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FIFTH EPOCHAL FELLOWSHIP
for readers of The Urantia Book

S P E C I A L C O N F E R E N C E I S S U E II

1990 GENERAL CONFERENCE

**WALKING
WITH GOD**

SNOWMASS/ASPEN, COLORADO U.S.A.
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About this issue...

This is the second of two planned special conference editions of *The Journal* to include some of the talks presented in the second half of the 1990 International Conference held at Snowmass/Aspen, Colorado from June 30-July 5, 1990.

The opinions, views, and/or conclusions presented in these talks are based wholly upon each author's understanding and personal religious experience. Therefore, the Fellowship is unable to respond to questions or comments received from readers on any of the talks presented. However, upon written request, the Fellowship will forward invitations for exchange of information or further dialogue on any of the topics contained in this issue of *The Journal* directly to the author(s) concerned.

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Opening Address

by John Hay

What I am about to say, I believe, for I speak not from text books nor theological courses, but from the heart, and from my own experiences and those of others. I believe the word of God, and love him, and my faith in Jesus Christ is irrevocable. I have no doubts, no reservations, no hesitations in my belief in him, the living Christ. Jesus is first in my life, and without his hand on me, I am absolutely nothing, and I thank him for giving me life.

All that I do is for God, with the accolades going one way, to him. In whatever I do, my goal is simply to be his servant in conveying the message of Christ, which is rooted in love. I accept Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. However, I support, acknowledge, and encourage the spiritual truths found among all people, because we all share a common destiny, unity in God.

I believe in the message of Christ, with its foundation of love being the conduit through which God works. And how he works in each of our lives is found in our own personal relationship with him. I believe in the power of God, and not of man, and only through God can we achieve a world more human and more divine. The only thing I can do is speak his truth, and then rely on him.

The sun shines and the rain falls on all people. God doesn't have any favorites, nor is there any exclusivity with him. He works in the freedom of personhood, and I won't judge or undercut or ridicule the faith of any person—that's not my concern. Where that person is in his or her relationship to God is only between that person and God. What's critical in today's society is that the dignity of all people be preserved. We have to respect where a person is at his or her time in life. How can we accept God as our Father, from whom we all come, and then discriminate against others, and look upon our personhood differently, and not acknowledge the equality of all people?

My belief is in the divinity and doctrine of Christ. If I can, in my small way, spread his word of love, then to me, that's enough. I trust and know my God, and I believe in his power, and his promises to us, and in his ability to fulfill them. I believe that when all people of all nations accept and adopt the simple message of Christ, which can be summed up in one word—love—then, and only then, can this earth have the total joy and peace that he promised.

Why are we sometimes deaf, dumb, and blind when we search for God in this world of ours? What was said thousands of years ago is applicable today. When the Holy Spirit spoke, she told our ancestors through the prophet Isaiah, "Go to this nation and say, 'You will hear and hear again, but not understand. See and see again, but not perceive, for the heart of this nation has grown coarse, their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes for fear they should see with their eyes, hear

with their ears, understand with their heart, and be converted and healed by me.'"

What's interesting is that man is always on some type of quest, crusade or campaign as she or he searches for God and tries to make this world more livable. We have gone the way of the peace march and the walk for desegregation. We have tried sit-ins, protests, civil disobedience, and we have even resorted to wars, or whatever the "in" thing of the day happened to be. You name it, man has tried it. We have tried it all, and what has it gained us? We see temporary relief in some cases, total failure in others, and hollow victories in still others. Doesn't it seem odd that even though our quality of life has improved greatly in most of the world, that anxieties, fears, mistrust and threats have grown right along with it?

What happens to us? Do we get our priorities turned around as we become involved in this world of ours, or do we get confused with all the slogans, movements, and every conceivable structure known to mankind? And to what, and to whom, do we relate? The structure or the simple command of Jesus Christ, to serve and love God and one another? Why do we thrive on competition? I'm not referring to individual creativity and competition in the world of sports and business. No. I am referring to the small thinking and pettiness of "one-upsmanship" in our everyday encounters. At times, it seems that without conflict and competition among people in one form or another, we would be lost. What is it that drives us in that direction? Don't we think we're deserving of peace and love and self-respect? Are we not children of God?

Our heavenly Father, through Christ, is calling all people to himself, and enlisting them in this ongoing and love-inspired adventure. He is always there, ready to guide us on this incredible journey with the same enthusiasm that we have in pursuing it. His children, doing his work on earth.

I ask you, if God is for us, who is against us? We have got to believe, believe in ourselves, believe in all people, no exceptions. Believe that the power of Christ can transform people, who will in turn radiate this earth of ours with love.

Love is in us, and is always straining to be released. The power of love based on Christ is a force so powerful that it is incomprehensible. We all know it, and all we have to do is accept and bring it to our conscious mind.

Enthusiasm, generosity and love, these are the things that ignite us. We need to accept our human responsibility out of love and not fear.

So, we may or may not choose to print signs or join activist groups or have long mental dissertations to arrive at some exotic plan of action, for activity without love has no permanent impact on life. Nor do we have to wait until Sunday, or some other day. Today is the day.

We can begin now. And it's simple and it's exciting, and all we have to do is put on Christ, live life to the fullest and love one another.

Lip service takes us just so far. It's not just a matter of practicing what we preach, but it goes beyond that into our normal, everyday encounters. And if we don't follow through in promises to one another and commitments to one another, how can we build the trust relationship that's needed to install love in our lives? People like to get involved when they feel they can benefit. However, whether or not we interact with one another, each of us affects the other person's life. That's a plain and simple fact. There's a natural impulse and mutual advantage to helping one another, for we are all one in God. The common denominator is not religion, but it is God, who is love. God is a 24-hour commitment every day of our lives. Religion is a means, and God is an end.

Love is contagious, and so is happiness. Our love, and the love and power of Christ, is a force so strong that nothing on this earth can resist it.

Instead of competition and fragmentation, we need to encourage cooperation among the various religions and service organizations by simply acknowledging to all people that the underlying purpose is to spread the

kingdom of God. The message of Christ has always been love, and it hasn't changed. Although we may use different methods and take different roads to accomplish our goals, they all lead to the kingdom of the one God, a kingdom that is universal, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

When we as a people, one by one, put on Christ, and live and love one another, then the answers to the problems that beset this world of ours will become apparent through the process of love. And therein lies the basis for peace and the renewal of the family, the answer to injustice, drug addiction and abuse, and therein lies the basis and answer to solve the hunger and poverty problems that exist in this world. The solutions are there. With faith we can do it. As our minds and hearts accept the love of God and then, planted in love and built in love, we become more like Christ, we will know what to do as the words turn into deeds, enabling us to live life to the fullest as we love one another.

Isn't it about time that all the words and pledges of all institutions and structures have a common goal: a goal to create a world more human and more divine? Or, once again, will the words of the prophet Isaiah ring true, as he says, "You will hear, and hear again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive."

Experiencing the God in Ourselves and in Others

by David Elders

What follows is a summary of a participatory meditation and experiential talk presented at the Fifth Epochal Fellowship's International Conference on July 3, 1990, in Snowmass/Aspen, Colorado.

You are each responsible for whatever you learn here today. Listen to the words spoken inwardly as well as outwardly. Open the words as windows to higher meaning and value. Penetrate the mystery of your very existence via this process of self-awareness and God-awareness.

Try to experience, not just understand, the meaning and value behind the words. Use each as a window, a means, to truth—truth which is both *known* and *experienced*. Allow the Thought Adjuster to adjust your thinking ABOUT the words into the direct experience OF the reality symbolized by the words.

What is the meaning of "reflective" thinking or meditation? Is it that it is "reflective" of higher truth, rather than just expressing the time spent thinking? If we looked at words in a different way, would we allow their reflective power to be released? Example: "Why does it matter? Because God cares!" If, in responding to the question, we only understood "matter" to signify material reality, we might have responded with intellectual reasons for the existence of matter. But, in looking at the word in a slightly different light, our answer is "reflective" of new meaning and value.

REFLECTIVE MEDITATION:

Let's together meditate on a single phrase. Remember the instructions given at the beginning...let the words reflect truth to you, rather than using your mind to attach your opinion of their meaning to each word.

I AM THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

Now let's consider the reflective meaning of some other words given us in *The Urantia Book*. First: "The universe fact of God's becoming man has forever changed all meanings and altered all values of human personality." (*1228) "The Eternal Son is the perfect and final expression of the 'first' personal and absolute concept of the Universal Father. Accordingly, whenever and however the Father personally expresses himself, he does so through his Eternal Son, who ever has been, now is, and ever will be, the living and divine Word." (*73) In reflecting on these statements, could we begin to see the word "person" in a different light? That is, in expressing himself personally through the Eternal Son, is our understanding of PER-SON enhanced? PER-SON, meaning the Father's expression by or through the Son? And, further, is Word used in this context to suggest SON? And, finally, closing the circle temporarily, does SON suggest not gender but rather personality? Per-SON, per-SON-ally, per-SON-ality?

On page 28 it is stated: "God is personality." Could we understand that to mean that God IS each personality—even though each personality is not God? For example, could our "own" self-conscious existence be expressive of God's declaring: I AM David, I AM John, I AM Marta, I AM Barbara, I AM Judy, etc.? Might we conclude that our self-conscious experience of the relationship between unique personality and the Indwelling Adjuster IS the living mechanism by virtue of which we participate in God's self-experience? Could each of us declare that "I am the only begotten Son of God," phraseology reflective of personality uniqueness? If the "word" of God suggests personality, is each of us a "word" of God?

REFLECTIVE MEDITATIONS:

I AM THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

I AM THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

On page 1232 of *The Urantia Book* a Solitary Messenger tells us that "Man's personality is eternal but with regard to identity a conditioned eternal reality. Having appeared in response to the Father's will, personality will attain Deity destiny, but man must choose whether or not he will be present at the attainment of such destiny." Steve Dreier mentioned in his talk that both personality and the Thought Adjuster are bestowed by God. Who, then, are we? If personality and the Adjuster come from God and will return to him, and if "we" must choose whether or not to be there when such returning takes place, who are we? Do we exist somehow in the living relationship between God as a perSON-ality (bestowed and qualified as unique) and God as a pre-SON-ality (bestowed and not qualified)? Are we conscious participants in the relationship between God qualified as personal and God not qualified at all? Do we exist at the focal point (in time/space) of God as unity and God as diversity? Is our job somehow to unify this relationship through experience, our experience? Do we in this way become a part, literally, of God's eternal self-exploration? Are we an expression of unity in diversity and the diversity of unity?

REFLECTIVE MEDITATIONS:

I AM THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

I WILL TRY TO UNIFY MY EXPERIENCE OF THE LIVING GOD.

Now this experience is not just a singular or solitary one because, while it may be true for each of us individually, it is just as true for all of us together, simultaneously. In addition, this experience provides for another level of unity which we may experience—the unity of relationships...the Supreme. On page 1228 we are told: "Every true relationship of mortal man with

other persons—human or divine—is an end in itself. And such fellowship with the personality of Deity is the eternal goal of universe ascension." In another way, Jesus taught us the same truth: "I am the vine and you are the branches. And the Father requires of me only that you shall bear much fruit...You must abide in me and I in you; the branch will die if it is separated from the vine. I am the real vine and you are the living branches. He who lives in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit of the spirit and experience the supreme joy of yielding this spiritual harvest." (*1945)

REFLECTIVE MEDITATIONS:

I AM THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.
YOU ARE THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.
WE ARE SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.

SUMMARY

The simple acts of seeing, knowing, and loving another person is the act of experiencing God, as revealed in his sons, personally. As we engage in this process, we are creating a living being which has as much or more life and vitality as each of us does. This being is God, expressed in time and space and called by the word symbol SUPREME.

And, through our consciousness of the inner relationship between our personality and the Thought Adjuster—both bestowed by God...both of God—we are able to participate in God's eternal experience of himself. At the same time, by virtue of our coexistence with other personal selves, we are able to experience God as Supreme, through and in our relationships with other beloved personalities. *God is personality.*

An Eye to the Keyhole of Eternity

by Robert J. Schuer

It is with great pleasure that I stand here on Urantia and speak to a special group of Andon and Fonta's descendants. Your "Walk with God" has brought you here from many states and even distant countries. You are interested in ways in which spiritual life is promoted and in particular the habits which cause your spiritual life to progress. The habit of meditating on cosmic meanings is the one with which we are concerned right now.

To meditate means to perceive truth and how you fit into it—how your being, your person, your spirit, your life, your family, your country, your world fit into it. Meanings have to do with the identification which you make with true values and purposes so that they become a structure and guide for your life now and for eternity. We all seek to find "meaning" for life and existence. Those who have found no "meaning" for their lives are in danger of wasting them.

When the word "cosmic" is applied to meanings it is to denote that they are far reaching and include the whole cosmos. This has to be because all truth is one and is centered in the one true God. Since you are interested in God, you find that you are interested in the entire cosmos, your place in it, and your function in it.

