-making, legalism, dogmatic proclamation, and mystic contemplation. The basic teachings of Jesus can be summarized by three words: attitude, action, and outreach. We are to love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind and our neighbor as ourself. We actualize this love in the concrete action of creative service; and this ministry is to be directed in an outreach to the ends of the earth.

Let us recall in more detail what Jesus has to say about this life of ministering to our fellows. In the parable of the sower he illustrates the importance of sowing the seed of truth. This seed will obviously fall on different types of ground. The sowing is our responsibility;

but the results, to a large extent, are in greater hands. We are reminded on p. 557:8 of *The URANTIA Book*, "The evolving soul is not made divine by what it does, but by what it strives to do." We ought to strive to whet the appetites of our associates for truth (556) but not be overly concerned about results.

The parable of the two sons points out that good intentions are not enough; actually *doing* the Father's will is required of all true sons and daughters. Or, as Matthew phrases it, "Not everyone that saith unto me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:22) To Peter he said, "Feed my sheep." (*2048:1)

Be outgoing

The parables of the good Samaritan, the lost sheep, and the lost coin all emphasize the importance of reaching out to others. Cults tend to be centripetal, inward; their primary relationships and focus is with insiders. Knowledge is shared only with cult members and special guidance is usually claimed by the select few. A mature religion or religionist is open and outgoing and seeks to bring ministry to all mankind. When we turn from our in-group preoccupations, we see that, indeed, the fields are white for the harvest but the laborers are few. The world hungers for a vision of a larger understanding of the universe and God.

Jesus admonishes us that one of the vital ways in which we relate with the Father is through the talents and treasure given to us. In *The URANTIA Book* we read, "Truth is living; the Spirit of Truth is ever leading the children of light into new realms of spiritual reality and divine service. You are not given truth to crystallize into settled, safe, and honored forms. Your revelation of truth must be so enhanced by passing through your personal experience that new beauty and actual spiritual gains will be disclosed to all who behold your spiritual fruits and in consequence thereof are led to glorify the Father who is in heaven. Only those faithful servants who thus grow in the knowledge of truth, and who thereby develop the capacity for divine appreciation of spiritual realities, can ever hope to 'enter fully into the joy of their Lord.' What a sorry sight for successive generations of the professed followers of Jesus to say, regarding their stewardship of divine truth: 'Here, Master, is the truth you committed to us a hundred or a thousand years ago. We have lost nothing; we have faithfully preserved all you gave us; we have allowed no changes to be made in that which you taught us; here is the truth you gave us.' But such a plea concerning spiritual indolence will not justify the barren steward of truth in the presence of the Master. In accordance with the truth committed to your hands will the Master of truth require reckoning." (*1917:4-1918:1)

These ringing words of the authors of *The URANTIA Book* are a clarion call to action. We further read on page 1780:6, "If you are not a positive and missionary evangel of your religion, you are self-deceived in that what you call religion is only a traditional belief or a mere system of intellectual philosophy." We are also told, "In the universal regime you are not reckoned as having possessed yourself of knowledge and truth until you have demonstrated your ability and your willingness to impart this knowledge and truth to others." (*279:14-280:1)

Show Forth Fruits

The latest and greatest truth which the Master has committed into our hands is the fifth epochal revelation. What fruits of the spirit show that you have done something creative with this enlarged vision of truth in your life and in your service? Where have you sown this new seed of truth? Are you cultivating soil and planting seeds with care; or are you merely letting nature take its course and busying yourself with other things while the winds broadcast the seed at random? Are you content to admire this beautiful treasure of wisdom, drinking in its great truths, and circumspectfully sharing them with a few initiates of your in-group and then returning the treasure again to its closet? Or are you putting this treasure to work in the world where it can enrich all of the peoples of the earth?

A mere handful of apostles and disciples of the fourth epochal revelation turned the Roman world up-side-down. Although thousands of people are students of *The URANTIA Book* most of them are "closet" followers of the fifth epochal revelation. After twenty-five years of preparing for the time when we will have an outreach program, the world, generally, is oblivious to its existence. I think the time has come to initiate a wise, but open, outreach ministry to the world.

I would remind you that virtually all of the major spiritual advances of history were spearheaded by laymen. The religious professionals not only are the stewards of vested interests, but their spiritual vision has been shaped and circumscribed by institutional forms and theological structures. It is perfectly natural for the priests living in Jerusalem to doubt that anything of real value could originate in Nazareth. This places an extraordinary responsibility in the hands of laymen for the initiation of any epochal spiritual renaissance.

