



# THE URANTIAN®

## Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

### THE PRIVILEGE OF INDIVIDUAL MINISTRY

*The following was adapted from an address given at the 1984 URANTIA Brotherhood General Conference, Green Lake, Wisconsin.*

This article is about "other people." Specifically, I'd like to talk about closing the gap between "self" and "other." In order to begin, let's back up a little to the "beginning of time" as we know it personally. Gail Sheehy, in her well-known book, *Passages*, describes the early experiences of childhood.

"Each child arrives in the world an outlaw. He strives to center the universe about himself and to make it what he wants it to be: his own inner circle. For the first few months of life, this is easy. The infant is the world, and there is no awareness of 'self' as distinct from 'other.'

"Gradually, though dimly, this first circle comes to include primitive images of the caregiver—the first other . . . The baby cries out to its caregiver, who responds by feeding, soothing, and removing discomforts. Naturally, the need and response will not always dovetail. This allows the child to make his first rough reckoning of the balance he must expect in life between satisfaction and discontent. With the discovery that most of his needs will in time be met, the child gains the fundamental resource from which his development will proceed; a sense of basic trust.

"This trust becomes the cushion enabling a new kind of exchange, in which both the self and the other are acknowledged; psychologists call it *mutuality*. An early example of mutuality can be seen when a baby smiles. The mother returns the smile, whereupon the child rewards her with an even more enthusiastic response. The essence of mutuality is that *each needs the recognition of the other to complete the transaction* [italics mine]. The child has now written the first page in a long story of intimate exchanges."

Now let's look at our spiritual quickening, the dawning of spiritual consciousness. We realize God is our

Father. We are lost in a world alone with God. In the words of Ann Morrow Lindbergh, "The pure relationship, how beautiful it is! How easily it is damaged, or weighed down with irrelevancies—not even irrelevancies, just life itself, the accumulations of life and of time. For the first part of every relationship is pure, whether it be with friend or lover, husband or child. It is pure, simple and unencumbered . . . Every relationship seems simple at its start. The simplicity of first love, or friendliness, the mutuality of first sympathy seems, at its initial appearance . . . to be a self-enclosed world. [The one and only.] Two people listening to each other, two shells meeting each other, making one world between them. There are no *others* [italics mine] in the perfect unity of that instant, no other people or things or interests."

If God created you alone, if God created me alone, this exclusive mutual adoration would be sufficient, beautiful, and justifiable. If God the Father created God the Son and quit—there would be no "other people." But he didn't. They were conscious of their mutuality; and this consciousness, this *expression* of Self and Other is the Spirit. And, as you know, with the appearance of the Spirit is a host of creation—an entire universe of reality.

And so we are faced with the cosmic truth that each of us is the child of God, that God has many children of innumerable orders, and that *through* our brothers and sisters we will find God.

I have tried to give you a logical reason for bothering with other people. I am not God's only child. I have cosmic brothers and sisters, and we are all God's family. Therefore,

- I have obligations to them.
- They benefit by, or suffer from, the consequences of my actions.
- I share God with them.

Each of us has cosmic mind endowments which enable us to recognize (respond to) truth, realize duty, and react in worship to the Father. We use these mind endowments to enable our will to make life choices.



Dr. Preston Bradley expressed the following thoughts in a recent radio talk. "As you think you travel. And as you live, you attract. You are today where your thoughts take you. You cannot escape the results of your thoughts... You will realize the vision, not the idle wish, of your heart—be it base, or beautiful, or a mixture of both. For you will always gravitate toward that which you secretly love most. Into your hands will be placed the exact results of your thoughts. You will receive that which you learn—no more, no less... You will become as small as your controlling desire—as great as your dominant aspirations."

The cosmic mind endowments which let us recognize that we are God's children enable us to make the life choice to love and serve "others." The thrust is from God through us. The Father's love becomes real as it passes through your heart to your fellows. "The great circuit of love is from the Father, through sons to brothers, and hence to the Supreme." (\*1289:4) Reveal the love the Father gives you through your loving interaction with your fellows. Let God's love through you. Let God work through you. God's love is a limitless endowment, more than you can ever overdraw.

In time and space, we make it real,  
we make it happen,  
we actualize the Supreme,  
we activate His love.

God's love works *through* us. It's like a siphon. It doesn't work unless you open the other end and let it *flow through*.