As I stand here on Urantia I see a great light. It is shining from each one of you. Its source is the Spirit of God within you—the Spirit of God the Father within you, the Thought Adjuster. He came when you made your first moral decision and began your life as a child of God being reborn in the Spirit. He teamed up with your mind to develop your soul by making more good decisions, gaining high values and true ideals. The light that I now see coming from you indicates to me the presence of the real you—your spirit—with whom you are learning to identify. It is distinct from your body and especially from your ego. It gives you identity as a Child of God and you give it your personality. So it is the real you which has come from God and will be returning to God. Whether your personality will be present or not on this return to God is entirely up to you. If you continue to acknowledge your true relationship with the Father and with all of his other children your safe return is practically assured. Your relationship with the Father and with all of his children is one of love: your desire and decision to do good for him and for all of them.

As you identify with your Spirit you begin to realize that your main purpose in this life is healing. As you refuse to identify with your ego or with your body you accept healing for yourself. As you see and acknowledge the Spirit of God within other people you bring healing to them. As you give them acceptance, respect and help—because of the Spirit of God within them—they learn to accept themselves as children of God because of this same Spirit. They learn to identify with their Spirit rather than with their bodies or with their

egos. They learn to get rid of their false illusions caused by their egos. They learn to perceive truth as through God's eyes.

As you know, everyone's life is pretty well governed by the way in which they perceive reality. If your perceptions are false, then you are living life under an illusion. One of the reasons why God has given us the Fifth Epochal Revelation is that it is time for us to see truth through *his* eyes. If we were not ready for it, he would not have given it.

Let's take a look now and see what we can see.

Putting an eye of faith to the keyhole of eternity we see ourselves and every other human being on the planet as a child of God who is destined to acknowledge his relationship with God and thereby gain the benefits of that relationship. This act of acknowledgement is called faith and reminds us of the truth of the revelation which states, "without faith no one can be saved." This act of acknowledgment also leads us to acknowledge our relationship with all the rest of God's children—living on this planet and elsewhere—and reminds us of our privilege and duty of giving them acceptance, respect and help. So we find ourselves in agreement with Jesus' great commandment of love: to love everyone regardless of their race, creed or the mistakes that they may have made in life. We feel no compulsion to like everyone or everything that everyone says or does, but we have sincerely desired and decided to do good for them.

Keeping our eye at the keyhole of eternity we now look at our material body. We have already seen our Spirit and our mind, and we see our soul which these two are developing. Now we see the body clearly and realize that it was given to us in time, to be used for communication. It came to us indirectly from our first parents, Andon and Fonta, unlike our personality which came to us from God the Father; unlike our Spirit which came to us from the Son; and unlike our mind which came to us from the Spirit. We now see our bodies as aggregations of organized energy: material, electrical, mental and psychological. With the psalmist we realize that we are "wondrously made." But we also realize that these bodies are only temporary and that on graduation we will receive a new morontia body. So we do not consider the loss of parts of it or of all of it to be any kind of catastrophe. In the meantime we take reasonably good care of it and avoid poisons, acids and drugs which could harm it. If for some reason we decide to use alcohol, nicotine or caffeine, we do so with moderation, knowing that these substances are extremely addictive and could make it difficult for the Thought Adjuster to communicate with us. The more deadly substances such as marijuana, crack, cocaine and heroin can easily make it impossible for the Thought Adjuster to communicate with a human being. So if a human being wishes to bury

himself in materiality and forever lose all contact with divinity and the possibility of a future happy life, these are the deadly chains with which to bind himself. The sad thing is that such persons have not only tried to throw away peace, joy and happiness for all eternity but that they have evidently succeeded in throwing away whatever peace, joy and happiness that they could have had right now, in this life. They could have lived in communication with a loving Father, a loyal Brother, Jesus, and an enlightening Spirit. Those who accept God into their lives live on a perpetual high of faith and love and do not need devilish substitutes or imitations of God. "I am the Lord thy God and thou shalt have no strange gods before me."

Next we turn our eye of faith to the next sphere we will wake up on after we graduate from this life. We see mansion world number one to which our guardian seraphim takes our soul upon graduation. Our Thought Adjuster, with our mortal mind transcripts and active creature memory patterns, has returned to the Father but comes to this first mansion world for our resurrection. It is the reuniting of the morontia-soul trust of the seraphim and the spirit-mind trust of the Adjuster that reassembles creature personality and constitutes resurrection of the sleeping survivor. Throughout all eternity you will recall the profound memory impressions of your first witnessing of these resurrection mornings. On mansion world number one (or another in case of advanced status) you will resume your intellectual training and spiritual development at the exact level whereon they were interrupted by death. Between the time of planetary death or translation and resurrection on the mansion world mortal man gains absolutely nothing aside from experiencing the fact of survival. You begin over there right where you left off down here. So, descendants of Andon and Fonta, continue to love and serve your heavenly Father and all of his children. Accept whatever environmental or social situation you find yourself in today and ask yourself, "What would Jesus do today if he were wearing my shoes and my flesh?" All you have to do in any situation that you find yourself in is to react to it the best you can in a God-like way. Then whenever and however you graduate from this life, you will find yourself well prepared. If you feel that you have had unusual trials, tests and difficulties in this life, know that this was only permitted because of your great physical, mental and spiritual potentials which needed opportunities for fruition. With Lacordaire you can now exclaim, "What a life on what a planet!"

Now if your eye of faith is not too tired looking through the keyhole of eternity we will take a look at the heaven of your culture and dreams. We see a real place called Jerusem. It is the capital of the system of 619 inhabited planets of which Urantia—our earth—is one. This is a beautiful sphere—an architectural sphere

created perfect, it is the place where our Adam and Eve were employed in the trial-and-testing physical laboratories before they volunteered to come to Urantia to upgrade the human race. Looking on Jerusem you see beauteous highlands and other unique variations of topography and landscape. You see thousands upon thousands of small lakes shimmering in the light of several nearby suns, not too bright but something like brilliant starlight, as Jerusem is not dependent on them for light or heat. You see transports arriving on the crystal field, the so-called sea of glass. Around this area are the receiving stations for the various orders of beings who traverse space by seraphic transport. Near the polar crystal station you see student visitors ascending to the pearly observatory to view the immense relief map of the entire headquarters planet. You see all types of beings present in the central broadcast amphitheater listening in and discerning the never-ending stream of universe space reports. All is peace, joy and harmony among all types of material, morontial and spiritual beings. There are no forms of conflicting life, no struggle for existence, no survival of the fittest. Rather there is a creative adaptation which foreshadows the beauty, harmony and the perfection of the eternal worlds of the central and divine universe. What a heaven!

Now we take a look through our keyhole at our constellation capital, Edentia; at our local universe capital, Salvington; at the capital of our minor sector called Uminor the third; at the capital of our major sector called Umajor the fifth; and at the capital of our superuniverse, Uversa. We could look at the one billion Havona worlds in linear procession in seven concentric circles about the capital of capitals called Paradise, but we won't. We have to save something for you to see for yourself.

Finally, can you imagine Christ Michael coming from his Father on Paradise past all these wonderful places to:

- A little-known star system on the outer edge of the seventh superuniverse?
- The third planet circling around a comparatively small sun and known to its inhabitants as Earth?
- A planet listed as number 606 of its system?
- One of the 35 planets that joined in the Lucifer rebellion?
- A planet whose grand universe number was 5,342,482,337,666?
- A planet whose Adam and Eve defaulted in their mission?
- The planet on which you are now living?
- The planet to which was sent an incredible fifth epochal revelation?
- And the planet from which you are now gazing through the keyhole of eternity because of that revelation?

Reflective Meditation on Cosmic Meanings

by David Glass

I want this to be a meditation of the meanings of the cosmos. And this survey will begin with the question: "What is the first single word that comes to mind when we consider the cosmos?" I believe that word is "BIG"!

It takes eight minutes for sunlight to reach our eyes. The sun is 93 million miles away. The light from the nearest star left that sun in 1986. Orvonton is 500,000 light years in diameter. The first outer space zone is 25,000,000 light years wide. Light from stars in that first outer space zone left those stars when Urantia was in the age of elephants and horses. At the time that the westward continental drift of North America came to a halt causing the rugged upsurge of the bedrock beneath the then western plains into the towering Rocky Mountains, light from stars in the second outer space zone reached Urantia.

William Sadler, Jr., described the size of the master universe in this way: If the size of the grand universe were that of a tennis ball, the first outer space zone would be the size of a living room. The second would be the size of a cubic city block. The third outer space zone would be the size of a large cubic city. And the fourth zone would be the size of the moon.

The revelators said that there are as many stars in the master universe as there are glasses of water in all the oceans of our world.

There will eventually exist approximately seven trillion (7,000,000,000,000) inhabited planets in the grand universe. We humans can grasp somewhat the sense of the number "one trillion." America's national budget has reached two trillion dollars this year. MacDonald's restaurant has probably served more than seven trillion hamburgers by this time. Perhaps you remember when they used to keep track of how many were served in their advertising.

Our registered planetary number in the grand universe is over five trillion, explicitly: 5,342,482,337,666. There seems to be an upper limit of trillions in the specific numerical values cited in *The Urantia Book*, since, to my recollection, no number larger than those in the trillions is mentioned. Sudna, a onetime Graduate Guide who is now a Havona Servitor, was the 842,842,682,846,782nd graduate guide so to be transformed.

However, in dealing numerically with reality, with values upwards of trillions, the revelators give no precise numbers. For example, while they reveal the number of our planet in the registry of the grand universe, over five trillion, as cited above, a Universal Censor from Uversa states: "I know the physical-sphere registry number [of Urantia], but it is of such an extraordinary size that it is of little practical significance to the mortal mind." (*182:7)

Technically, numbers are usually regarded as factual, rather than meaningful. But the human psyche has a

faculty which seems to sense a kind of "meaning" conveyed by normal, as well as by extraordinarily large or small numbers. Numbers are relative given various measuring units, but numbers in the trillions seem to be on the horizon of the meaningfulness of numbers. For example, the numerical figure referred to as Planck's constant is a dimensional measurement which, when expressed in ordinary numbers, is quite meaningless. Indeed, scientists themselves are of the opinion that at such large or small physical dimensions even the basic laws of physics cannot apply.

To get a sense of the approximate number of inhabited worlds in the grand universe—seven trillion—imagine a football field covered with *Urantia Books* to the depth of four books; the number "seven trillion" would refer roughly to the number of individual letters and punctuation marks in all those books.

Enough! We have a sense of the truth that the cosmos is BIG and that certain measurements of the universe are practically valuable and some are humanly incomprehensible except in the relativity of the values of numbers under consideration. We should not think that it is only we lowly mortals who find such gigantic dimensions and numerical values nonunderstandable. A Divine Counselor of Uversa, one of the highest ranking personalities of those who collaborated in the composition of *The Urantia Book*, states: "...the enormousness of the master universe staggers the concept of even my order of being." (*128:1)

We have established the fact that the master universe, the revealed cosmos, is BIG! There is another three-letter word which describes the universe and which gives us an insight into the "meaning" of the cosmos. That word is "OLD"!

Perhaps an even more emphatic word, "Ancient," might better characterize the age of the universe. When I was in school, we employed the term "ancient" to refer to the civilizations of pre-Christian times—those of Sumer, Egypt, and Greece. If we wish to use the words "old" or "ancient" to describe the age of the universe, we will have to stretch the meanings of those words to the extremities of human comprehension.

The first event associated with the history of Nebadon took place about a trillion years ago: "987,000,000,000 years ago associate force organizer and then acting inspector number 811,307 of the Orvonton series, traveling out from Uversa, reported to the Ancients of Days that space conditions were favorable for the initiation of materialization phenomena in a certain sector of the, then, easterly segment of Orvonton." (*651:5) It is interesting to me that the revelators employed that other word for old, "ancient," when referring to the oldest beings in the superuniverses, the Ancients of Days, deriving that term from Christianity.

Nebadon is about one third actualized at this point

with more than three million out of an eventual ten million inhabited planets in existence. Allow for another one or two trillion years, and then the entire local universe might be in light and life. For convenience, let's say that it takes about three trillion years for a local universe to complete its evolution, from the time of the beginning of the amassing of the energy which will form the physical foundation of the local universe to that distant day when the entirety of a local universe swings into the stable circuits of cosmic light and life.

At the time of the inditing of the Urantia Papers, there were 611,121 local universes in existence. We cannot simply multiply the number of local universes, say, 600,000, times the time it may approximately take for a local universe to complete its evolution, say, three trillion years, because local universes are developing simultaneously. In a very conservative estimation, let's suppose that local universes are initiated in thousand-year intervals. That is, local universe A begins in year zero, universe B begins in year 1000, and C in 2000, etc. Adopting this scheme, I arrive at the figure 1.8 quintillion, that is, 1.8×10^{18} , for the minimum age of the grand universe. Again we arrive at a quantity which is, humanly speaking, *meaningless*. Like visible light, there is a band of quantities which are "visible" or meaningful for people.