It is easy for new spiritual movements to be captured by cult dynamics. They tend to become preoccupied with in-group activities and functions, organizational developments, legalistic disputes, and internal power struggles in the place of the proclamation of truth and spiritual ministry. The only escape from this cultocentric trap is to relate to the Father as Jesus taught his apostles: by engaging in an active outgoing proclama-

tion of the good news; we can transcend the cultocentric predicament through a courageous attempt to share these great truths with all mankind. I would invite all serious students of *The URANTIA Book* to dedicate themselves to some form of active outreach ministry.

This service to our fellowmen can take many forms and each of us must discover which function or channel we find creative. We can serve the Father in every vocation of man and through all of the arts and the sciences. Jesus directs us to seek the Father's guidance and direction for our lives. All of us are not called to the same ministry. Courageously keep step with the music you hear. Whether it be the call of the trumpets, the cadence of the drums, the melody of the woodwinds, the exquisite strains of the violins, or the quieting harmony of the harp — follow your own inner leading and so will the Father's symphony of service benefit all mankind.

Three forms of service

There are three basic forms of service in which we are challenged to participate. First, we should strive to live the great truths given to us. This is elemental. Second, we ought to engage in various types of material service. We should aid the needy, work for social, economic, and legal justice, and foster the actualization of human well-being. Finally, and most importantly, we are called to engage in a spiritual ministry to the minds and souls of our fellows. This sharing and proclamation of the good news has, historically, effected the greatest transformation of human life and society of all of the forms of ministry. Spiritual ministry is the most vital and far-reaching way to share the great truths of revelation and experience.

As this service relates to the fifth epochal revelation, probably the most critical decision each of us must make is whether we are going to share this larger revelation of truth directly or indirectly, whether we are going to "bootleg" it or openly share it, whether we are going to be "closet" students of *The URANTIA Book* or identify ourselves with it openly in our daily life. After more than twenty years of experimenting with ways to "bootleg" the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, I am convinced that only *The URANTIA Book* itself has the potential to bring a spiritual renaissance to our planet.

Most of the concepts of *The URANTIA Book* are already in the thought patterns of Western Civilization. It is the unique integration of these ideas in *The URANTIA Book* which makes them effective. Many theologians, ministers, and educators are currently presenting the essential truths of *The URANTIA Book* in their teaching. This is doing much good but it lacks the integrative spiritual vision and faith power of a revelatory breakthrough. Only the coherent message of *The URANTIA Book* itself has the dynamic to bring about a transformation of the contemporary human condition.

I recognize that such an open ministry is not for timid souls. It is difficult for people who are balanced, solid citizens in their communities to risk being viewed as "different" or belonging to some strange cult or movement. Let us not forget that pioneers always face difficulty and hardship. Pioneering is a rigorous and lonely path of service. Do not imagine that opposition and oppression are only aberrations of the past. New and enlarged truth will be attacked in every era of historical development. Nevertheless, for those who have courage guided by wisdom, bringing a knowledge of the fifth epochal revelation to the individuals and institutions of our world is one of the most important ministries of modern times. An archangel of Nebadon reminds us, "The weak indulge in resolutions, but the strong act. Life is but a day's work - do it well. The act is ours; the consequences God's." (*556:13)

Whatever form of outreach ministry you should choose to engage in, let me share some principles which may help to guide this service. I would invite you to adapt, internalize, and live by the following seven principles of ministry.

1. Use wisdom and balance in all of your service. Avoid extremes, exhibitionism, oversell, and the spectacular. Learn to distinguish between artistic good taste and the theatrical. Remember that personal contact is more effective than impersonal mass communication. Understand the wisdom and effectiveness of small groups. These groups form coalitions and networks more open and dynamic than hierarchical bureaucracies and self-serving cults. Such a network is many times greater than the sum of its parts. It has multiple leadership, pluralistic policies, and its center is everywhere. Start where people are, not where you are. Communicate in their frames of reference and anticipate their natural reactions. Combine the most expert knowledge with the highest values in all of your ministry. Master your mind through the power of the spirit. Be strong in the spirit; know that in liaison with God nothing can defeat the spiritual purposes of your life. Be fearless but act with discretion.
 2. Let love create the atmosphere of all of your interpersonal relationships. Remember that you cannot communicate effectively with others unless you positively and unconditionally accept them with all of their imperfections. Strive to prevent your own biases and limitations from interfering or distorting your service to them. Support, stimulate, and help people; do not seek to coerce them. See all of your fellows as persons of worth and strive to build their self-confidence and self-respect. Be natural and genuine and enjoy their company.
- Serve out of love, a thankful heart, and the joy of the act itself. Ministry is an intrinsic activity of

the creative mind and the loving soul. Extrinsic motivation in service compromises its spiritual value. Serving God even for good extrinsic purposes such as building your study group, society, or church, or even to bring about a spiritual renaissance, limits its spiritual value and personal satisfaction. Minister out of the intrinsic motivation of love, thankfulness, and joy, and the extrinsic repercussions or results will largely take care of themselves. Serve with the openness of creative love; but do not try to manipulate people.

