



THE
URANTIAN®

Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

**WHAT IS THE NEW PHILOSOPHY
OF LIVING PROJECT?**

"The religious challenge of this age is to those farseeing and forward-looking men and women of spiritual insight who will dare to construct a new and appealing philosophy of living out of the enlarged and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness." (*43:4) What implications does this passage carry? What questions does it raise?

The religious challenge. What a surprise to propose this one as primary! What would you have said if you had been asked what the main religious challenge of this age is? Most religionists would come up with very different answers. Let us not hurriedly nod our agreement with the text and quickly pass on to the next edifying line. In order to discover whether we agree with the author, we must investigate.

The religious challenge. We might have been less shocked if the author had called this the intellectual or philosophic challenge of the age. I can only surmise that progress on this project is important for preachers and religious teachers during and after the spiritual renaissance.

Note that a religious challenge is not identical to a spiritual one. A spiritual challenge pertains to our coordination with the inner spiritual influences, for example, "The great challenge to modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Monitor that dwells within the human mind." (*2097:2) Religion depends not only on inner spiritual experience but also on truth coming from outside—from epochal revelation and from evolutionary traditions. Religion is the interface of spirituality and culture.

The religious challenge. To succeed in a challenge it is well to know the obstacles. What are they? Religious inertia? Secularist social power? THEIR static concepts? OUR ignorance?

Trail-blazing work is fairly lonely. It is easy to get off the track in uncharted territory. Most people do not understand or appreciate your project. If you say a few words about it, you may expect the polite approval

generally accorded to idealistic projects. If you say much more, people may conclude that you belong where you are—on the margin of the culture.

If the project could be completed in a pleasant weekend seminar, there would be no point in asking for people who will dare to construct this new philosophy. We can only comprehend truth by living it, and a finer philosophy presents greater challenges to the way we live.

The religious challenge of this age. This is an age of ideological conflict—published attacks, institutional prejudice, warfare. To be sure, there are many well-balanced, humane, and truly spiritual individuals leading civilization forward. But two thousand years after Christ, there are scientists who regard the acquisition and application of knowledge as the key to solving the world's problems; humanists who believe that enlightened tolerance, rational persuasion, and political power are adequate to the problems of human community; and preachers who teach people to expect miracles when they really need to face facts and participate in rational dialogue.

To be a peacemaker in this chaos of ideologies one must appreciate the values they are defending. To know them takes time to explore thickets of fundamentalistic oneness, secularist error, and atheistic ugliness—in search of truths that can be the basis of dialogue. Not only is there a risk of getting lost in some thicket. To experience the reality of the struggle, one must get out and talk to people—leave the quiet of one's own study and the peace of one's own ideological circle to meet some of the bright, well-educated, persuasive, living advocates of different positions.

A philosophy of living can express cosmic, universal, and divine values without taking positions on social, economic, and political issues. Much of the ideological battle today has to do with totalitarianism and democracy, capitalism and socialism, nationalism and communism. Ideological struggles over these matters form part of the backdrop for the new construction. Philosophy is capable of becoming directly involved in these controversies; but the religious challenge is not to produce a new political theory, an attractive economic vi-

sion, or an exquisite blueprint for interracial peace and progress. The project assigned by the Divine Counselor comes down on the personal and spiritual side of life, rather than the material and social side. The care with which this frontier is understood and respected will greatly affect the serviceableness of what we construct. It must be possible to speak of certain helpful essentials that will indirectly illuminate these issues—but without entering the same battleground. Can we manage it?

Farseeing and forward-looking. A farseeing planetary perspective ranges back to the stone age and forward to the advanced culture of destiny. It is not overwhelmed by the immediate problems of its own generation. A new age is under construction. A forward-looking perspective is not chained to philosophic tradition. The more accurately we can discern planetary developments, the more strategically we can emphasize timely facets of truth, even as Jesus did in teaching the gospel! "By this process of gradually changing man's will and thus affecting human decisions, Michael and his associates are likewise

gradually but certainly changing the entire course of human evolution, social and otherwise." (*1863:5)

Men and women. This is not a job for a lone religious philosopher; if and when the planet receives another Plato, it will not do to just go and implore this genius to construct our philosophy of living for us. And the viewpoints of men and women are complementary; it takes many voices to speak truth repletely.