It always strikes me as humorous that we estimate universe time in terms of the revolution of a somewhat small planet around a star on the outskirts of the Milky Way.

With true respect for today's theoretical cosmologists, I would like to point out that the currently going estimate for the age of the universe is fifteen to twenty billion years. To acquire insight into contemporary astrophysics and cosmology, *A Brief History of Time* is an overview both interesting and engaging. Millions of hardbacks of this book kept it on the best seller list for over two years, and it is now a best seller in the paperback. I mention this because I think that these millions of copies of the book sold indicates that there is a tremendous amount of interest in cosmology and in the origin and destiny of the universe. Such a situation signifies the advent of a "scientific springtime" in which large sectors of humanity are questing after reliable facts about the universe, such as those which are discoverable in *The Urantia Book*. Only the basis of such facts can adequately enable man to begin the reflective meditation on cosmic meanings.

The origination of meanings in and of the cosmos must be derived from God's revelation of himself in the creation of the universe. Meanings are appreciations of the thoughts of the Deities which always precede cosmic actualization. Comprehending the preactualized thought of God is the equivalent of approaching him. The revered British cosmologist, the late Sir James Jeans, once commented that the universe is coming to look more like a great thought than a great thing. And thoughts only become *meaningful* when they are revealed, in evolutionary evolution, to be *purposeful*. Goals or purposes are the preferred unifying factors among religionists. The purposes of the future can

reveal the highest and truest *meaning* of the present.

Final meanings and ultimate purposes—the will of God—are known in their entirety probably only by the Eternal Son and the Infinite Spirit. But the step-by-step purposes of time disclose the deepening *meanings* of the progress of the present toward the future, revealed in finite increments which mortals can comprehend and take. Some of these time purposes are: teamwork, scientific discovery, loving God and one's fellows, service, and the effort to transcend the finite and to transform one's personality.

The prior and eternal purpose of the Father is initially a thought and the progressive comprehension of the Father's thoughts reveals that the master universe is a *concept* within his mind. A Mighty Messenger writes, "There is in the mind of God a plan which embraces every creature of all his vast domains, and this plan is an eternal purpose of boundless opportunity, unlimited progress, and endless life." (*365:3, italics mine)

In such a universe, the *evolution of meanings* and of language is progressively becoming relevant to higher and higher verbal significance and valuable concepts and vocabulary, such as the revelators provide, e.g., Divinington, morontia, absonity, etc.

But even at the highest level of the scrutiny of cosmic meanings and eternal purposes, the Masters of Philosophy on Paradise hold numerous and diverse opinions. The quest for meanings must be as endless as the eternal purpose of God.

Each step is like a foothold on the perpendicular face of el capitan on the climb to perfection and each foothold is an idea or ideal which reveals each progressive meaning of the ascent.

When thoughts change, meanings change, and "behold, all things have become new"; they have each acquired a new and higher significance. When masses of meanings change, completely new *contexts* appear in the continuum of meaning evolution.

Revelation is indispensable to universal evolution, because certain concepts and meanings do not appear spontaneously within the human psyche. Just as babies are not expected to evolve into teenagers without almost continuous care and supervision, so is thoughtful and uninformed evolving mankind not expected to progress independent of the ministry of revelation.

For me, one of the most towering autorevelations of humankind was Lao Tse's intuition of the existence of the triad of Deities—the First, Second, and Third Sources and Centers.

Progress can occur independent of a standstill in the discovery of new facts because intuitive perception can discern new meanings in facts already well known by mankind.

God could have created us with great inherent knowledge, but it appears he is interested in providing us, his children, with the exhilaration of discovery and the sweetness of achievement. And this very process vastly increases our love for God and our zeal to perform his will.

Jesus was essential in the transforming of many

realities: footwashing, Passover, forcefully imposed death as a revelation of unconditional love. And thereby he introduced eternal meanings into temporal human life and showed that we could also enact that ministry.

It is stated in the book that scientific facts are not in themselves meaningful because, just as the physical sensory sensations of man register and are experienced in the mind, so, "even the discoveries of science are not truly *real* in the consciousness of human experience ...until their relevant facts actually *become meaningful* through encirclement in the thought streams of mind."

Possibly, the phenomenon of fusion will most radically change for us the meanings which we now have regarding God and reality and our relationship with and within them. We will no longer be faith sons of the Father, we shall be ascending sons of God.

Four of the most significant changes are listed in one brief paragraph. (*1237:3) Fusion with this fragment [of God] means that we immediately become the beneficiaries of these incomparable treasures: (1) "fixation of divinity quality." After fusion we are the Adjuster, a Solitary Messenger states, and Adjusters are of the purest divinity. No longer will we fluctuate between our mortal and immortal components, for we will no longer be "mort-als"—beings subject to physical [mort] death. We become and shall forever remain divine in quality; (2) "past-eternal experience and memory"—think of that! The Adjuster is eternal and has had an existence prior to the personalization of the 21 Ancients of Days and indeed was individuated from the I AM "before" the personification of the Universal Father—Thought Adjusters are prepersonal; (3) immortality—another aspect of our Godlikeness; and (4) a phase of qualified potential absoluteness. What is the *meaning* of such a statement? This absoluteness is potential now. Since all absoluteness is eternal, that potential will ever be actualizing in our endless future universe careers. This absoluteness is all we will ever need throughout the ages of Supremacy and Ultimacy and on to the infinite absoluteness of the Cosmos Infinite itself. This *means* that through fusion we have become one with the absolute foundations of the universe; with the Absolute willful Cause of the universe.

The deep well of the *meaning* of ourselves and of reality will never run dry because we shall have penetrated the bottom of the well of our finite potential and discovered the ever-fresh subterranean streams of life and love—of the subliminal God.

Jesus' most profound revelation of his divinity was the resurrection of Lazarus. And our planet is awaiting its own resurrection and spiritual springtime. Jesus will command, "Urantia, come forth." Our distraught planet will awaken again to spiritual realities and stir with new life. Jesus will call out, "Loose her and let her go." We will shed the graveclothes of divisiveness and conflict and sit up, never to be religiously comatose again.

The eyes of all orders of beings in Orvonton are

trained on Urantia, attentively anticipating Urantia's spiritual resurrection. Our sky is crowded with student visitors, seraphim, recorders, superangels, observers, and archangels. What a celestial jubilation will accompany the universal broadcast message that some of the highest spiritual principles and truths are demonstrated to be valid even on erratic Urantia! The scattered and scrambled alphabet of Urantia's ideas will one day spell out again the highest meanings of the universe. And we are called to participate in this great transformation.

"Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings. The spiritual renaissance [may have to] await the coming of these new teachers of Jesus' religion who will be exclusively devoted to the spiritual regeneration of men. And then will these spirit-born souls quickly supply the leadership and inspiration requisite for the social, moral, economic, and political reorganization of the world." (*2082:9) Let us not conceive of ourselves as functioning apart from the mainstreams of progress in our day because the Master's cause will one day "rule this very world," and we are already actualizing that supreme goal!

Jesus overthrew Lucifer as a mere human being relying only on his inner Thought Adjuster. Such a spiritual endowment has been provided for every mortal on Urantia. Even more amazing, virtually all Urantians have experienced Adjusters. What potentials for planetary transformation may be ours?!

The achievement of brotherhood on Urantia will be an adventure characterized by unbelievable transformations and astounding personal, individual liberations. The *meanings* of life in the cosmos and progress based on partnership with God will reach ever-heightening levels of Godlikeness and increasing perfection. Social and economic terms shall be applied to higher levels of human civilization as their *meanings* are altered and exalted. The meanings of such words as "God," "sonship," "brotherhood," "personality," and "progress" shall increasingly refer to higher spiritual ideals.

Personal isolation gives way to universal brotherhood as higher meanings are perceived. "At last all creatures become conscious of the fact that God and all the divine hosts of a well-nigh limitless universe are on their side in the supernal struggle to attain eternity of life and divinity of status. Such faith-liberated sons have certainly enlisted in the struggles of time on the side of the supreme forces and divine personalities of eternity; even the stars in their courses are now doing battle for them; at last they gaze upon the universe from within, from God's viewpoint, and all is transformed from the uncertainties of material isolation to the sureties of eternal spiritual progression." (1117:3)

One meaning of universal creation is, it can lead to insight into the Father's eternal purposes, one of which is, in my opinion, the maximization of the experientialization of love, for God is LOVE.

Discovering Cosmic Meanings through Personal Story and Song

by Francyl Streano Gawryn

Talk begins with this reading from "Mary Magdalen":

It was in the month of June when I saw Him for the first time. He was walking in the wheatfield when I passed by with my handmaidens, and He was alone.

The rhythm of His step was different from other men's, and the movement of His body was like naught I had seen before.

Men do not pace the earth in that manner. And even now I do not know whether He walked fast or slow.

My handmaidens pointed their fingers at Him and spoke in shy whispers to one another. And I stayed my steps for a moment, and raised my hand to hail Him. But He did not turn His face, and He did not look at me. And I hated Him. I was swept back into myself, and I was as cold as if I had been in a snow-drift. And I shivered.

That night I beheld Him in my dreaming; and they told me afterward that I screamed in my sleep and was restless upon my bed.

It was in the month of August that I saw Him again, through my window. He was sitting in the shadow of the cypress tree across my garden, and He was as still as if He had been carved out of stone, like the statues in Antioch and other cities of the North Country.

And my slave, the Egyptian, came to me and said, "That man is here again. He is sitting there across your garden."

And I gazed at Him, and my soul quivered within me, for He was beautiful.

His body was single and each part seemed to love every other part.

Then I clothed myself with raiment of Damascus, and I left my house and walked towards Him.

Was it my aloneness, or was it His fragrance, that drew me to Him? Was it a hunger in my eyes that desired comeliness, or was it His beauty that sought the light of my eyes?

Even now I do not know.

I walked to him with my scented garments and my golden sandals, the sandals the Roman captain had given me, even these sandals. And when I reached Him, I said, "Good-morrow to you."

And He said, "Good-morrow to you, Miriam."

And He looked at me, and His night-eyes saw me as no man had seen me. And suddenly I was as if naked, and I was shy.

Yet He had only said, "Good-morrow to you."

And then I said to Him, "Will you not come to my house?"

I did not know what He meant then, but I know now.

And I said, "Will you not have wine and bread with me?"

And He said, "Yes, Miriam, but not now."

Not now, not now, He said. And the voice of the sea was in those two words, and the voice of the wind and the trees. And when He said them unto me, life spoke to death.

For mind you, my friend, I was dead. I was a woman who had divorced her soul. I was living apart from this self which you now see. I belonged to all men, and to none. They called me harlot, and a woman possessed of seven devils. I was cursed, and I was envied.

But when His dawn-eyes looked into my eyes all the stars of my night faded away, and I became Miriam, only Miriam, a woman lost to the earth she had known, and finding herself in new places.

And now again I said to Him, "Come into my house and share bread and wine with me."

And He said, "Why do you bid me to be your guest?"

And I said, "I beg you to come into my house." And it was all that was sod in me, and all that was sky in me calling unto Him.

Then He looked at me, and the noontide of His eyes was upon me, and He said, "You have many lovers, and yet I alone love you. Other men love themselves in your nearness. I love you in your self. Other men see a beauty in you that shall fade away sooner than their own years. But I see in you a beauty that shall not fade away, and in the autumn of your days that beauty shall not be afraid to gaze at itself in the mirror, and it shall not be offended. I alone love the unseen in you."

Then He said in a low voice, "Go away now. If this cypress tree is yours and you would not have me sit in its shadow, I will walk my way."

And I cried to Him and I said, "Master, come to my house. I have incense to burn for you, and a silver basin for your feet. You are a stranger and yet not a stranger. I entreat you, come to my house."

Then He stood up and looked at me even as the seasons might look down upon the field, and He smiled. And He said again: "All men love you for themselves. I love you for yourself."

And then He walked away.

But no other man ever walked the way He walked. Was it a breath born in my garden that moved to the east? Or was it a storm that would shake all things to their foundations?

I knew not, but on that day the sunset of His eyes slew the dragon in me, and I became a woman, I became Miriam, Miriam of Mijdel.

—Kahlil Gibran, *The Son of Man*

Salvation is spoken of in many, many terms and from many contexts. John Sanford, in his book, *Healing and Wholeness*, speaks of spiritual growth and its goal in terms of wholeness. He says, "It is impossible to sum-

marize the way a person becomes whole. It is an individual matter, differing with each person. But it can be said that to become whole we must be involved with life. This earthly existence appears to be a crucible in which the forging of the whole person is to take place. Our life must have a story to it if we are to become whole, and this means we must come up against something; otherwise a story can't take place. Some people seem destined to become whole by combating outer life circumstances, some through encountering the inner forces of the unconscious, some through involvement with both. But if we stand on the sidelines of life, wholeness cannot emerge. If we are to become whole, we will have led a life in which darkness has been faced, and an encounter with evil has been risked."