We have talked about mind endowments, those realities which make us *decide* to do something true, good, beautiful—to be something true, good, beautiful. Now let's look for a moment at spirit endowments—those powerhouses which enable us to move once we have decided to go somewhere.

In the early church at Corinth, there was great dissension about the relative merits of the gifts of the Spirit. Paul pointed out that there are many manifestations of one gift, one Spirit.

- Many colors, one picture.
- Many persons, one family.
- Many members, one body.

In our consideration of spirit endowment, let's reflect upon the Spirit of Truth. "Pentecost endowed mortal man with the power to forgive personal injuries, to keep sweet in the midst of the gravest injustice, to remain unmoved in the face of appalling danger, and to challenge the evils of hate and anger by the fearless acts of love and forbearance." (\*2064:5) So, the Father provides the raw materials—the seed, the soil, and the elements. The Son sows the seed—uses the power provided by the Father to set the stage in time and space. And the Spirit in us can make something of it. He activates us. We are empowered by the Spirit for God's work—God's will—God's cause. The Spirit yields the fruit. From the harvest comes "bread," the staff of the life eternal.

I am supposed to be telling you "how-to-go-do" but I am not telling you how. I have tried to tell you "why" and "what," but I will not tell you "how." The "why"—because if we are all sons of God then we must be brothers. And, if God had chosen to differentiate in time and space, then we must synthesize toward eternity unity reality. (That's a high fallutin' philosophical way of saying that we must get along together, we must help each other, we must coordinate our differences.) The "what"—actualize the potential. We must *socialize our religion* to make it happen. We do not learn by merely studying, hearing, being told, observing. We learn by doing, by teaching, by putting into practice what we have studied. Learning, living, and sharing the teachings—we are evolutionary creatures. It is philosophical-ly required that we experience in order to become real.

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The "how"—I would not tell you how you should actualize your faith within the context of your own individuality. We *will* have social content. We will *not* see or feel or think or act alike. Our relation to God is the determinant as concerns the *reality* of our actions. I do not want to focus on technique by relation—our relation to God and to each other.

Reflect on your favorite teachers. Do you remember the chart of elements the favorite chemistry teacher had you memorize? Do you remember the memorized poems in English lit? Do you remember the entire Gettysburg Address from American history? No. You remember the teacher, the person, the relationship.

Conversely, if the church has left a bad taste in your mouth... is it because of the "irreligious" things taught you by a Sunday school teacher or minister? It is probably because of the attitude of that person. It was not Jesus' superb *teachings* or marvelous *doings* that held the apostles together, it was the human sentiments of friendship. It was not technique; it was relation. Each apostle regarded Jesus as the best *friend* he had in the world.

Let's move to considering personal spiritual progress and then come back to this idea of many different people going about doing good. We are told over and over we must first be transformed by the spirit. To transform is to change form:

- To trade one form for another.
- To give up the old form and get the new.
- To exchange perhaps our mind for the mind of Jesus.

Spiritual transformation is the key. We are born again in the spirit and all things are new. First you must be spiritually transformed for the magic (as it were) to work.

Spiritual transformation: Be you therefore perfect, not *do* you therefore perfect and wonderful things. Jesus would reiterate: In the kingdom you must *be* righteous in order to *do* righteous. In the kingdom *being* righteous by faith must precede *doing* righteous in the *daily lives* of the mortals of the earth. Starting study groups, placing books in libraries, visiting the sick, telling people about *The URANTIA Book*, raising money to translate the book, helping a person in distress, hosting conferences, even the intellectual interpretation shared at study group meetings—these things are *doing* righteous. We must be righteous *in order to do* righteous. *Being* righteous by faith must *precede doing* righteous in *daily life*. Please not though, "doing righteous in daily life,"

*daily life*. We should not fail to make note of the fact that we are told, "[Jesus] not only *meant well*, but he went about actually *doing good*." (\*1590:2) We also read, "...one must *do something* as well as *be something*." (\*1260:1) [Italics mine].

So, let us assume that we have a group of spiritually transformed individuals all ready to go about actually doing good—diverse personalities with radically different intellectual attitudes each striving to do good with his own original endowments of mind, body, and soul... and experiencing a threat to social harmony and fraternal peace. What is our unifier? How do we achieve harmony—while we lead individual lives of originality and freedom before God?