3. Temper your personal convictions with philosophic objectivity. Always be honest and open. Cultivate freedom of opinion and respect the right of others to disagree with your most deeply-held convictions. Honor each person's God-given right to self-determination. Try to establish common ground but do not contend with people. Let your enthusiasm for truth animate your discussions but never knowingly put people down or offend.
4. Recognize that evolution is the underlying principle of life. Do not expect immediate results. All growth is unconscious and has mustard seed beginnings. The roots of a new tree of life take decades to penetrate the rocks of tradition on which it is planted. Be patient but do not become the victim of a fearful "do-nothing" psychology and bury your talents and treasure in stagnation or cult obscurities. Be concerned about ministering effectively but relatively unconcerned about results. Realize that your ministry must be planned and conducted in the context of the law of readiness. Always minister at the point of evolutionary readiness but do not confuse this basic preparation for the surface conditions of psychological and social readiness. All who have prophetic vision know that evolution, the plow of history, eventually breaks the crust of individual resistance and moves the clods of social stagnation. Be loyal and persistent in your service without needing to see results or to be honored by success. It is our privilege and responsibility to minister; the results are in the hands of God the Supreme. In all things cultivate in yourself the mind and attitude of the Supreme. The vicissitudes of time do not change the goals of eternity.
5. Be actively involved in routine, commonplace experiences. Grow, bloom, and bear fruit in the soil where you are planted. If possible, keep your old social and religious ties strong and healthy. Share at the level of spiritual acceptance. When you are a tadpole don't pretend to be a trout or an eagle. Only dedicated and creative tadpoling will bring you inner satisfaction and a sense of fulfillment. These mundane activities and identifications will bring a sense of proportion, genuineness, and integ-

ity to your ministry. Forget the failures of the past and do not allow yourself to be preoccupied anticipating the future. Live in the present in constant fellowship with the Father and absorbed in the existential moment of experience.

6. Cultivate an active sense of humor. Humor helps us maintain a proper sense of perspective. You can carry useful man-sized loads when you get the world off your shoulders. Do not take yourself too seriously even though you are participating in important work. Be unconcerned about prestige and status. Strive to avoid self-contemplation and cultivate self-forgetfulness. Finite personalities can become tragic figures when they lose their sense of perspective and fail to appreciate the comedy of life. We need to learn to laugh at ourselves and the frustrating, ridiculous, and absurd situations we encounter. A light-hearted spirit can be a great asset in carrying the sometimes heavy burdens of ministry.
7. Above all, live with joy in your heart and find joy in your ministry. You belong to the Father's kingdom which has an eternal future of unimaginable adventure and reward. Nothing can long prevent the fulfillment of your most ardent spiritual hopes and fondest dreams. All who experience this faith in an eternal destiny live with irrepressible joy even in the midst of material hardship, social conflict, and seeming personal defeat. As you free yourself from the slavery of the lure of things, the adoration or criticism of people, and the importance or preoccupation with self, you will experience the liberating joys of service. You will also discover that in doing so you are free from the egocentric social pressure of being successful and establishing or maintaining a reputation.

When our will is in harmony with the Universal Father, the joy of service also brings a deep inner peace. When you no longer experience this peace of mind and joy in your ministry, find another channel of service which does fill your heart with joy because you feel that you are where you belong, where your Heavenly Father wishes you to serve.

Let me now summarize what we have shared together. Jesus by example and teaching tells us that the one thing necessary in our relationship with the Universal Father is to experience a personal fellowship with him, a living faith. This living faith actuates three great spiritual truth responses:

1. Loving attitudes - toward God and man.
2. Dedicated action - service motivation.
3. Outreach ministry - communicating the good news to all the world.

These three great spiritual truth responses are augmented by the seven principles of ministry:

1. Wisdom initiation,
2. Love radiation,
3. Philosophical discretion,
4. Evolutionary consideration,
5. Commonplace participation,
6. Humor realization, and
7. Joyful consummation.