On page 1662-3 of *The Urantia Book*, Jesus, in talking with John, makes reference to the story of Job, who, having been blessed with money, a beautiful home, lovely family, good health, etc., suddenly finds himself stricken, his family dead, his lands and home ruined. Said Jesus, "...While Job did not, through suffering, find the resolution of his intellectual troubles or the solution of his philosophical difficulties, he did achieve great victories; even in the very face of the breakdown of his theological defenses he ascended to those spiritual heights where he could sincerely say, 'I abhor myself'; then was there granted him the salvation of a vision of God. So even through misunderstood suffering, Job ascended to the superhuman plane of moral understanding and spiritual insight. When the suffering servant obtains a vision of God, there follows a soul peace which passes all human understanding."

On page 1651, Jesus, in the company of Simon the Pharisee and others, is reclining to eat when a well-known woman of "unsavory reputation" who had recently become a believer in Jesus' gospel and changed her mode of living came in from the street.

...This unnamed woman had brought with her a large flask of perfumed anointing lotion and, standing behind Jesus as he reclined at meat, began to anoint his feet while she also wet his feet with her tears of gratitude, wiping them with the hair of her head. And when she had finished this anointing, she continued weeping and kissing his feet.

When Simon saw all this, he said to himself: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is who thus touches him; that she is a notorious sinner." And Jesus, knowing what was going on in Simon's mind, spoke up, saying: "Simon, I have something which I would like to say to you." Simon answered, "Teacher, say on." Then said Jesus: "A certain wealthy moneylender had two debtors. The one owed him five hundred denarii and the other fifty. Now, when neither of them had wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them do you think, Simon, would love him most?" Simon answered, "He, I suppose, whom he for-

gave the most." And Jesus said, "You have rightly judged," and pointing to the woman, he continued: "Simon, take a good look at this woman. I entered your house as an invited guest, yet you gave me no water for my feet. This grateful woman has washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss of friendly greeting, but this woman, ever since she came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil you neglected to anoint, but she has anointed my feet with precious lotions. And what is the meaning of all this? Simply that her many sins have been forgiven, and this has led her to love much. But those who have received but little forgiveness sometimes love but little."

And on page 1838 Jesus tells the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican:

...Said Jesus: "You see, then, that the Father gives salvation to the children of men, and this salvation is a free gift to all who have the faith to receive sonship in the divine family. There is nothing man can do to earn this salvation. Works of self-righteousness cannot buy the favor of God, and much praying in public will not atone for lack of living faith in the heart. Men you may deceive by your outward service, but God looks into your souls. What I am telling you is well illustrated by two men who went into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself: 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unlearned, unjust, adulterers, or even like this publican. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven but smote his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you that the publican went home with God's approval rather than the Pharisee, for every one who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."

The common bond here is the recognition of one's own personal limitations, one's own capacity for evil, one's own fragile and vulnerable state of being, and what the spiritual repercussions are consequent upon the recognition and acknowledgement of those limitations, capacity for evil and fragile and vulnerable state of being. In these stories, the darkness has been faced, the evil has been encountered.

From the section, "Trips about Rome," we read on page 1466 of *The Urantia Book* that Jesus has just passed by a person and has not engaged that man in a conversation which would naturally lead to questions regarding spirituality. In part, Jesus explains to Ganid, "That man was not ripe for the harvest of salvation; he must be allowed more time for the trials and difficulties of life to prepare him for the reception of wisdom and higher learning. Or, if we could have him live with us, we might by our lives show him the Father in heaven, and thus

would he become so attracted by our lives as sons of God that he would be constrained to inquire about your Father."

John Bradshaw uses a term which I personally like—that of *healthy shame*. Healthy shame brings us to a correct recognition of our human limitations. It gives us the permission to be human. It gives us permission to act and to make mistakes when we act. Reading again from John Sanford's *Healing and Wholeness*: "This means, of course, that life must be lived with risk...The safe life is not the whole life, and the whole life will have its share of mistakes. Not only will we learn through these mistakes and errors, but they themselves become a part of our mysterious totality. We are our mistakes, as well as our successes. A life without mistakes is impoverished, although, of course, our mistakes and errors must be redeemed by our becoming conscious through them."

I believe that if we do not, on a continual basis, reconsider and accept the fact of our own limitations, reckon with our own healthy shame, the reality of our own capacity for evil, our own smallness, then we cannot accept ourselves for who we really are, and we divorce ourselves from ourselves. We then fail not only to accept our own humanity, but we also fail to accept the humanity of those around us.

The second solution which Jesus offers for spiritual blindness is relatedness—our relationships to those around us whom we love and who love us. It is in relationship that we find another path to spiritual growth. It is in the embrace of real relationship that we allow ourselves to be vulnerable to others and valuable to others. It is in growing relationships that we discover that we are lovable and that we have the capacity to love, and it is through relationships, the successes and the failures, that we perfect our ability to love. Again, reading from John Sanford:

The development of consciousness is not possible without emotion, and emotion comes to us through the significant relationships in our lives. If we have not loved and hated, been enriched and injured by others, life has not been lived. For this reason, relationships are crucial to our psychological development.

At the conclusion of Sanford's book, he suggests six techniques whereby we may seek to enhance our own personal process of self-healing, our own process of becoming whole. I would add, our own process toward a deeper and more rich understanding of our own story,

our own movement toward spiritual completeness. They are:

1. Our relationships.
2. Journal writing. Keeping a journal is not the same as keeping a diary. In a diary, one writes about what one did during the day, outward actions, people seen, etc. In a journal one writes about one's inner life. A journal is a personal account of one's own inner journey toward wholeness.
3. Body work of some sort. Be it yoga, jogging, tennis, swimming, racquet ball, golf, you name it. Try at least three times per week to do some regular activity which honors and exercises the wonderful companion your body is for you.
4. Meditation. Again, pick your own style, but spend some regular time every day if possible in this quieting activity.
5. Active imagination. This will take some explaining if you are not familiar with it. For a more detailed explanation, please do refer to John Sanford's *Healing and Wholeness*. This is a process of actively engaging in dialogue with some image or feeling which holds special meaning for you, and *writing down the dialogue*. Use your journal. Writing it down is very important. Take for example a dream you have recently had, or an image from a piece of poetry or art. Ask the image what import it holds for you. The fact that it is an image which you remember with some emotional content guarantees that it holds import for you. Write down your questions and the answers you receive.
6. Dreamwork. Try to put some thought each morning before arising to remember your dreams. Use your journal to record your dreams and your reactions to them. Use active imagination with those images which are intriguing or hold emotional content for you.

For more information on this topic, please refer to the following books:

1. *Prayer, Stress, and Our Inner Wounds*, by Flora Wuellner, published by The Upper Room
2. *Prayer and Our Bodies*, by Flora Wuellner, The Upper Room
3. *Healing and Wholeness*, by John Sanford, Paulist Press
4. *Necessary Losses*, by Judith Viorst, Ballantine
5. *The Uses of Enchantment*, by Bruno Bettelheim, Vintage Press
6. *Dreamwork*, by Jeremy Taylor

An Offer Too Good to Refuse

by Beth Bartley

Starting with the spiritual retreat, I have continuously heard things in different talks that have built up to what I have to say about problem solving. For instance, at the Adventures in Spiritual Living retreat we were talking about Prayer in the Moment, the immediate and sometimes emergency need for help from God. In his keynote speech Steve Dreier talked about the inner and the outer walk and how they relate. Carol Hay referred to a need of skills to promote our interest to act; you get skills through repetitive action, the formation of habits. Bobbie Dreier talked about her search to find God, the problems she encountered and her need to rely on God for guidance. Phil Geiger's songs this morning were about worship and the effect it has on your attitude; attitude affects your perspective of the problem. Finally, there was Allison Gardner's talk this morning and the third slip of paper; the one we were to keep. Mine said: "Love with all your heart, ask me for help, and feel peace." All of these thoughts relate in some way to my perspective of problem solving. My message: When you have problems, ask God for help.

Several months ago in prayer, I was evaluating the change in direction of my career, and my interest in business ethics. Since there are no established credentials for this line of work, it created a challenge in how to proceed. In this particular conversation with God I mentioned that I could stand to update my experience speaking to large groups of people. I ended the conversation with the question, "How do you get on the Urantia speaking circuit?" Obviously God heard my question, for a short while later Marta Elders called and offered me this opportunity. The other day Monica Kemp commented that "God called my bluff."

In asking for help I was following the instructions in *The Urantia Book* where it states: "The law of the universe is: Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find." (*1838) Steve Dreier mentioned in his keynote speech that "we were made to walk with God." From that perspective it is very natural to ask God when we need help, for he is interested in helping us learn and grow.

It is natural for me to ask questions, for my mother nurtured my curiosity when I was young. She taught me that questions were okay and she would respond with a positive statement and action such as, "Let's go see what the encyclopedia (or dictionary) says about that," or, "Why don't we go to the library and see if they have some books on that subject." My mother not only encouraged my curiosity, but she taught me responsibility. She didn't give me the answers; she taught me to find the answers.

When I was introduced to *The Urantia Book*, I was delighted with the strong statement it makes about curiosity. On page 160 it says: "Curiosity—the spirit of investigation, the urge of discovery, and the drive of exploration—is a part of the inborn and divine endowment of evolutionary space creatures." I challenge you

to remember the importance of curiosity when you are around children; not only is it a divine endowment, but curiosity stays with us until we pass beyond the last circuit of Havona.

It was my habit of asking questions that helped me at a time of confusion in my spiritual life. The churches were not answering my questions, and there was a very critical time when I asked God, "If you are there, then help me find you." Can you imagine the reaction of my Thought Adjuster when I said that? With that question I opened myself to being guided; I became receptive to God. Eventually I was lead to *The Urantia Book*.

However, I'm getting ahead of myself, for I want to talk about the three words in this session's topic: worshipful, problem, and solving. The first and last words are fine, but personally I prefer to use "opportunity" or "challenge" instead of the word "problem." These words imply there is something to obtain in the action, some goal towards which you are going, whereas "problem" so often has a negative concept. Attitude has a great deal to do with how you approach and deal with situations and therefore it affects the outcome. Remember the book tells us: "The positive always has the advantage over the negative." (*1125)

Along with a positive attitude it helps to get beyond the emotions so we can objectively deal with the facts. We are told that, "The mind of evolutionary man is ever confronted with the intricate problem of refereeing the contest between the natural expansion of emotional impulses and the moral growth." (*1134) I can relate to this because when I am dealing with a challenge, often my emotions seem to be ahead of my mind. When this happens it prevents me from properly thinking the problem through. That's when I get myself into trouble and I cannot deal with the situation until I slow down and re-establish my connection to God and thereby feel his peace.

In the philosophic style, for clarification, let me define the words worshipful, problem, and solving. There is no better definition of worship than what the book has to say: "Believers must increasingly learn how to step aside from the rush of life—escape the harassments of material existence—while they refresh the soul, inspire the mind, and renew the spirit by worshipful communion." (*1739) What a wonderful concept that gives to worship—it offers an instant getaway when you are under stress. We're not told to withdraw permanently, just step aside and be refreshed. What an offer.

For the second word—problem—I went to Merriam-Webster's dictionary which defines it as "a question raised for consideration or solution." It doesn't say that action is always needed, only that you will consider or solve the question.

For the last word—solving—I go back to *The Urantia Book* where it says: "Personal, spiritual religious experience is an efficient solvent for most mortal difficulties."

(*2093) You deal with problems through your religious experience by building a foundation of knowledge where you learn how to react and deal with situations.

If you put these ideas and definitions together and add the quote, "Growth needs the stimulus of adversity" (*1097), problem solving starts to take on a circular pattern. You have a problem, you pray, you solve, you grow. You have another problem, you pray, you solve, you grow, and on and on. You end up with an ongoing circle not just in this life but beyond. However, I'll return to this idea later.

Rodan said that Jesus had the greatest method of problem solving which was: isolated worshipful meditation. (*1774) But as we meditate it is necessary to understand what to do. This brings us back to the law of the universe. Another and expanded version of it is: "Ask and it shall be given; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one who asks receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks the door of salvation will be opened." (*1619) Another offer to assist is in our lives.

Jesus encourages your prayers and offers assistance when he says: "If...you are ever in doubt as to what you would ask of the Father, ask in my name, and I will present your petition in accordance with your real needs and desires and in accordance with my Father's will." (*1639) If you don't know how to pray or what to ask for he will ask for you.