Jesus required spirit unity of his apostles. We must be unified in our wholehearted dedication to doing the will of God. Again, use your mind endowments to direct your decisions which determine your actions. Achieving harmony as we freely and individually serve God through serving man *must* be one of our life goals. We must have unity—not in spite of—but *because* of our differences. Understand the dynamics of the actualization of the Supreme—achieving balance—reality—harmony through the synthesis of seemingly disparate entities—unification through diversification.

On a personal level: The supreme purpose of life is the development of a majestic and well-balanced personality. And turn your gaze to each other and remember each member needs every other member for the body to be whole. The supreme purpose—balance—unification—coordination. Our unity will be derived from the consciousness that each of us is indwelt and increasingly dominated by the spirit gift of God. Our harmony must grow out of the fact that the spirit hope of each of us is identical.

Let me talk a little about specifics and not be so abstract. How about Home and Neighbor? As my husband is so fond of saying, "Charity begins at home." On this subject Mother Theresa tells us that "God gives us that great strength and the great joy of loving those he has chosen. Do we use it? Where do we use it first? Jesus said love one another. He didn't say love the world, he said love one another—right here, my brother, my neighbor, my husband, my wife, my child, the old one. Our Sisters are working around the world and I have seen all the trouble, all the misery, all the suffering. From where did it come? It has come from lack of love and lack of prayer. There is no coming together in the family, praying together, coming together, staying together. Love begins at home and we will find the poor even in our own home. We have a house in London,



Our Sisters there work at night and one night they went out to pick up the people on the streets. They saw a young man there late at night, lying in the street, and they said, 'You should not be here, you should be with your parents,' and he said, 'When I go home my mother does not want me because I have long hair. Every time I go home she pushes me out.' By the time they came back he had taken an overdose and they had to take him to hospital. I could not help thinking it was quite possible his mother was busy, with the hunger of our people of India, and there was her own child hungry for her, hungry for her love, hungry for her care and she refused it.

"It is easy to love the people far away. It is not always easy to love those close to us. It is easier to give a cup of rice to relieve hunger than to relieve the loneliness and pain of someone unloved in our own home. Bring love into your home for this is where our love for each other must start."

In an address called *The Weight of Glory* C.S. Lewis states this concern somewhat differently. "It may be possible for each [of us] to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible [that we will] think too often or too deeply about that of [our] neighbor. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship. [This is fatherly love—seeing the perfected creature]. . . All day long we are, in some degree [or not], helping each other to [this] destination. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations, [organizations]—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit . . . everlasting splendours. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously — no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love . . . no mere

tolerance, or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment . . . your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses . . . [and within him, God]. . . the glorifier and the glorified, Glory himself, is truly hidden."

Paul of Tarsus said it simply, "I am the glory of God. You are the glory of God."

Let's just talk about the here and now. Our immediate neighbors, the people in our families, at work, in our study group, our friends, strangers in the street — the people in our daily lives. Today — not tomorrow — now — here. "As the Father sent me into the world, so send I you. As I have revealed the Father, so shall you reveal the divine love, not merely with words, but in your daily living. I send you forth, not to love the souls of men, but rather to *love men* . . . Your mission to the world is founded on the fact that I lived a God-revealing life among you; on the truth that you and all other men are the sons of God; and it shall consist in the life which you will live among men — the actual and living experience of loving men and serving them, even as I have loved and served you." (\*2043:2) Your mission shall consist in the life which you will live among men. Here — now. The religion of Jesus was based wholly on living his life. He left no books, laws, or organizations affecting the religious life of the individual. The religion of Jesus was based wholly on *living his life*.

We can't just talk about it. We must live it to make it happen. We must be interested in the members of our own study group, not just because they increase its size, but because we truly love them — we are interested in *them*. "The privilege of service immediately follows the discovery of trustworthiness. Nothing can stand between you and opportunity for increased service except your own untrustworthiness, your lack of capacity for appreciation of the solemnity of trust." (\*316:4) "Trust is the crucial test of will creatures. Trustworthiness is the true measure of self-mastery, character." (\*315:7) "What is loyalty? It is the fruit of an intelligent appreciation of universe brotherhood; one could not take so much and give nothing." (\*435:5)

In John's epistle we read, "Beloved! Let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. We love because God first loved us. If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates his brother, he is a liar. For he cannot love God, whom he has not seen, if he does not love his brother, whom he has seen. This, then, is the command that Christ gave us: he who loves God must love his brother also."



Louis Evelyn, in a book called *That Man is You*, envisioned the last judgment as it was described in a play by Jean Anouilh.