Now may living faith, the one all-encompassing requirement of sonship, inspire us to actualize the three great truths of service, guided and enhanced by the seven-fold principle of ministry. I wish you Godspeed in your adventure in service.

I should like to close with three verses of a prayer hymn written by Washington Gladden in 1879.

O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

Help me the slow of heart to move
By some clear, winning word of love;
Teach me the wayward feet to stay,
And guide them in the homeward way.

In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broad'ning way,
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live. Amen.

—Meredith J. Sprunger
Fr. Wayne, Indiana

DOING THE FATHER'S WILL AND HUMAN MOTIVATION

There may be a great difference between acting from good human motives and doing the Father's will. Morality, and its correlated motivation, is in the first place an evolutionary phenomenon. Then it is "super-animal, but sub-spiritual." Morality derived from this level is not spiritual activity, but an activity derived from a sense of duty. Morality as Jesus taught is more than evolutionary, it is revelatory, because its origin is in the Father-child relationship. This *experienced* relationship has as a consequence an enhanced morality that transcends duty. "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." (*1585:3)

We may intellectually accept this, believe it, but this is not sufficient, not the real thing. *The URANTIA Book* continually and consistently places the accent on the point that such a relationship should be an actuality for us. The first phase of the kingdom is described as: "The personal and inward experience of the spiritual life of the fellowship of the individual believer with God the

Father." (*1862:11) Then the second phase of the kingdom results as "The enlarging brotherhood of gospel believers, the social aspects of the enhanced morals and quickened ethics resulting from the reign of God's spirit in the hearts of individual believers." (*1863:1)

To have once experienced this contact with the Father does not imply that henceforward this contact is an established factual relationship. All too often, and all too easily, we drift away from this living contact. Then our morality is no longer rooted in this communion-experience, and it descends again to the evolutionary level of duty, though our aims and purposes may nominally remain the same. We then act as sons of God, (at best), but not in a sonship *with* God. And our good motives and intentions are human then, and not divine, though they may be our human *concepts* (not *experience*) of the Father's will.

To know the Father's will requires an actual, living contact with him, as he lives in us. This contact is characterized by experiencing his attributes as our values. When we actually *feel* those values (values must be felt, says *The URANTIA Book*), then we begin to discern the Father's will. "The human Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful, and good. All these attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as the 'will of the Father in heaven.'" (*2087:2)

By These Fruits

The Father's will is the Father's way. His ways are characterized by beauty, goodness, truth, mercy, fairness, greatness, nobility, etc. And if we desire to do the will of the Father, our ways should reflect those same values, even though necessarily incompletely, finitely. Then we show forth the fruits of the spirit. And by these fruits we shall be judged. Nobody can judge somebody else's contact with the Father. But a good tree will bring forth good fruits, and an evil tree evil fruits.

The Father, generally, does not tell us *what* to do, but *how* to act. If he should say: do this, do that, he would not deal with us as sons, but as servants. The Father respects us too much for that. But he is always longing to show us *how* we should act. "The Father's will is manifest throughout the universes." His attributes are; and we know them as spiritual values.

So when we have to make a decision, or have a problem, we should not submit to our human minds that want to tackle the problem itself. The solution of a problem does not lie *in* that problem, it must be found on a higher level. We should look away from the problem, and do as Jesus did: focus our minds on the Father's attributes. Then we soon realize that all solutions of the problem that do not reflect, or hardly reflect, those attributes, are not the Father's way. That already turns our minds in the right direction. And when we begin to feel truth, beauty, and goodness in our meditative

minds, those minds become enlightened, spiritualized. And the *father* knows that the *what* of the Father's will will unfold now we begin to see the *how* of his will.

There is a great difference between *knowing* and *seeing*. Knowing essentially is an intellectual function; seeing, with the spiritual eye, is a spiritual function. Our book states, for example, that believing in Jesus is not sufficient, not even believing in his teachings; you must *see* Jesus. (*1857:3) So when we meditate on the Father's attributes (e.g. truth), we should not make the mistake of substituting the form, the expression, the letter of truth for truth itself. Truth is living, a dynamic value, that must be felt, experienced. Values must be *felt*. (see p. 1219:6) A passage from our book may lead us to that experience, it is not that experience. Mind may be the gateway to spirit, it is not spirit. Try to feel truth, and you'll discover how much more difficult that is than knowing truth.