The last phrase of this quote, "in accordance with my Father's will," helps to understand how to pray. For instance, it is the Father's will that we develop the potential that we have (remember the ideal mortal career that the Thought Adjuster brought). I've observed that when I ask for help, if the request involves characteristics that will assist me to grow spiritually, the response can be felt immediately. For instance, when in doubt if I ask for faith, or when fearful if I ask for understanding, courage or knowledge (fear often comes from the unknown), or when confused if I ask for wisdom, then I am aware deep within that there has been a response. These requests are things of values, things that help us grow. The book specifically tells us that we should never ask God to solve our problems but to ask him for wisdom and spiritual strength so we can attack the problem ourselves. (*999)

Prayer is a daily event with most *Urantia Book* readers that I know. I don't mean down on the knees with a lot of thee's and thou's; rather a time of quiet reflection with God, a time set aside for personal growth and spiritual nurturing. We're told that: "Genuine prayer adds to spiritual growth, modifies attitudes, and yields that satisfaction which comes from communion with divinity...a spontaneous outburst of God-consciousness." It continues, saying that, "Prayer is not a technique of escape from conflict but rather a stimulus to growth." One of the most explicit comments about prayer is: "Words are irrelevant to prayer." (*1002)

Several times we are told that God knows our needs before we ask. Yet as mortal creatures—will creatures—it is necessary to ask God to be involved in our lives. We

must actually choose God with knowledge and intent. There was an occasion in my life when I called God's name—thankfully that's all that was necessary to reflect my choice and engage God's involvement. I was driving my children home from a church party one afternoon, when suddenly I realized a car approaching from the opposite direction was angled in such a way that we were destined for a head-on collision. The other driver wasn't watching the road and was unaware of what he was doing. All I said was, "Father God." (I'm not sure why I used that name for God, but it worked.) The children immediately became silent, my voice must have indicated trouble or urgency.

The events that followed were instantaneous and yet seem to be isolated in slow-motion within my mind as individual happenings. My high school physics was somehow mentally resurrected to work out the best angle to take the "hit" from the other car so that we wouldn't be flipped into the water-filled ditch on the side of the road. My daughters settled back and prepared for the obvious outcome of the situation (thankfully all seat belts were on). All other traffic seemed to fade away as the other drivers became aware of the potential accident and presumably put on their brakes. Everything was set to have an accident—an accident that should have happened but didn't.

The *Urantia Book* says God does not normally get involved with accidents of time, but I know within the very core of my existence God was involved in this situation. I could feel the presence of an energy between the cars that prevented them from touching. You can bet that I believe in worshipful problem solving. God was somehow involved in this and my turning to him was instrumental in the outcome. The *Urantia Book* tells us that "Repetitive experiences become habits." (*1777) More specifically, we are told that "[the] numbers of decision, frequent repetitions, persistent repetitions, are also essential to the habit-forming certainty." (*1210) When you keep asking God for help and he responds, you become certain and confident in God. When I said "Father God" I did so with certain knowledge he would be there. Thankfully turning to God was a habit that I had cultivated.

Earlier I mentioned the idea that problem solving was circular—problems, prayer, solving and growth. We have discussed the first three points; now I want to look at the fourth—growth. We are told that "Difficulties must be encountered for growth." (*1719) and again, "Growth needs the stimulation of adversity." (*1097) And yet on page 1204 it says "All spiritual growth...is a gift from our heavenly Father and not our own doing." If our spiritual growth is a gift from our heavenly Father, why do we have to encounter the difficulties? Why doesn't God just make it happen? Well, God could make it all happen, and he could have created us so that it was automatic, but we would lose the aspect of our lives that makes us free-will creatures. When we ask, and by asking choose, he gives us this gift, "growth"—spiritual growth—for the work and trials we confront and endure. It is the spiritual growth that makes all the

aggravations in life worthwhile; it's kind of a bonus (a Christmas bonus, if you will). Our spiritual growth in turn draws us closer to God and makes us aware of the immense satisfaction we gain in and through and from the relationship we have with God. The peace that passes all understanding is our awareness of God and gives us certainty of his presence in our lives.

Problems are the food that nurture spiritual growth. Problems, challenges, opportunities, aggravations—whatever name you give them—are an essential part of our ascent to the Father. We are will creatures and as such we must choose. Without adversity there is no choice to make. But keep in mind that “Every step you take must be one of willingness, intelligent, and cheerful co-operation.” (*381) No long faces allowed; you must live life with a smile on your face and joy in your heart.

We are told that “Successful living [is] the art of the mastery of dependable techniques for solving common problems.” (1773) This implies that we should be aware of our method or technique. Could it be that when you are aware of your method it is more automatic to use, and the more it is used the more certain you become? (Sounds like another circle.) You are also instructed that “The wise and effective solution of any problem demands that the mind shall be free from bias, passion, and all other personal prejudices.” (*1773) Solving problems effectively needs a mind that is free from the emotional contaminates we bring into our thoughts, especially the negative aspects.

On page 1662, Jesus tells Nathaniel that their mission is to help solve people's spiritual problems so that they are better prepared to deal with their material ones. This relates to Steve Dreier's comment in the keynote speech that, “once the inner life is secure the outer life begins.”

In Rodan's talk he mentions that Jesus said, “The greatest of all methods of problem solving [is] the isolation of worshipful meditation.” (1774) Jesus went off by himself to pray and we can learn from Jesus' approach to problems in prayer. He looked at the problem to analyze what it was and how best to deal with it. He sought wisdom and energy. Jesus also considered the long-range purpose of life. So imagine yourself ten years down the road looking back. Is the present situation a major one or is it trivial? Jesus controlled the changes in life rather than letting them control him. This changes your attitude and insight on life's events. And last, remember the Master's prayer: “Not my will, but your be done.” (1774)

I'd like to take a minute to quickly review what I have said. First, I talked about the three words in the topic: worshipful, problem, and solving, and I defined them. Next I brought in the idea of growth, because this makes the situation circular and ongoing, eternal if you will. Most recently I was talking about the “how to” of problem solving from *The Urantia Book*. One of the most basic aspects of our lives, from a spiritual perspective, is that as will creatures we must choose God, and that by choosing God we need adversity and challenges in our lives from which to grow. This does not mean that life is or should be oppressive. In fact, it's just the opposite.

Have you ever seen the face of a God-centered person who is experiencing adversity? Their face seems to glow—actually glow. On 1227 it says: “Only religious confidence—living faith—can sustain man amid such difficult and perplexing problems.” (*1222) In contrast think of a person without faith who is in an adverse situation. They seem to fall apart. There is nothing for them to hold onto.

Let me give you an example of how opportunities and the application of the law of the universe can work to sustain us. These are real situations and involve two heart attacks. One happened to my husband and the other to a friend's husband. (Let's call my friends John and Jane—as in Doe.) My husband had a heart attack when he was in his early 40's, just as John did; they were both in the hospital for 10 days, and home for three months of recovery. Without getting technical, both heart attacks were mild and would be called in layman's language a “warner” (the word my husband's doctor used, explaining that he had been warned there was a problem).

These are the similarities. However, there is a difference in how Jane and I initially handled the situation. While my husband was still in the ER, looking as though he was wired for sound with an EKG attached, an oxygen mask, and a blood-pressure cuff, I prayed. We had just moved there a few months earlier and we didn't have a local support team. I didn't know what to do, so I turned to God for help. Actually I gave it all into God's hands. It was a matter of desperation. I didn't know where else to turn. However, this prayer is the only difference in how Jane and I dealt with our situations.

I walked through the next three months in peace, and at no time did I feel anger, concern, fear, or apprehension about what was happening. Each day I confronted the realities of life and did whatever needed to be done; I took care of the house, the bills, the family and Steve in the hospital. I had always presumed that Jane's experience had been like mine and was shocked recently when she told of her anger towards God for allowing the heart attack to happen. In listening closely to her story I realized that the only difference was the prayer that I said in the ER. I had asked God for help.

Could a prayer make this much difference, allowing one person to walk through a situation with inner peace, while the other was consumed with anger and bitterness at God? That's quite a statement.

While writing this example, I recalled a quote from *The Urantia Book*: “In the time of testing, a man's soul is revealed; trial discloses what really is in the heart.” (*1824) I had a real problem with what this implies; it sounds religiously arrogant. Yet, Jane and I were each given the same opportunity; we just dealt with it differently. As Christians we both had the same knowledge of, “Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find.” I chose to apply it to my situation. She didn't.

Let me run through some other examples of asking. (Do keep in mind that the stories I am using are examples of when I did things right. Please don't presume that I always do. I am human.)

Many years ago I taught Sunday school for two and three year olds and there were between 20 and 30 students in the class. There were three adult teachers and two teenager assistants. The teachers rotated two weeks on and one week off. During one of my "on" weeks I suddenly came down with a sinus infection and was put on antibiotics. I was running a fever and was dizzy and mentally confused from the medicine. This all happened Friday evening and by a fluke I couldn't get in touch with either of the other teachers to take over for me. Since I wasn't infectious I decided to go and teach the lesson. My husband drove me up, helped me into the class, and waited to return me home and to bed, even though he normally sang in the choir. I was physically exhausted when we arrived at church and the other teacher told me to go home. Since I was there I said if she would get the students into place I would teach and then leave. While they got the students seated in front of the little altar in the room, I turned my back and prayed, "Father, I can't do this today; you have to do it for me. These are your children, so please tell them the story you want them to hear." I had no idea the impact of this simple prayer for a couple of weeks.

The story that week was the parable of the Good Shepherd, and I don't know what God said that day, but he reached the hearts and minds of those young children in a way that I never could. Their parents came in for months afterwards and told us how their children loved that parable; the parents presumed it had been told the week before. If you consider the retention of a child this age you can see what a marvelous thing God did.

Another example has to do with fear, for I have had a fear for many years of New York City. It caused no inconvenience until I was asked to be an Area Coordinator, and being an AC was important enough to me that I finally confronted this fear. I used self-guided meditation to sort through early stories of trips I took to New York City with my mother and brother. As I prayed I began to feel the terror of the crowds in Grand Central

Station that I had experienced when I was a child. It really amazed me how easy it was to locate the reason for my fear and once I had identified the source of the fear, it was easy to deal with. I have found that often fear comes from the unknown, or something that you aren't aware of knowing, so look at it, evaluate it, and then confront it. And remember to let God help.

I've covered a lot of territory in this talk, so let me do a real quick summary. *Worship* is an escape from the harassment of the material world; a retreat to refresh, inspire and renew. *Problems* are situations that need consideration and/or action. *Solving* is dealing with a situation. When you put them together, worshipful problem solving means letting your spirituality strengthen and refresh you while dealing with mortal situations. *Growth* was added to these three terms, which made a circular pattern that is the basis of spiritual growth and progress throughout your life.

There is one last word I want to mention: *joy*. Our lives are to be joyful. Did you know that the principle activity of the secondary seconaphim is to direct a reaction of joy? (*312) This morning Phil Grieger mentioned the primary seconaphim's job involves worship and I know God well enough to know the connection is no coincidence. We are told that sonship is to yield supreme joy in the spirit. (*1674) Joy is actually a byproduct of sonship. We are also told that no matter what the cost of sonship in this life, you will receive manyfold more joy. (*1537) No matter what you go through you will be given enough joy to cover the matter. (There is no excuse not to be joyful.) "Increasing happiness is the experience of all who are certain about God." (*1766) (Remember, certainty comes from habitually seeking God.) And last, joy is defined as: "A tonic for health, a stimulus for mind and an unfailing energy for the soul." (*2065)

So go forth with your circles; circles of progress, and love, and joy and as David Elders said, of unity. These circles will help you as you develop and grow on your Walk with God.

Prayerful Problem Solving

by Meredith J. Sprunger

Human beings are, by nature, problem-solving creatures. Our basic needs and urges interact with environmental stimuli in search of organismic satisfaction and fulfillment. All problem solving from birth to death is set in the context of our nature, experience, and learning. How we solve our problems is most fundamentally determined by our nature and resources. We are material beings integrated and controlled by a neural system directed by mind and indwelt by spirit. Human beings, therefore, have physical, mental, and spiritual resources to aid in problem solving. All of these capacities and capabilities interact and function holistically.

Centuries of experience—verified by scientific discovery, rational insight, and spiritual revelation—has taught us that these triune human resources exist in a hierarchical relationship. Our material nature is directed by the meanings and quality of mind, and mind is eventually influenced and determined by the values of spiritual reality. The more immature and underdeveloped the individual is psychologically and spiritually, the greater the domination of the physical laws and conditions will be. Conversely, the more mature and developed we are mentally and spiritually, the less we are influenced and controlled by our physical condition and the material world.

The human approach to problem solving reflects this hierarchical relationship of resources and leads to a differential strategy in finding a solution to our difficulties. Usually we start by analyzing the situation; attempting to break it down into its simplest components. We isolate facts and influences. If this analytical process does not lead to a solution, we have learned to employ the more systematic techniques of the scientific method. The scientific method is especially helpful in understanding and solving problems related to the material world.

When these analytical attempts at problem solving bring inadequate results, we turn to the more holistic or integral method of creative thinking. Graham Wallas, a pioneer in creative thinking research, describes this type of thinking as a four-step process: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. This is solution by insight. In creative thinking we are able to cross the borderline between our empirical-rational capacities for the resolution of difficulties and prayerful problem solving. We cannot distinguish whether insights originate in our conscious and subconscious mind or if they are received from spiritual, superconscious resources.