Men and women of spiritual insight. This is the number one qualification for the job, not academic degrees or impressive human achievements. It is not even necessary to "be a philosopher." We often use the word "insight" to refer to a momentary experience of putting some pieces together into a new idea. Spiritual insight, however, is an experience of divine value. Insight is "... the capacity to experience unchallengeable consciousness of cosmic reality." (*1226:15) How is insight tested? Does attack make it timid? Does seeming evidence to the contrary suspend it? Do the months and years make it dim and eventually dubious? One Buddhist scripture describes such insightful persons as "having seen the Truth, having mastered the Truth, having understood the Truth, having penetrated the Truth, having overcome uncertainty, having dispelled all doubts, having gained full knowledge, dependent on nobody else for the knowledge of the doctrine of the Teacher."

Construct. There is a danger to constructing a philosophy. Some of the finest articles of Thomas Aquinas concern the nature of God. The intellectual precision of his system, however, not only served to handle the arguments of his day with a stunning completeness; it also helped crystallize scholastic philosophy and thereby undermined its vitality—intellect domesticated spiritual experience. Confucius is said to have built too well; his error was perhaps to go too far in identifying goodness with the details of a particular ethical tradition. Why does the Divine Counselor introduce the paper containing the sketch of this project with the comment that "... it is permissible, and may prove helpful, to study certain characteristics of the divine nature..."? (*33:1) This implies that there is a possibility that this paper may not prove helpful. What can we do to secure beneficial results for the coming millenium? The author emphasizes regarding ourselves as God's children and keeping in mind the life of Jesus as the living illustration of the concepts of divinity being presented. We are being invited to see the Master's life in new categories, and to discover new life in the concept of God.

Constructing a philosophy of living is different from writing down the meanings of supreme concepts. To

THE
URANTIAN®
Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

Published Quarterly by
URANTIA Brotherhood
533 Diversey Parkway
Chicago Illinois 60614

Subscription Price: \$5.00 a year

International Subscribers - add \$1.00 for postage

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construct does not mean to publish. Is the construction a literary enterprise at all? Or a life of dialogue? The questions of whether something should be written down, and if so, which generation should do it, were questions that Jesus and the apostles took seriously. Those developing the new philosophy will undoubtedly yield an abundant variety of creative expressions.

A new and appealing philosophy of living. Why not many philosophies? Why shouldn't each person construct his or her own? To be sure, there are particulars that give a unique hue to one's personal philosophy; not only the way we express truth, but the ideas we highlight have much to do with variables such as race, sex, class, occupation, education, family situation, and personal religious experience. But something more universal is underway in this philosophy of living project, and only by sharing with others will we discover what is universal about our own philosophy.

This philosophy is not like a prefabricated house, a mass-production special, one model per neighborhood. It is a flexible design that includes the essentials of any adequate particular structure—family room with an area for games, a place for worship, a study, etc. And it is more like a home to live in than one built for speculation on the market.

New and appealing. Appealing to whom? Is there a primary audience, a secondary audience, etc.? Eventually there will be one world-wide philosophy. Where will it first be received?

I find a creative tension in the marketing implications here. If you are too new, you won't appeal to very many people. Someday a keen essay about the seven absolutes may appeal to a majority of intellectuals. On the other hand, if you are too appealing, you won't be communicating much that's new. The formula for quick appeal is to "find a parade and get in front of it." At the extreme, this is the musician's dilemma—shall I sing pop trash and enjoy the applause, or dedicate myself to beauty and starve?

In order to appeal, the new philosophy must relate to human needs. Sensitivity to the ideological battleground will make the construction more relevant. And so will sensitivity to each generation's "... ever-new and varied spiritual difficulties" (*2060:6) Surely the spiritual difficulties reveal needs to which the new philosophy must minister if it is to appeal. And the more it incorporates universal concepts, the more lasting will be its appeal, since it will be capable of application to many generations, not only to one.