It is the same difference as between being a son of God, and having sonship *with* God. When we see truth, when we feel it, then indeed are we in the presence of God, and his will is manifest to us. But truth is only one aspect of the Father's reality. Love, beauty, and goodness are as characteristic of his nature and ways as truth. And we should, to solve our problems, meditate on these other attributes as well. Especially feeling the Father's goodness will prove to be a mighty help in solving our problems, though solving the problem should not be the main feature of our activity. To find the Father, to be like him, is the greater goal, and the problem is just a step on that long, long way. Let us not be result-oriented, and look for immediate results. The Father's way is the slow, but sure way. The Father is patient, but not compromising.

There is a great temptation in good motives. They may seem so nice and good, and we feel so nice and good when well-motivated. But let us beware. Remember Cano and Eve. Cano, though "completely honest and sincere", was, unconsciously, a tool in the hands of Caligastia. And his philosophy was: "Men and women of good motives and true intentions can do no evil." Have we really outgrown that philosophy? The second epochal revelation stranded on good motives. Let us behold Jesus, the Father incarnate amongst us. His philosophy was: "The Son can do nothing of himself, only what he *sees* the Father doing." Sonship *with* God. Let us not be satisfied with our good motives and hard work for the kingdom, sometimes for the Brotherhood, or the Foundation. "According to the truth committed to your hands you will be judged." And our book stresses continually the point of *true* religion, *experienced* values, living *inward* fellowship with the Father. To be a son of God will not do, sonship *with* God is required, and our great privilege.

—Henry Begemann
Wassenaar, Netherlands

EVOLVING A PERSONAL RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE: BELIEF TO FAITH TO TRUTH

Thank you all for being here. I've titled this talk, "Evolving a Personal Religious Experience: from Belief to Faith to Truth." I've chosen this theme because I feel that the most important message of *The URANTIA Book*, our fifth epochal revelation, is "how to know God," as contrasted with "how to know *The URANTIA Book*."

When I began reading the book in 1970, I was in the midst of a deep quest for truth, nearly a matter of life and death. With the social tumult and crisis of the late 1960's, I had chosen to do things that would be of service to mankind, to seek for an end to wars and for ideals that would improve the planetary condition. Determined not to rest until I had found answers to my questions, I recognized *The URANTIA Book* for what it was and literally devoured it within a three month period. On page 1739 I found a quote that changed my life:

"You are destined to live a narrow and mean life if you learn to love only those who love you. Human love may indeed be reciprocal, but divine love is outgoing in all its satisfaction-seeking. The less of love in any creature's nature, the greater the love need, and the more does divine love seek to satisfy such need. Love is never self-seeking, and it cannot be self-bestowed. Divine love cannot be self-contained; it must be unselfishly bestowed." (*1739:7)

After meditating on the nature of love for a few days, I realized that the questions of truth, the nature of reality, and the issue of revelation was this: "Can we love, can we be loved, and from where comes this power of love?" Since I was not overly satisfied with myself and was willing to change, I called God's bluff. I decided to make myself receptive to his love and see what happened.

I then made a list of those things I had been planning on doing, all of the ideas I had of who I was, my potentials, and so forth. Taking all of those ideas and concepts together, I decided to put them all on the back burner. I let go of all preconceptions of who I was and what was important at the time and unreservedly dedicated myself to God's will without trying to tell him in advance what it was.

Within a matter of seconds I experienced a spiritual down-grasp and was enveloped in the love and presence of God. I knew for certain that I was a child of God and that I and everyone else was loved with an infinite love.

Needless to say, my mind was blown. I had not expected such a profound and immediate response, although I knew inside that anyone could experience the same reality if only they could become total in their desire for his presence. The spirit of God, I knew for a cer-

tainty, was within everyone and through a faith link, we could help each other realize the love that was our divine right to experience. At last I had found the secret to making the world a better place and that to the extent that I would learn to love other people and help them to the same illumination, I could be a more complete person and share the presence of God again.

As the experience became more of a memory than a conscious reality, I began to feel a new orientation of my personality. Being a child of God was as much a part of my identity now as was my need to eat and sleep. Appreciating the value of *The URANTIA Book* in my transformed consciousness, I began seeking out other readers and introducing friends and relatives to its supernal teachings. To my astonishment, many did not find the same level of God's presence after reading the book. Too many were intellectually accepting what it said without personally finding God.

To a certain extent, that is why I am making this presentation today. I hope to share some thoughts and insights selected from *The URANTIA Book* with the challenge for others to go beyond belief, through faith, to their own personal religious experience "too sublime for words." With the thoughts I share, I am attempting to help catalyze the thinking of persons here and now to make some decisions, to make new commitments, to reach a new level of totality and enter their next psychic circle.