We do find that sooner or later we reach the limit of our human ability to solve difficult problems. At this point those of us who accept the reality and availability of spiritual resources and the efficacy of prayer may consciously engage in prayerful problem solving. At the outset, spiritually mature people need to rule out prayer

as a form of magic or a technique in which we can bargain with or change God. God is infinite in goodness and love and does not need to be persuaded to do good. Secondly, we must have an understanding of God and universe laws which enable prayerful problem solving to operate effectively. Physical, mental, and spiritual laws were established by God to regulate the world and our lives. Prayer is not a means to circumvent these laws.

While God's relationship with material reality is largely through the utilization of impersonal laws, God's relationship with people is personal. Through personal communication God seeks to assist us in using universe laws more effectively to augment our welfare. We receive this spiritual ministry primarily through our minds and the minds of others. Mind is the arena in which prayerful problem solving takes place.

Efficacious prayer is not a rocking chair solution to tough problems or an easy detour around the hilly road of rigorous living. When prayer is used as an escape mechanism or psychological safety net by the fearful, slothful, or cowardly, it does not achieve genuine spiritual quality or power. Prayer is not a spiritual crutch or a magic wand. It is the actualization of an indigenous partnership with God. God works with us, not "for" us as an indulgent wonder worker. There are elemental spiritual requirements which must precede problem solving prayer. We are required to face reality courageously and have exhausted our human ability to cope with our difficulties. Egocentric, selfish, or purely personal objectives must be surrendered for a dedication to spiritual values and growth. Indecision and vacillation are barriers to divine guidance. Only a wholehearted decision to follow God's will as we sincerely understand it will bring spiritual wisdom. Our prayer should be for guidance, not some miraculous happening. Finally, we need to pursue our quest with living faith, not doubting that our spiritual resources will be sufficient for any mortal eventuality.

Even though prayer does not change God's mind and is not a way of changing natural or spiritual laws, it is a process through which the natural course of events can be altered. We live in an open universe in which human thought and action may influence the sequence and quality of events. Prayer is a spiritual technique through which we sometimes discover or utilize higher laws which may nullify or counteract lower laws. It is a psychological-spiritual relationship which may change our thinking and behavior. As a result, different options or events take place, higher and more inclusive laws may be set in motion, or superior resources may be made available to help us solve or cope with problems.

The editors of *Guideposts* in *His Mysterious Ways* (1988, Guideposts Associates, Inc.) have compiled the stories of over a hundred people who have escaped

tragedy or death or whose lives have been dramatically changed by seemingly miraculous happenings brought about as the result of prayer. How do we understand these unusual events? And why are people in similar situations, who appear to be just as good and righteous, not the recipients of such miraculous deliverance through their prayers?

While the answer to these questions is hidden by our incomplete knowledge and limited view of divine wisdom, it appears that the basic factor in God's relationship with persons is a spiritual quality of love which is unique for each individual in any given situation. The effect of every personal relationship with God is determined by the quality and circumstances of its singular reality.

It may be helpful to speculate about the methodologies of prayerful problem solving. Our minds are indwelt by the spirit of the Universal Father and nurtured by the Spirit of Truth and the Holy Spirit. No doubt there are many ways in which we may be assisted by this triune spirit ministry. The following avenues are suggested as ways in which prayer may bring spiritual help in problem solving.

1. New ideas or insights which result in changed attitudes and/or actions that alter our lives and the reactions of our associates.

2. Augmented faith and imagination increases the power of our mind to change our body chemistry and function. These changes appear to be miraculous only because we are largely ignorant of the ability of the mind to control the body when fully undergirded by faith visualization and imaginative imagery.

3. Possible greater utilization of latent extrasensory capacities: telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis. In unusual situations and times of crisis we observe the association of prayer and exceptional perception, awareness, and other events.

4. The activity of angels or other superhuman beings to minister to needs and bring help which is sought through prayer. Such events usually take place only in extremely critical situations or when larger providential purposes are served.

5. Prayer may be able to use channels, energy forms, or laws unknown to us. Sometimes it appears that prayer brings about a mysterious coordination of people and events.

Any or all of these methods of ministry may be involved in prayerful problem solving. Sometimes prayer

enables us to find approaches to our difficulties which were not available to us through analytical-rational-creative thinking. At other times we find that prayer does not bring those ideas, attitudes, or actions which alter the external conditions of the problem. It is still there in all its terrible reality. But even in these situations, prayer is spiritually effective. It is a dynamic spiritual fellowship which inspires creative attitudes and courage which enable us to live with even the most difficult problems such as personal deficiencies, tragedy, injustice, pain, and death.

One of the most difficult questions associated with prayerful problem solving is the place of intercessory prayer. Is it a legitimate spiritual technique for helping others or only a psychological-social way of expressing our concern for their welfare? God does not need to be informed of their condition nor be persuaded to perform good deeds. God is our loving Universal Father whose spirit indwells each of us and we do not need saints, supermortal beings, or fellow mortals interceding for us. Each person has to determine their own spiritual destiny, and intercessory prayer cannot be used to manipulate their lives.

Regardless of its effect, we spontaneously pray for those we love. There is great value in the psychological-social ramifications of intercessory prayer. There is some evidence, however, that intercessory prayer has more than autosuggestive or sociosuggestive validity. If this is so, how do we understand this form of ministry? One explanation is that our extrasensory capacities have the ability to enter other minds and bring comfort, strength, and love. Another possibility is that God not only gives us the opportunity to be co-partners with him in shaping our own lives, but may have created spiritual channels through which we are privileged to be co-ministers with him in helping others within the limits of their spiritual autonomy. If not, why do we have this spiritual urge to pray for others?

In concluding our thinking about prayerful problem solving, we should remember that the stimulus of problems is basic to personal and spiritual growth. Problems are really opportunities for development and service. There are inherent limits to problem solving in the evolutionary universe. These limitations are germane to our glorious destiny and the quality of spiritual perfection which we are forging out between the hammers of anguish and the anvils of necessity here on planet earth.

Worshipful Problem Solving

by Carolyn Kendall

The subject of this presentation is "worshipful problem solving." It is included on page 1095 among the habits which promote religious growth. Before we get into a discussion of solving problems through prayer and worship, let's first establish whether we actually *do* have problems in this life. Are problems real? Do we exaggerate situations, magnifying them all out of proportion to their importance? What is the human condition on our world? Is it possible to deny suffering and attain a level of blissful oblivion?

In Buddhism, the Second Noble Truth involves the idea of one's *attachment* to things or to other persons that influences how one reacts; i.e., the death of another doesn't grieve if we're not *attached* to him; loss of possessions doesn't matter if we're not *attached* to them; our own death is not important if we're not *attached* to life, and so on. The Third Noble Truth teaches that if we overcome desire and attachment by rising above illusions, we will cease to suffer. Buddhism does not deny the existence of suffering, or "*dukka*"; it teaches an *attitude* toward suffering where one can become immune to suffering.

In the Old Testament, the author of the book of Job never presumes that suffering is just, or that we should harden our heart to the misery of others. His question: Why, who or what causes it? Is one himself responsible? To atheists, suffering is proof that there is no God of love, no controlling spirit. We live, we suffer, we die, all to no purpose.

"To the unbelieving materialist, man is simply an evolutionary accident. His hopes of survival are strung on a figment of mortal imagination; his fears, loves, longings, and beliefs are but the reaction of the incidental juxtaposition of certain lifeless atoms of matter. No display of energy nor expression of trust can carry him beyond the grave. The devotional labors and inspirational genius of the best of men are doomed to be extinguished by death, the long and lonely night of eternal oblivion and soul extinction. Nameless despair is man's only reward for living and toiling under the temporal sun of mortal existence. Each day of life slowly and surely tightens the grasp of a pitiless doom which a hostile and relentless universe of matter has decreed shall be the crowning insult to everything in human desire which is beautiful, noble, lofty, and good." (*1118)

Again, are problems real? Yes, in the view of the majority of people, problems are real and terrible on our world. They are not imaginary. The authors of *The Urantia Book* do not minimize such experiences. Eve is described as never fully recovering from the effects of the 30-day period of mental suffering and spiritual sorrow when Adam had gone off alone in anguish after the default. No one has ever gone through an entire life

without some kind of pain, or being confronted with some sort of dire circumstance to be solved. We can't pretend problems don't exist. How to look at them and how to deal with them are the real questions requiring our attention.

"Many things which happen in the course of a human life are hard to understand, difficult to reconcile with the idea that this is a universe in which truth prevails and in which righteousness triumphs. It so often appears that slander, lies, dishonesty, and unrighteousness—sin—prevails." (*2062-3)

But such is not man's end and eternal destiny; such a vision is but the cry of despair uttered by some wandering soul who has become lost in spiritual darkness, and who bravely struggles on in the face of the mechanistic sophistries of a material philosophy, blinded by the confusion and distortion of a complex learning. And all this doom of darkness and all this destiny of despair are forever dispelled by one brave stretch of faith on the part of the most humble and unlearned of God's children on earth." (*1118)

There is reassurance on page 2076: "As you view the world, remember that the black patches of evil are shown against a white background of ultimate good. You don't see merely white patches which show up against a black background of evil. When there is so much good to proclaim, why...dwell on evil in the world just because it appears to be a fact? The spiritual values of truth are more uplifting than the phenomenon of evil." There is a balance to be found here.

Let's look at how Rodan listed the steps in problem solving on page 1773:

1. You have "to locate the difficulty, isolate the problem, and frankly recognize its nature and gravity."
2. You have to free your mind of passion, of bias—prejudices that interfere with the evaluation of the factors that make up the problem.
3. The solution "requires sincerity and courage." Only when you are "honest and brave" can you work your way through the confusing maze of many problems.
4. You must be "equipped with...wisdom of mind and charm of personality" in order to "win the support and cooperation" of others. Learn to persuade others; you have to have tact and tolerance.
5. You must isolate yourself frequently in worshipful meditation in order to gather strength and wisdom.

Problems and problem solving can also be broken down into other cross sections. Keeping Rodan's advice in mind, problems may be attacked from three angles:

1. Identifying types of problems and their causes. Using *The Urantia Book* as guidance, certain beings or other alleged "entities" may be eliminated as the source of problems.

2. Dealing with two types of problems—the ones you *can* do something about, and the ones you *can't* do anything about.

3. Preventive maintenance—material and spiritual.

Material Problems, Their Causes and Prevention

1. *God does not cause problems.* All catastrophic disasters, whether natural or otherwise—earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tornados, floods, hurricanes, drought, famine, war, disease, fires, plane crashes, auto accidents, domestic upheavals, crime—none of these things are caused either directly or indirectly by God. “The Gods who go on a rampage...who inflict their judgments of displeasure...these are the Gods of primitive religions; they are not the Gods who live and rule the universe.” (*60) God does not punish one innocent person because of the mistakes another has committed. Neither does the Thought Adjuster cause personal problems; the Adjuster is an actual fragment—a part—of God the Father.

We can't predict when natural disasters will occur, only that they *will* occur. Prudence should teach us not to live on an earthquake fault, downslope from an erupting volcano, downstream from a dam, or on an eroding shore line. One ought not build a home on a sand dune, a flood plain, next door to a nuclear reactor or under high-tension wires. Tornados are sporadic, but more common in some areas than others. Weigh the risks and make decisions with knowledge and discretion. Many accidents can be avoided. Clumsiness and carelessness are things we can do something about.

Crime and war—other than avoiding living where either are likely to occur—are inevitable consequences of an imperfect world. “Today, nations are directed by people who have a superabundance of ideas, but are poverty stricken in ideals. That is the explanation of poverty, divorce, war and racial hatreds.” (*1220) “War is an animalistic reaction to misunderstandings and irritations.” (*783) “War persists because man is human, evolved from the animals, and all animals are bellicose.” (*784) “[W]hen closely associated uncultured people irritate and offend each other.” (*714) “The immature individual arouses the antagonisms of his fellows.” (*1778) “It is the lack of natural brotherly affection that now stands in the way of immediate realization of the brotherhood of man on Urantia.” (*763)

2. *Lucifer, Satan, the Devil or the Fall of Adam and Eve.* None of these beings or events have anything *directly* to do with the majority of problems that befall the average person. Certainly, this is true of natural disasters, accidents, violence, or social disharmony. There is an *indirect* relationship between the actions of these being in times past, and some of the conditions that have retarded our planet. For example, as a consequence of the failure of Adam and Eve to leave a sufficient number of their progeny on our world, we are not immune to viral and bacterial diseases. Because of the absence of supermortal judges—due to the Caligastia betrayal and default of Adam and Eve—who would have been competent to rule on the quality of human genetic stocks, our world has experienced the proliferation of all groups, good

and bad. Consequently, we suffer an uncommonly large proportion of the mentally ill, mentally retarded, inherited physical diseases, as well as those individuals who engage in self-destructive, anti-social or criminal behavior. As individuals, we cannot reconstitute our own genes to enhance the quality of our lives, but we can make personal choices that could affect the quality of future generations.