Philosophy. Consider the different functions of phi-

losophy. First, philosophy is half-way up the mountain that ascends from science to spiritual experience. Philosophy is a reflection on facts in order to discern meanings; and it is sublime thinking, a preparation for worship.

Second, for someone who has reached the top of the mountain, philosophy integrates a balanced perspective on reality, bringing material fact and spiritual experience together with the aid of revelation. From the standpoint of mind, philosophy surveys the totality; and religion is one theme, albeit the central theme within its reflective compass.

Finally, philosophy finds its place as part of a larger whole. Religion is the whole of life, ultimately, not a part. And philosophy is religion's access to science and its way of thinking: "Philosophy is to religion as conception is to action." (*1080:2)

Philosophy of living. When a culture takes religion too seriously and lacks a "non-theologic philosophy of living," its direct contact with life is hampered. Every experience is filtered through scripture. Every lesson has been written down and needs only to be quoted. Only a philosophy grown on the soil of experience can achieve simplicity and broad appeal. Buddhist philosophy spread as a simple teaching about universal human concerns—the cause and cure for suffering, and discipline that leads to moral excellence and mental serenity.

Construct a philosophy *out of* the expanded and exquisitely integrated modern concepts. The network of high concepts is the raw material, not the finished product. Exploring their breadth and integration is one task. And expressing one's discoveries in a manner consistent with truth, beauty, and goodness is another.

Expanded and exquisitely integrated concepts. Expanded concepts have tentacles into many fields. The concept of evolution is meaningful in history and in many sciences; the concept of character is meaningful in social science, literature, philosophy, and religion.

Exquisite is a quality of artistry. Plato attained heights of artistic philosophy that have not been reached since. How can we approach these heights within the limits set by our genetic capacity, education, and available time? Perhaps this is the key:

"Cosmic concepts of true philosophy, the portrayal of celestial artistry, or the mortal attempt to depict the human recognition of divine beauty can never be truly satisfying if such attempted creature progression is ununified. These expressions of the divine urge within the evolving creature may be intellectually true, emotionally beautiful, and spiritually good; but the real soul

of expression is absent unless these realities of truth, meanings of beauty, and values of goodness are unified in the life experience of the artisan, the scientist, or the philosopher." (*507:4)

Modern concepts. What will the term "modern" mean in 200 years? Literally the term "modern" refers to changeable fashions—the latest fashion. What are the modern concepts we are supposed to use? Where do we find them? *The URANTIA Book* contains the essentials. The revelators "...selected as the basis of these papers more than one thousand human concepts representing the highest and most advanced planetary knowledge of spiritual values and universe meanings." (*17:1) In studying the religious life of Jesus we are treated to "...thought gems and superior concepts of Jesus' teachings assembled from more than two thousand human beings..." (*1343:2) To identify these concepts will require much research within the book; but there is a further important part of the task. Evolutionary cosmology, philosophy, and theology were not frozen in 1935. To survey the ripening planetary harvest of expanding concepts, ongoing study outside the book is required. No wonder there is talk of a challenge for many men and women!

Concepts. A concept is more than an idea; it has two sides, an intellectual side and a spiritual side. The intellectual side is a clear idea; but an idea is potentially static, for it can be treated as having a single, fixed meaning, isolated from the rest of the organically growing universe. The spiritual side is a value, flowing and dynamic; it can never be captured in words, but it can be obscured by the human tendency toward standardized emotional responses.

The best way to realize the special significance the authors give to the term "concept" is to contemplate sample passages showing how these two sides, fact and truth, are explicitly joined:

(1) "The Master made it clear that the kingdom of heaven must begin with, and be centered in, the dual concept of the truth of the fatherhood of God and the correlated fact of the brotherhood of man." (*1859:12)

(2) "The gospel of the kingdom is: the fact of the fatherhood of God, coupled with the resultant truth of the sonship-brotherhood of men." (*2059:4)

Cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness. The adjectives require that our concepts not be limited to a human and earthly focus; they should point to our participation in a wider universe. The term "cosmic" reminds us that science is also part of truth; the concept of

God as Creator links spiritual truth with the science of fact. The beauty we celebrate is more than local charm; the events of our lives reflect larger patterns. And this goodness overflows the confines of humanism; the golden rule cannot be truly explored under the ceiling of secularist assumptions about ethics; and character cannot be fathomed without a vision of the soul.