Today we find ourselves at a point similar to the place Abner and Paul found themselves after the Master's resurrection. What is the Gospel? What was it that Jesus taught? What do we tell those who are waiting for new truth? It would be so safe and easy to repeat the dogma of a new authoritative scripture, as if accepting *The URANTIA Book* were the same as finding God. Are we to manifest the arrogance of revelation, gloating with unearned knowledge, unquestioned answers, ever ready with quotes and pat answers? Or are we to focalize the total powers of our personality and reach in for a spiritual experience that will illuminate and transform our lives to bring out the brotherhood of man as a living experience?

We are to go beyond the level of believing that *The URANTIA Book* is true. Its teachings are not real until we have challenged them, until they are tested in our lives. *The URANTIA Book* is three pounds of ink and paper; the epochal revelation is alive in the experience of those who actualize its words.

I was at a regional conference last year, sitting in a cafeteria overhearing book readers at another table making fun of Christians and Christianity. Across from them at another table, a girl, obviously not a book reader, arose after eating her lunch and said to the persons making the jokes, "If you're making fun of my Jesus, I think it's just terrible what you are doing."

We have to appreciate that there are millions of per-

sons around us who are having deep religious experiences without benefit of our book. There is a reformation occurring within the churches today that is moving more and more to the living Jesus, finding that there is more to his gospel than the stories about him. Polls tell us that nearly one half of all Americans consider themselves to be reborn Christians. It is our challenge to find that common denominator in Jesus that cuts across the belief systems, across generations, over national barriers, and around the world and upon this base to bring about the realization of the brotherhood of man. Beliefs will never unify men, only the faith experience of actually knowing and finding God.

In the book we read that we need to spend less time thinking and more time realizing. We are sadly told that few mortals are real thinkers and that only one in one thousand is a true leader. We are told to have that willingness to go wherever truth leads, to not imprison truth in our hearts and to be prepared to do and be all things in the pursuit of truth.

Our lives are carefully balanced between the need for security and the adventure of freedom. The fear of uncertainty holds us back from new avenues of thinking and realizing. It requires inspiration, enthusiasm, and leadership to open new vistas of creative thinking. The Life Carriers mention that they miss past generations when men had more courage, bravery, heroism, persistence, and devotion.

The Master's parable of the difficulty of having a camel pass through the eye of a needle gives us an insight into the process of dedicating the will to the doing of the Father's will. The term "eye of the needle" was in reference to openings in the walls of cities such as Jerusalem that were the only pathways in or out of the city when the main gates were closed for defense. These doorways were only the height of a man, making it difficult for a mounted horseman or a camel with a cargo to pass through. A camel had to have its load removed and then it was coaxed through on its knees. On the other side, the load would be returned to the camel for the trip to the marketplace. In the same way must we be willing to give up our attachments and preconceptions to be able to pass into the new life of spiritual living.

The lesson is not that we are to abandon our lives and plans to pass through the door into spiritual experience, which is the old notion of the death of the ego, but that we must be willing to let go of all of our things, concepts, and pet evils that we carry with us. In this sense, God's will is nothing in particular, it is not what we think it is, but only a willingness to be receptive to God's will whatever it may happen to be. Upon unloading our burdens and actually passing through the door, most often God sees our desire and rewards us by returning the self we have given to him with the inspiration to be ourselves and get back to work.

Too many of us are losing the battle to the "yeah-

but." "Yeah, but what about rent?" "Yeah, but what if nothing happens?" "It would be nice to share God's love, yeah but what if people won't like me?" Only living faith and a trust that God is going through all of our life with us can overcome uncertainty.

The important issue is to place God in the center of your life, align your personality around the willingness to do God's will and then to find God's will through the Spirit of Truth in every situation by being receptive. There is nothing more tragic than a person so obsessed with what he thinks is God's will that he has lost touch with reality.

Our Adjuster does just that — adjusts. We can no longer rely on a moral code of what is right and wrong. God's will is ever growing, shifting, and leading men closer to even higher truth.

If we understand that God's will is the willingness in all situations to do God's will, we free ourselves from judging ourselves and others. At any moment a person can return to the ascension plan by seeking the will of the Father. The sign that we have found God, we are told, is the fact that we have gone looking for him. It is written that God's will is simply the willingness to share the inner life with God.

Stop and think. What is it that is truly ours? We are only borrowers of things, stewards of the land. Everything we have is a gift, including our bodies, minds, personality, and even the Adjuster. Only our wills are our own, truly ours. And it is our free will that is the only acceptable gift that we can give to God in appreciation for all that he has given us.