Lucifer was taken into custody when Michael became sovereign of Nebadon and is now a prisoner on a Jerusalem satellite world. Satan visited our world until the time of the preparation of these papers, but he was also apprehended and imprisoned. (*611) Caligastia, the “Devil,” is still free, but he has no power to enter our minds because of the universal bestowal of Thought Adjusters and the Spirit of Truth. (*610) There is a tradition that the Devil works to drive a wedge between good men—between friends—but that is not in *The Urantia Book*. “The devil has been given a great deal of credit for evil which does not belong to him...In general, when weak and dissolute mortals are supposed to be under the influence of devils and demons, they are merely being dominated by their own inherent and debased tendencies, being led astray by their own natural propensities.” (*610)

3. *Evil spirits and demons are not responsible for our problems.* All of the stray and rebellious midwayers, along with their leader, Beelzebub, have been held prisoner since Pentecost and can no longer invade weak or inferior minds. (*863-4, 1646) Jesus denounced belief in witches and mandrakes. (*1681)

4. *Astrological influences not responsible.* “The courses of the stars in the heavens have nothing whatever to do with the events of human life on earth.” (*1680)

5. *Ghosts not responsible.* “The spirits of the dead do not come back to communicate with their families or their onetime friends among the living.” (*1680, 1230, 1646, 436)

6. *Seraphim are not responsible for painful or evil situations.* However, “they constantly manipulate the mortal environment for the purpose of augmenting the cosmic insight.” They “function as teachers...by guiding the footsteps of the human personality into paths of new and progressive experiences. To accept the guidance of a seraphim rarely means attaining a life of ease.” Rather, “...you encounter the rugged hills of moral choosing and spiritual progress.” (*1245) In times of peace and prosperity they likely become most active. Jesus warned the apostles: “Tempt not the angels of your supervision to lead you in troublous ways as a loving discipline designed to save your ease-drifting souls.” (*1931) When some new and challenging problem arises unexpectedly requiring unusual decision making, you might suspect your seraphim have had something to do with it. Accept the problem as an opportunity for growth, not something to whine and complain about. Remember that Jesus warned that all who enter the kingdom are not exempt from accidents and catastrophes. Believing in the Father will not keep you safe from trouble; however, such faith assures that you will be unafraid when

trouble comes. If you believe, you will enter the pathway to trouble. Jesus did not promise to deliver you from adversity, but he promised to go with you through all of it. (*1767)

7. *Psychic phenomena and UFOs.* From the standpoint of *The Urantia Book*, no mention is made of beings who exert problem-solving influence upon psychics, or of fortune tellers who are able to envision future events. There is no mention of *human* visitors from other planets—those who supposedly come to advise us concerning our affairs. No mention is made of near-death experiences; the relevance of such experience to human problems cannot be verified.

8. *Contacts from midwayers, seraphim, Thought Adjusters, and higher beings.* Such contacts do not fall into the realm of "psychic phenomena." An individual who has attained the first circle may be directly contacted by his/her Adjuster. (*1210) If one were a reservist, there might be contact by a midwayer, but there are approximately 1000 reservists and 1100 secondary midwayers who work with the reservists. (*1257, 865) If one were a contact reservist, one could be contacted by any kind of being visiting or resident on the planet, who needed the assistance of a human associate. All of these are possible, according to *The Urantia Book*, but also rare, and such beings are never responsible for pain and suffering. One thing these beings never do is abrogate mortal free will. (*71)

9. *Genetic inheritance, environment, character, ability and skill.* It has been said that heredity deals the cards, but environment plays them. We are all both victims and winners in the heredity sweepstakes. Abraham's progenitors were of such quality that the Melchizedeks were able to project that in a certain generation, the offspring "would be characterized by intelligence, initiative, sagacity and sincerity." (*1018) "Personality is basically changeless; that which changes—grows—is the moral character..." While inherited urges cannot be modified, emotional reactions to the urges can be changed; therefore the moral nature can be modified, character can be improved. (*1572) Rodan said, "Character is something more than mere mind and morals," and he recommends marriage as the most effective and ideal social relationship: "...[I]t is marriage that draws forth those precious impulses and higher motives which are indispensable for the development of a strong character." (*1776) Character defects and maladaptation to one's vocation probably account for most of life's problems. Cain killed his half-brother Abel. Their characters and inheritance are compared on page 848: Had Abel lived to be 25 or 30, "his superb inheritance would...have shown itself." "A good environment cannot...overcome the character handicaps of a base heredity, a bad environment can...spoil an excellent inheritance during the younger years of life. Good social environment and proper education are indispensable for...getting the most out of a good inheritance."

One can avoid much unhappiness and frustration by finding work appropriate to one's interests, training and education. "Ability is that which you inherit, while skill

is what you acquire. Life is not real to one who cannot do some one thing well, expertly. Skill is one of the real sources of the satisfaction of living." (*1779) Jesus trained his three brothers in carpentry so they could support their mother and sisters, and later, their own families. (*1410) It is recommended that one become trained in one or more methods of making a living so that one can get a job when transiently unemployed in one's chosen profession. (*910) We are told we need better job placement techniques.

Jesus and John Mark talked about the importance of a good home life and its effect upon the social, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of children. (*1922-3) In all likelihood, most parents do the best they know how; very few mothers and fathers set out deliberately to ruin their children's lives.

10. *Mental and emotional problems.* Depression seems to afflict more people than other types of mental disorders. Many folks grow up with feelings of helplessness and inferiority. On the island of Crete, Jesus encountered a young man who was dejected. Jesus made an approach to his "soul." He first asked for help—directions on how to get to the next town. As he started to leave, he turned and offered him guidance. Jesus suggested goals for him, ordered him to stand up like a man, not to slouch, assured him that all the good things in the universe were on his side. "The sun shines on you the same as on the richest, most powerful man on earth. You're strong; your physical equipment is better than average. Don't be a slave to fear like an animal. Train your mind to work to solve problems. The indwelling spirit will inspire your mind to control itself and activate the body by getting rid of fear." (*1437)

11. *Government agencies, financial institutions.* Sometimes we suspect credit card companies, financial institutions, utility companies, or the IRS are out to get us, and sometimes they are through no fault of our own. However, we can avoid difficulties by simply paying bills, insurance premiums, licenses and taxes in a timely manner. Jesus always paid his taxes; he worked to support his own family, and later saw to it that the apostles' families were cared for. He was not oblivious to, or disdainful of, the requirements of life in a complex society.

12. *Health and nutrition.* The leading causes of death are heart disease and cancer. Many of the causes of these and other diseases are avoidable, others aren't—some are hereditary. Good nutrition and health habits are essential. The book warns against deliberately defiling the physical body, as well as against physical and mental poisons which interfere with the Thought Adjuster's work in the mind. (*1204)

13. *Social problems.* Many of our problems relate to inequities and misunderstandings between ourselves and our neighbors or fellow employees. During Jesus', Gonod's and Ganid's stopover in Caesarea on the trip to Rome, they encountered a young man who was repairing the steering paddle of their ship. He complained, "If the Gods are so interested in me, why don't they remove the cruel and unjust foreman of this workshop?" Jesus

answered, "Since you know the ways of kindness and value justice, perhaps the 'Gods' have brought him near you so that you can lead him into the better way. As it is, this man is *your* master because his evil ways control you. Assert your mastery over the situation by the power of your goodness. I predict the good in you will overcome the evil in him. You are more blessed with truth than is the other man; his need should challenge you. You aren't a coward. You wouldn't watch a man drown. Don't let this man's soul flounder in darkness." (*1430)

Worshipful Problem Solving

The *Urantia Book* has a lot to say about prayer and worship. Sometimes I think people hesitate to pray, lest they do it the "wrong" way. Even when they are in difficulty, or have serious problems, they feel guilty about praying because they haven't been doing it regularly—when everything went well. Chances are, they have been praying and worshiping right along, without being aware that their spiritual thoughts were actually prayer or worship.

Generally speaking, if one demanded of God, "Solve all my material and emotional problems for me" and then sat back and waited, one would be waiting a long time for something to happen. It doesn't work that way because God isn't a genie who responds to commands. The book presents guidelines for prayer and worship. The idea in prayer is to help one prepare for the challenges that are inevitable, to build up spiritual resources *before* problems arise in order to react with grace and fortitude when they do come.

There are a few general things to know about prayer and worship: The urge to pray is often prompted by the seraphim. (*1245) The Spirit never drives, only leads. (*381) Pray when all goes well, not only in times of trouble. (*1640) There's no need to be overanxious about your common needs. (*1640) The Father knows what you need even before you think to ask. (???) Worship is the measure of the soul's detachment from the material universe, and one's attachment to spiritual realities. (However) worship—contemplation—must alternate with service, contact with material reality. (*1616) Be persistent, always pray, don't become discouraged. Persistence changes *your* attitude; enlarges your soul's capacity for receptivity. (*1619) There are many specific things we can remember about prayer and worship:

1. *Private.* Make your petitions in secret. Don't let others hear your personal prayers. Soul prayer is a personal matter. (*1640) Jesus was against praying in public. Go into a room and close the door. Or pray outdoors in a natural setting. (*1620) Rodan said of Jesus that he goes off by himself to commune with the Father; he practices the isolation of worshipful meditation. (*1774) All of Jesus' praying was done in the spirit and heart—silently. (*1621)

2. *No intermediaries except Jesus.* Pray directly to the heavenly Father. No human intermediaries are needed. (*1187) Adam taught the people of his time never to

worship anyone but God. (*832) Many prayers may not proceed beyond the local universe, except adoration of the Father. (*65) If you are in doubt as to whether your petition is proper, present your prayers to Jesus; he will present them to the appropriate beings. (*1638) Ask in his name. (*1952)

3. *No language needed.* Words are irrelevant to prayer. God answers the soul's attitude, not the words. (*1002) No need for eloquence. (*1001) Don't use set, formal prayers; they should be personal and spontaneous expressions. (*1618) Use everyday language, not a solemn style. (*965) One might imagine a dialogue between oneself and God. (*999) No need for fasting, repetitious phrases, sounds, sacrifices. (*1640) Prayer is sublime thinking. Worship is effortless attention, ideal soul rest, restful spiritual exertion. (*1616) Prayer is the breath of the soul. (*1619) The Father accepts their sincere worship no matter how crude their concept of Deity. (*1598)

4. *Most prayers are heard and answered, eventually.* Sincere prayer will be heard. Your wisdom determines the answer. To receive mercy, you must show mercy. The Father forgives before you ask for forgiveness. You will appreciate forgiveness when you have forgiven others. (*1638) Be silent after prayer to allow the Thought Adjuster to speak to the listening soul. (*1640) The Father speaks to one in an attitude of worship. (*1641) The answer to prayer is often in one's changed attitudes. (*1307) Some prayers are so advanced, they can only be answered in eternity. (*1848) When one becomes fully dedicated to doing the Father's will—when one becomes like God—all petitions will be answered. (*1638)

5. *Ethical prayers.* Prayer must be consistent with known and established natural laws. (*1638) Prayer cannot delay time or transcend space. (*1638) Avoid praying for yourself. (*1638) Jesus rarely prayed for himself. (*1620) Selfish, material requests die as they are spoken. (*84) Avoid materialistic praying. Pray for the spiritual progress of others. Pray for the sick and afflicted, but prayer is not a substitute for ministry to them. Pray for those who curse you and persecute you. Pray for divine guidance. Petition for a knowledge of the Father. It is not proper to pray for human knowledge or special skill. (*1640) Prayer cannot atone for lack of genuine compassion. (*1951) Do not ask God to solve your difficulties, but don't hesitate to ask him for wisdom and spiritual strength. (*999)

6. *Effect of prayer on the individual.* Prayer cannot cure organic disease, but contributes to the cure of mental or nervous ailments. (*999) Prayer changes your attitude, not God's. (*1638) Prayer makes you less thinking, but more realizing. It expands insight, not knowledge. Prayer sustains, worship is creative. (*1616) Even ill-advised or impossible prayers of one who is sincere expands the soul's capacity. Prayer promotes detachment from the daily routine, monotony, the daily grind. Prayer is an antidote for harmful introspection. It recharges spiritual batteries of the soul. It is the longing look of the child to the Father. The psychologic process of exchanging human will for the divine will. (*1621) Jesus prayed to gather strength for ordinary conflicts,

energy for solutions of higher problems of the moral and spiritual nature. (*1774) Prayer digs deeper channels so that divine bestowals may flow to the heart and soul. (*2066) Prayer enriches life. (*1123)

7. *Effect of worship on the individual.* Worship illuminates destiny. (*1123) It brings salvation for pleasure-seeking mortals. (*1621) Worship brings relaxation which renews, illumination that inspires the soul, gives courage to face problems, self-understanding that

obliterates debilitating fear, conscious union with divinity—assurance of becoming Godlike. Communion relieves tension, removes conflicts. (*1774) Inward effect of worship—one becomes illuminated; the outward effect—one engages in more service. (*1175) Worship helps identify with the whole; the son with the Father; time striking step with eternity. (*1616) Tuning in the soul to catch universe broadcasts of the Universal Father. (*1621)

Worshipful Problem Solving

by Lynne Kulieke

The subject is worshipful problem solving, which we are enjoined to cultivate as one of the many desirable spiritual habits. A number of questions arise merely from this peculiarly beautiful and intriguing combination of words. What is worshipful problem solving? It appears to be a somewhat contradictory term, for we know that worship is not self-serving, but for its own sake, while problem solving definitely implies self-interest. Another question that occurs is *how* is this religious predisposition to be developed? And finally *why* should mortal men and women strive to acquire such a habit? What purposes of God and humanity are achieved?