"The good are densely clustered at the gate of heaven,  
eager to march in,  
sure of their reserved seats,  
keyed up and bursting with impatience.

All at once, a rumor starts spreading:  
'It seems He's going to forgive those others,  
too!'

For a minute, everyone's dumbfounded.  
They look at one another in disbelief,  
gasping and sputtering.  
'After all the trouble I went through!  
If only I'd known this. . .'  
'I just can't get over it!'

Exasperated, they work themselves into a fury  
and start cursing God;  
and at that very instant [they do not survive].

That was the final judgment, you see.  
They judged themselves,  
excommunicated themselves.

Love appeared,  
and they refused to acknowledge it.  
'We don't know this man.'  
'We don't approve of a heaven  
that's open to every Tom, Dick and  
Harry.'  
'We spurn this God who lets everyone off.'  
'We can't love a God who loves so  
foolishly.'  
And because they didn't love Love,  
they didn't recognize Him."

Evelyn also says:  
'If people tell us, 'I love God,'  
we should withhold our judgment  
and hesitate to canonize them.  
Perhaps they're merely going through  
a pious phase.  
But if they say, 'I love my neighbor,'  
then we can begin to esteem them  
as extraordinary beings.  
Perhaps we've met someone, at last,  
who can put up with God.'

If someone says, "I love God," but hates his brother,  
he is a liar. For he cannot love God, whom he has not  
seen, if he does not love his brother, whom he has seen.

"The Master has taught the apostles that they are the  
sons of God. He has called them brethren, and now, be-  
fore he leaves, he calls them his friends." (\*1945:4) In  
the gospel that we call John: "No longer do I call you  
servants, for the servant does not know what his master  
is doing; instead I call you friends."

Fr. George Ninteman, a Dominican Preacher, writes,  
"Every meeting of persons is the exchange of gifts. But a  
gift without a giver is not a gift, it is a thing devoid of re-  
lationship. Friendship is a relationship between persons  
who see themselves as they truly are; gifts of the Father  
to each other for others. . .brothers. A friend is a gift  
not just to me, but to others through me. . . When I  
keep my friend, possess him, I destroy him 'giftness.' If I  
save his life for me, I lose it for others. Persons are gifts,  
gifts received and gifts given, like the Son, like the  
Spirit, gifts from the Father. Friendship is the response  
of persons. . ."

Remember our father/brother's last words on earth:  
"Love men with the love wherewith I have loved you  
and serve your fellow mortals even as I have served  
you. By the spirit fruits of your lives impel souls to be-  
lieve the truth that man is a son of God, and that all men  
are brethren. Remember all I have taught you and the  
life I have lived among you. My love overshadows you,  
my spirit will dwell with you, and my peace shall abide  
upon you. Farewell." (\*2057:4)

Do well.

May we go out  
to do the work  
he has given us to do.

To love and serve him  
with gladness and singleness of heart.

May we walk in his ways  
and delight  
in the certain and joyous performance  
of the gracious,  
acceptable,  
and perfect  
will of God.



## FROM THE EDITORS

Over the last eight years of publication of The URANTIAN Journal of URANTIA Brotherhood, we have from time to time suggested topics for future issues to stimulate the writers in our community to offer their work for publication. Once again we would like to tickle your imaginations and word-processors with a request for your active participation in The Journal in the coming months. Here's our question, based upon the following quote from Paper 1 of *The URANTIA Book*:

"The affectionate dedication of the human will to the doing of the Father's will is man's choicest gift to God; in fact, such a consecration of creature will constitutes man's only possible gift of true value to the Paradise Father." (\*22:5)

### Question

Why is this consecration the *only* gift of true value?

While our intent is to stimulate the submittal of finished articles for publication, we will also welcome, edit (if necessary), and publish in summary form *any* responses to this question you care to send us. In fact, if this approach generates the level of interest we hope it will, we plan to use it on a regular basis to provide a way for our readers to share their thoughts, observations, and responses to questions many of us struggle with on a regular basis, alone, or in our study groups, as we seek to understand our Father better through the mechanism of *The URANTIA Book*. Thanks in advance for your willingness to participate with us in a more active way of using The URANTIAN Journal to cross-fertilize our thinking.

Warmly,

—The Editors

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*"A personality who knows God and desires to do his will, who has spirit insight, is divinely stable and eternally existent. 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)*