Can we realize how much God needs us? He needs to experience the sovereignty of will through the Supreme. The prepersonal Adjuster becomes a personal being only by fusing with the mortal who has freely given his will to God. In return for our will, which was a gift to begin with, God gives us inner peace, love, joy, happiness, and eternal life. God gave us our self, that mystery within we call our "I AM," and it is the one thing he asks for in return.

We can share in the experience of the Trinity as we liberate the Father within through our acceptance of sonship and give the divine spirit an opportunity to function and live a life of love. One by one, men progressively give themselves to God, and as a consequence, the Supreme is realized.

On world after world, life after life, the question is being resolved, "If imperfect free will creatures were given choice, would they chose to be like God?" "If God gave personality to men, would they choose perfection, would they choose love, could they become selfless?"

God is not the Sovereign Lord of the universe merely because he is the original and absolute being. He earns his right to rule through the Creator Sons and the Supreme. God does not rule by decree like Lucifer attempted, but through the free will choice of men. God is

sovereign to the extent that he is sovereign in our lives.

In this way, the right to rule is earned and gradually attained. Once the worlds of time and space are perfected and the Supreme rules as the Almighty, the Father will be free to achieve new levels of ultimate and absolute reality that were not experiential before the era of time and space.

Many of us may be thinking, "I can't wait to get to the mansion worlds." We feel that life is too hard, too complex, and confusing, that suffering is overcoming joy. And yet there are those on the mansion worlds dying to come to worlds like ours. It is no great challenge to serve those who are well on their way to perfection. It is the struggling mortals on the worlds of space who have the greatest love need, especially the mortals on the isolated worlds. Over 700,000 Jerusalem citizens volunteered to come to our world for duty on the Prince's staff. They would rather be back on a world where the service and action is, than be sitting around on a perfect world.

Even after attaining perfection the finalizers return to worlds like those of their origin to be of service while waiting for the next universe age. The bestowals of Michael are a series of experiences with created and less perfect beings.

Ambassadors of the kingdom

We, too, can become descending sons; we can enlist in the "service" and become finite members of the new Prince's staff. Through finding God in our lives here and now, we can become ambassadors of the spiritual life while still on earth. The highest service is to love those with the greatest need, and the need is greatest in those around us who have yet to realize that they are sons and daughters of God.

It is supposed to be a natural fact of life that men are the sons of God. It is abnormal for people to think they are simply animals. The 200,000 years of isolation and the absence of revelation have taken their toll. The tragedy is that the men of the world do not know who they are, and through revelation it is now possible for the global identity crisis to be overcome.

There are religions today that are teaching that men are the children of the devil and that they become adopted children of God when they accept a particular belief system. Those outside their cult are therefore going to a fictitious hell and the cult members live in a world of "us and them." We have to break the back of this false teaching and be unafraid once and for all to proclaim that *all* men are the children of God and that we can actually feel and experience our sonship as a personal reality.

There is a remarkable quote which says, "When the mental mobilization is absolutely total on any level of the psychic upreach toward spirit attainment, when there exists perfection of the human motivation of loyalties to the

divine idea, then there very often occurs a sudden down-grasp of the indwelling spirit to synchronize with the concentrated and consecrated purpose of the superconscious mind of the believing mortal." (*1099:3) And there is a similar quote on page 1130, "But the 'birth' of religion is not sudden; it is rather a gradual emergence. Nevertheless, sooner or later there is a 'birth day.' You do not enter the kingdom of heaven unless you have been 'born again' — born of the Spirit." (*1130:7)

There comes a time when there must be a transformation of the consciousness, a new mobilization of the personality, and a new orientation of the spiritual forces within. You don't just happen across such an experience. No one on the street will hand it to you. It won't arrive in the mail. You must go out looking for it. You have to want it. Your desire must be so great that you enter into a new level of "totality of motivation."

Over forty different times in the book the term "wholehearted" is used. There are similar injunctions such as the consecration of will, the elimination of doubt, the totality of a decision, the supremacy of a choice, and the willingness to believe. Few points are repeated or stressed as much as the need to come to a point in your life where you become absolutely unified, when all elements of doubt are gone.

For those who have difficulty passing through the barriers from belief to faith, from faith to truth, we can trade our mind for the mind of Jesus. If we are overcome by fears, when our worries and anxieties take control and we shy away from a supreme decision, the Adjuster can help us if we only let him break through the barrier of inertia. Through wholehearted prayer, we can ask for help realizing that we cannot do it on our own.