Consider the three-part structure of the project. The systematic order given here—truth, beauty, goodness—is nearly standard in this book. "Such a Father life is one predicated on truth, sensitive to beauty, and dominated by goodness." (*1175:2)

The paragraph that precedes the one we are studying gives an objective for this new philosophy and topics in the overarching structure of truth, beauty, and goodness. In order for religion to come alive for certain types of people today, it must, in addition to its moral mandates, give equal attention to the "truths of science, philosophy, and spiritual experience, and to the beauties of the physical creation, the charm of intellectual art, and the grandeur of genuine character achievement." (*43:3) Now there's a big hint about how to flesh out a personal philosophy of living.

I find cosmic truth best summarized in the concept of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, universe beauty revealed most in the joy and liberty of sonship with God, and divine goodness experienced most directly in worship and service. The three branches of the philosophy of living can be symbolized by different phases of the gospel; on these pillars a bridge can be built harmonizing mind and spirit, philosophy and religion, culture and spirituality. The gospel is the seed of the new philosophy of living; the life of Jesus is its master illustration; but it is necessary to say more than the gospel and to show more than Jesus. Cosmic concepts must be explored and made appealing in an unprecedented way.

Who will build the new philosophy? How conscious does the teamwork need to be? How organized? And why do it? This philosophy, presumably, is not an end in itself. Is a philosophic foundation required if we are to convert our spiritual action-impulses into enduringly productive service? Do we have the patience to establish an adequate foundation before raising up towers of ambitious enterprises? Spirituality, philosophy, service. Has the quote been overanalyzed and left for dead by the side of the road, or are we beginning to fathom its call?

—Jeffrey Wattles
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The following was a talk given at the 1985 Intensive Study Seminar, Lake Forest, Illinois.

THE DIVINE-HUMAN PARTNERSHIP

I would like to direct your attention to a word. The word is "partnership"—partnership as found in several places in *The URANTIA Book*:

"In the beginning the Father does all, but as the panorama of eternity unfolds in response to the will and mandates of the Infinite, it becomes increasingly apparent that creatures, even men, are to become God's partners in the realization of finality of destiny. And this is true even in the life in the flesh; when man and God enter into partnership, no limitation can be placed upon the future possibilities of such a partnership." (*1299:2)

"God, having commanded man to be perfect, even as he is perfect, has descended as the Adjuster to become man's experiential partner in the achievement of the supernal destiny which has been thus ordained." (*1176:3)

"With the Son and in the Spirit did God project eternal Havona, and ever since has there obtained the eternal pattern of co-ordinate participation in creation—sharing. This pattern of sharing is the master design for every one of the Sons and Daughters of God who go out into space to engage in the attempt to duplicate in time the central universe of eternal perfection." (*614:6)

"Every creature of every evolving universe who aspires to do the Father's will is destined to become the partner of the time-space Creators in this magnificent adventure of experiential perfection attainment. Were this not true, the Father would have hardly endowed such creatures with creative free will, neither would he indwell them, actually go into partnership with them by means of his own spirit." (*614:7)

"In short, what God [had] given men and angels...[is] the divine privilege of participating in the creation of their own destinies and of the destiny of this local system of inhabited worlds." (*615:2)

Why "partnership"? Because it seems to me that this concept goes a long way toward explaining why we have this revelation—even why it begins with the Universal Father!

After all, how does one explain why we have this new revelation? One would think—and certainly Christians, for example, think—that the incarnation and revelation two thousand years ago of the Creator Son himself as

Jesus of Nazareth would be for all time; that it could not be improved upon—so to speak! Yet here we have *The URANTIA Book* described in Paper 92 as the fifth revelation of epochal significance.

Now I think that one reason for this revelation is to promote this idea of *partnership with God* which hinges on the fact of the Universal Father's indwelling presence, the Thought Adjuster. I feel this is one of the purposes of the papers because, as I see it, the sharpest difference between *The URANTIA Book* and the New Testament is a clear concept of the Father's indwelling spirit. Now while it is true that this concept is in the New Testament (for example, 1 Corinthians 3: 16: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"), it has been so attenuated through the years, and confused with the Holy Spirit, the Creative Mother Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, and the Spirit of Truth, that its power as a liberating concept and a personal experience for each and every one of us individually has all but been lost.