In a sense, we are addicted to our problems and shortcomings. We have our 'spirits' of fear, prejudices, self-doubt, and anxieties that keep us from experiencing God, because they keep us from a wholehearted decision. By using the philosophy in Alcoholics Anonymous of "letting go and letting God" we can find the spirit within that can and will overcome our difficulties. There has to be a desire from so deep within that the choice will resonate to the Absolute.

We need to meet God half way. Although God is an absolute being, we are told that he delights in communicating with us, that he wants to share his life with us. He needs us as much as we need him and wants to see with our eyes, to feel with our hands, and to be us. Even Jesus can live again through our lives. We can open our life now, to tell doubt to be gone. "Get the heck out of here, I'm tired of this uncertainty. I want to have a higher experience. I don't want to keep living with these recurring problems. I want to know God. I'm ready to be reborn."

You have to want it so bad that you reach an absolute decision where your mind is dominated with the Spirit, and then God can share the common ground with you. When your decisions become absolute, the absolute God

can communicate with you. He can share himself with you, he can become one with you. Jesus thaws "... the frozen forms of religion into the liquid liberties of enlightened sonship." (*1728:1) Ultimately truth replaces the assurance of faith just as faith transcended our belief.

Mota number 16 states, "You cannot perceive spiritual truth until you feelingly experience it, and many truths are not really felt except in adversity." (*557:2)

Sometimes you may not have an instant response after reaching a total decision, but you can be sure that your angel and the Adjuster will start testing the sincerity of the decision. They want to know if you really mean it and are going to challenge it through experience. You will find yourself in a crisis where your new decision will be mobilized and you will have to experience for yourself the reality of your choice. If the decision is sincere, the Spirit of Truth will speak to you, sustain you in the conflict, and reveal the Father's love to you.

Wholehearted faith

The willingness to believe, the willingness to comprehend are the keys to Havona. Half-hearted and partial devotion is unavailing. There is no growth without psychic conflict and spiritual agitation. We contact God through service more than we do through meditation. But only through actual experience can we know of a certainty the reality of revelation and the nature of truth, and they become real as we integrate them into our lives.

There are seven jubilees which we experience in our universe career. The first jubilee can be experienced here and now in the flesh. It comes when we make a solemn oath of our willingness to survive. For an experience that ranks with surviving death, fusing with the Thought Adjuster, arriving on Havona, attaining Paradise, finding the Father, or being mustered into the Corps of the Finality, it must be an incredible experience. If you must ask yourself if you have experienced it, you probably haven't.

Jesus can share his experience with us as well, an experience that is possible only on an isolated world such as ours — an experience of going from total isolation and darkness into supreme enlightenment in a single lifetime. Only agondonters who grow up on an isolated world without visible spiritual teachers can go from the lowest to the highest in this manner. This new revelation of the Supreme is available to us now. This knowledge of the sovereignty of Jesus as our Planetary Prince and Universe Sovereign is available to any of us for the desiring. Religious experience is not just for the prophets or saints, it is for normal human beings, jerks off of the street like ourselves. Knowing God does not require that we drop dead and go to a higher sphere; God wants us to know him now.

Already many people are finding God and returning to the ordinary world as ambassadors of a higher spiritual kingdom. Can we truly appreciate the rare opportunity to be of service to God in the flesh on an isolated world? If we slip back into mere security, we'll be kicking ourselves for thousands of years over the opportunity we missed while alive today in the era of an epochal revelation.

How can there be anything more important than finding God and sharing his love? Whatever it is that may be keeping you from this new experience, get rid of it. In the biblical sense, if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off. Find that thing that is keeping you from your total commitment and eliminate it from your life. The time has come to obliterate the dead center of indecision. You have to go for it. You have to want it. The desire is up to you.

The reality of the presence of God is not just an idea. I know that it is a reality. It is not a fantasy of the imagina-

tion. It can be attained and had as our own personal experience. If you set your mind to it, there is no reason why you can't have a new experience of God this moment.

In conclusion, I wish to share a prayer about the final rest that we will enjoy upon finding Paradise, "And there shall be no more sleep. The presence of God and his Son are before you, and you are eternally his servants; you have seen his face, and his name is your spirit. There shall be no night there; and they need no light of the sun, for the great Source and Center gives them light; they shall live forever and ever. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away." (*299:6)

—Jim McNelly
Denver, Colorado

"Be not deceived by those who come saying here is the kingdom or there is the kingdom, for my Father's kingdom concerns not things visible and material. And this kingdom is even now among you, for where the spirit of God teaches and leads the soul of man, there in reality is the kingdom of heaven. And this kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." (*1536:5)

Jesus' sermon on "The Kingdom"—Capernaum

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