I have come to the conclusion that a re-introduction, a re-revelation, of the truth that we are planetary sons and daughters of God in *partnership* with him through the presence of his Adjuster is the goal (or at least one of the goals) of this revelation. It is stated in Paper 102 (where evolutionary religion is being contrasted with revelation) that "...revelation glorifies man and discloses his capacity for partnership with God." (*1122:3) And further, this disclosure of sonship and partnership is consistent with other statements made in *The URANTIA Papers* which explain that a primary purpose of all epochal revelation is to reveal, enlarge, expand our ideas, concepts, and understanding of the Paradise Father. A Divine Counselor says, "The idea of the personality of the Universal Father is an enlarged and truer concept of God which has come to mankind chiefly through revelation." (*28:8)

"All our efforts to enlarge the human concept of God would be well-nigh futile except for the fact that the mortal mind is indwelt by the bestowed Adjuster of the Universal Father and is pervaded by the Truth Spirit of the Creator Son. Depending, therefore, on the presence of these divine spirits within the heart of man for assistance in the enlargement of the concept of God, I cheerfully undertake the execution of my mandate to attempt the further portrayal of the nature of God to the mind of man." (*33:3)

Similarly Immanuel explains that Jesus' mission was to reveal the Father:

"Your great mission to be realized and experienced

in the mortal incarnation is embraced in your decision to live a life wholeheartedly motivated to do the will of your Paradise Father, thus to *reveal God*, your Father, in the flesh and especially to the creatures of the flesh." (*1328:5)

The midwayers state that "...the supreme spiritual purpose of the Michael bestowal was to enhance the *revelation of God*." (*1331:5)

And on page 1343 this revelation is actually characterized as a "restatement" of Jesus' life and teaching—which was the good news that men and women are the sons and daughters of the Universal Father and in partnership with him through his indwelling spirit presence.

Jesus himself declares that "...we will ... shortly begin the bold proclamation of a new religion—a religion which is not a religion in the present-day meaning of that word, a religion that makes its chief appeal to the divine spirit of my Father which resides in the mind of man..." (*1730:1)

And further on Jesus' mission is characterized as the "...proclamation of a new religion, the religion of the spirit of the living God who dwells in the minds of men." (*1742:3)

In light of the preceding statements I feel that it is precisely the need to expand our understanding of the Universal Father and *re-reveal* the truth of his spirit indwelling that *The URANTIA Book* opens with the five papers on the Universal Father. For it is the truth of his father-ship, our son- and daughtership, and his indwelling presence, the truth of our divine-human partnership, and the power of this truth that liberates us (see pages 1116-7) and further, renders us more competent (see page 1581) to solve our own political, social, and economic problems.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Many thanks to everyone who wrote in response to the questions we've posed in the past few issues. Out of all the material we received, the lead article for this issue was selected for publication. Although space limitations preclude our printing every contribution, it's often the case that the act of organizing one's thinking and expressing it in writing provides a great sense of accomplishment and a strengthened perspective on the concern that has been addressed.

This by no means concludes our intention to publish work that focuses on the questions we've raised. If you've been taking your time to carefully consider your response, please go ahead and put it in writing and send it to *The Journal*. Just to give you something else to think about, here's one more question, this time from the following quote in Paper 4:

"The infinite goodness of the Father is beyond the comprehension of the finite mind of time; hence must there always be afforded a contrast with comparative evil (not sin) for the effective exhibition of all phases of relative goodness. Perfection of divine goodness can be discerned by mortal imperfection of insight only because it stands in contrastive association with relative imperfection in the relationships of time and matter in the motions of space." (*58:4)

Question

The nature of evil and the concern about its reality is a major theological question today. Based on understandings gleaned from *The URANTIA Book*, why do you think bad things happen to good people?

*"The characteristic difference between evolved and revealed religion is a new quality of divine wisdom which is added to purely experiential human wisdom." (*1101:5)*