I choose to begin today's examination of the topic with some selected passages from *The Urantia Book* which may help to serve as an illuminating text for further consideration, if not now and in this company, perhaps at another time and place. I will conclude with some personal reflections.

Let's commence with a study of the nature of worship. We are informed:

Worship is a personal communion with that which is divinely real, with that which is the very source of reality. (*2095)

Worship [is] the sincere pursuit of divine values and the wholehearted love of the divine Value-Giver. (*195)

Worship is the conscious and joyous act of recognizing and acknowledging the truth and fact of the intimate and personal relationships of the Creators with their creatures. (*2031)

Only personalities can commune with each other, albeit this personal communion may be greatly facilitated by the presence of just such an impersonal entity as the Thought Adjuster...[and] only a person can love and be loved. (*31)

Worship is...the act of the material mind's assenting to the attempt of its spiritualizing self, under the guidance of the associated spirit, to communicate with God as a faith son of the Universal Father. (*66)

There is a dynamic here which I have chosen to emphasize through the arrangement of the citations. Notice we begin with a rather general statement about the worship of God as the source of reality, but it becomes readily apparent that with the choice of the word "communion" as an alternative for "worship," the activity takes on meaning and reality for us as time-space mortals only inasmuch as it is personal, and most significantly, as it makes forever clear that personal relationship illuminated by Michael's bestowal on earth, the loving relationship of Father and child.

The Father desires all his creatures to be in personal communion with him...Therefore settle in your philosophy now and forever: To each of you and all of us, God is approachable, the Father is attainable, the way is open.... (*63)

Although the approach to the Paradise presence of the Father must await your attainment of the highest finite levels of spirit progression, you should rejoice in the recognition of the ever-present possibility of immediate communion with the bestowal spirit of the Father so intimately associated with your inner soul and your spiritualizing self. (*63)

The great challenge to modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Monitor that dwells within the human mind. (*2097)

But there are other universe difficulties [which] must be met and planetary obstacles [which] must be encountered as a part of the experience training provided for the growth and development, the progressive perfection, of the evolving souls of mortal creatures. (*1719)

Of all the problems in the universe requiring an exercise of consummate wisdom of experience and adaptability, none are more important than those arising out of the relationships and associations of intelligent beings. (*311)

Still, we are reminded that worship is, as I remarked at the beginning, for its own sake; prayer embodies a self- or creature-interest element; that is the great difference between worship and prayer. There is absolutely no self-request or other element of personal interest in true worship; we simply worship God for what we comprehend him to be. Worship asks nothing and expects nothing for the worshiper. We do not worship the Father because of anything we may derive from such veneration (such as solutions to our problems); we render such devotion and engage in such worship 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)

These remarks may be definitive, but more is required to understand why the authors dare, then, in another paper to use the word "worship" in combination with the words "problem solving." Clearly the phrase suggests benefits, though unsought in moments of true worship, to be derived from communion with the Father. Rodan provides some enlightenment.

"Successful living is nothing more or less than the art of the mastery of dependable techniques for solving common problems. The wise and effective solution of any problem demands that the mind

shall be free from bias, passion, and all other purely personal prejudices which might interfere with the disinterested survey of the actual factors that go to make up the problem presenting itself for solution. The solution of life problems requires courage and sincerity...And this emancipation of the mind and soul can never be reflected without the driving power of an intelligent enthusiasm which borders on religious zeal. [And] you can hardly expect success unless you are equipped with that wisdom of mind and charm of personality which enable you to win the hearty support and cooperation of your fellows...You simply must have tact and tolerance...But the greatest of all methods of problem solving I have learned from Jesus, your Master...In this habit of Jesus' going off so frequently by himself to commune with the Father in heaven is to be found the technique, not only of gathering strength and wisdom for the ordinary conflicts of living, but also of appropriating the energy for the solution of the higher problems of a moral and spiritual nature....

"I am deeply impressed with the custom of Jesus in going apart by himself to engage in these seasons of solitary survey of the problems of living; to seek for new stores of wisdom and energy for meeting the manifold demands of social service; to quicken and deepen the supreme purpose of living by actually subjecting the total personality to the consciousness of contacting with divinity; to grasp for possession of new and better methods of adjusting oneself to the ever-changing situation of living existence; to effect those vital reconstructions and readjustments of one's personal attitudes which are so essential to enhanced insight into everything worth while and real; and to do all of this with an eye single to the glory of God—to breathe in sincerity your Master's favorite prayer, 'Not my will, but yours, be done.'

"The 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." (*1773-4)

The secret of [Jesus'] unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship—unbroken communion with God—and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices. (*2089)

Personal, spiritual religious experience is an efficient solvent for most mortal difficulties; it is an

effective sorter, evaluator, and adjuster of all human problems. Religion does not remove or destroy human troubles, but it does dissolve, absorb, illuminate, and transcend them. (*2093)

Sincere worship connotes the mobilization of all the powers of the human personality under the dominance of the evolving soul and subject to the divine directionization of the associated Thought Adjuster. (*66)

It appears, after thoughtful contemplation of these passages that problems can be viewed altruistically as well as selfishly; they can even be viewed, on the highest level, with "an eye single to the glory of God." I submit, then, that the soul's attitude in identifying and confronting problems is pivotal to our understanding of the role of worship in their solution. If our God is occasionally too small (meaning our understanding of him, as J.B. Phillips contends), then our comprehension of the nature of our problems may be just a trifle small, also. They may merely be petty and largely fictitious grievances, hardly worthy of consideration.

Let us now turn our attention to the contribution of the Thought Adjuster in our development, specifically to the role he plays in the cultivation of the habit under discussion today. I think here we begin to find how worshipful problem solving is initiated, enhanced, and ultimately made a firm part of our being and also exactly how important it is that we assent to and cooperate in this process.

Religious experience, being essentially spiritual, can never be fully understood by the material mind; hence the function of theology, the psychology of religion. The essential doctrine of the human realization of God creates a paradox in finite comprehension. It is well-nigh impossible for human logic and finite reason to harmonize the concept of divine immanence, God within and a part of every individual, with the idea of God's transcendence, the divine domination of the universe of universes. These two essential concepts of Deity must be unified in the faith-grasp of the concept of the transcendence of a personal God and in the realization of the indwelling presence of a fragment of that God in order to justify intelligent worship and validate the hope of personality survival. (*69)

However Urantia mortals may differ in their intellectual, social, economic, and even moral opportunities and endowments, forget not that their spiritual endowment is uniform and unique. They all enjoy the same divine presence of the gift from the Father, and they are all equally privileged to seek intimate personal communion with this indwelling spirit of divine origin, while they may all equally choose to accept the uniform spiritual leading of these Mystery Monitors. (*63)

Adjusters are interested in, and concerned with, your daily doings and the manifold details of your life just to the extent that these are influential in the determination of your significant temporal choices and vital spiritual decisions and, hence, are factors in the solution of your problem of soul survival and eternal progress. (*1204)

Now, that's a problem that merits attention, but it is still, in a manner of speaking, selfish. After all, religion is not a technique for attaining a static and blissful peace of mind; it is an impulse for organizing the soul for dynamic service. We can include now a consideration of the noblest ends accomplished by true worship.

Worship is the technique of looking to the *One* for the inspiration of service to the *many*. (*1616)

The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in an attitude of true worship. (*1641)

By opening the human end of the channel of the God-man communication, mortals make immediately available the ever-flowing stream of divine ministry to the creatures of the worlds. (*1638)

Prayer may enrich the life, but worship illuminates destiny. (*1123)

Worship is intended to anticipate the better life ahead and then to reflect these new spiritual significances back onto the life which now is. (*1616)

It appears that worship of the Father, under the guidance of the Thought Adjuster, can enhance the altruistic urge in God-knowing mortals. As they adore the Father, they cannot fail to become impressed by the beauty and goodness of his loving nature and (as a result), as Jesus taught, become increasingly like the being who is worshiped. It follows then that the children of the Universal Father will attempt to emulate his perfection in their own sphere and serve others as generously as he bestows himself on them. (*1641) How often do we hear Jesus exhort his followers, "Be you perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect"? (*1584)

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. His second greatest exhortation was ever to seek to do the will of the Father. (*2087)

"The will of God is the way of God," he said. "To do the will of God, therefore, is the progressive experience of becoming more and more like God. (*1431)

The demonstration that believers are moved by the supreme human desire is to be found in the lives they live.

Spiritual development depends, first, on the maintenance of a living spiritual connection with

true spiritual forces and, second, on the continuous bearing of spiritual fruit. (*1095)

The proof of fraternity with the divine Adjuster consists wholly in the nature and extent of the fruits of the spirit which are yielded in the life experience of the individual believer. (*65)

The evidence of true spiritual development consists in the exhibition of a human personality motivated by love, activated by unselfish ministry, and dominated by the wholehearted worship of the perfection ideals of divinity. (*1095)

The fruits of the spirit are worthy of enumeration. They are loving service, unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, sincere fairness, enlightened honesty, undying hope, confiding trust, merciful ministry, unfailing goodness, forgiving tolerance, and enduring peace. (*2054)

The results of so living one's life as to bear these fruits is happiness, of which the book says we humans know relatively little:

Human happiness is achieved only when the ego desire of the self and the altruistic urge of the higher self [divine spirit] are co-ordinated and reconciled by the unified will of the integrating and supervising personality. (*1134)

In this endeavor we have a magnificent partner: "God has embarked upon the eternal adventure with man. If you yield to the leadings of the spiritual forces in you and around you, you cannot fail to attain the high destiny established by a loving God as the universe goal of his ascendant creatures from the evolutionary worlds of space." (*64)

These selections from the book are powerful, they are definitive, they serve as pointers towards the truth; but until they are confirmed in and by experience, until they are lived, they cannot be truth for us. Faith must ever be active. Yet inasmuch as we have responded, if only to the extent signified by our presence here today, I hold that as an indication that we have already experienced in some small way the realities reported in the Urantia papers. The chord has been struck and it resounds with endless reverberations—we shall hear it through eternity.

Up to this point, we have contemplated worshipful problem solving in the most ideal of spiritual generalities, but I think few of us would deny that the human element has made a contribution to our spiritual welfare, that God-knowing individuals have, through their efforts, conscious or unconscious, aided in the growth of our religious habits to serve the Father and our fellows. Reflection on the human origins of our uniquely personal call to worship might well be worthwhile and worthy of sharing with others as we spend time in fellowship here this week. To stimulate your thinking, I'd like to offer some reminiscences of my own. I'm going to tell you a story; there appears to be ample precedent for storytelling.

A story

Like David Copperfield, I was born (although there I think the similarity ends. Certainly I am not going to present an endless recitation of trials and tribulations for your delight and delectation.) I spent the formative years of my life in a small midwestern town called Zion. It had been founded as a fundamentalist religious community in the very early 1900's. With their respective families, my mother's parents arrived as children, and there they grew up and married, having ten children of their own. My father's people lived in Chicago where they belonged to the Advent Christian Church (not to be confused with Seventh Day Adventists), but in the thirties my great uncle Fred introduced my grandparents and their six children to the Urantia papers; the entire family moved as one in joining the early Forum. My father and mother met in Zion when he began to teach at Elmwood School. I am given to understand that my mother was the star pupil of his first seventh and eighth grade classes, though they didn't start to date until my mother's junior year in high school and didn't marry until the September following her graduation.

When my father returned from the war, he found us already settled into a small apartment over the living quarters of my Grandma and Grandpa Edwards. My grandfather, a celebrated plasterer, had completely remodeled the large old house to accommodate us, and the address 2806 Emmaus, the block between Elisha and Enoch, was drilled into me as the place where I belonged, in case I should stray, which I must admit, I often did. Oh yes, Zion was characterized by street names from the Old Testament and the periodic arrival of a bevy of preachers and ministers who knew where they would find a welcome audience. Many of the descendants of the early settlers, my grandparents among them, had become disenchanted by the strict autocracy of the Christian Catholic Church and its leaders, who ruled like the Hebrew Judges of old. Imbued with the restless pioneer spirit and disgruntled by the slavish adherence to old rules and dogma, the Edwards were always seeking a new Moses to lead them to freedom in the promised land, though their journeys had become more figurative than literal of late.

I came to know the Kulieke residence in Chicago equally as well because never a Sunday or Wednesday dawned but that my father would announce it was Forum day, and we would trundle down the turnpike in our pick-up truck, he to continue on to Diversey with a large number of other members of the clan. Sometimes my mother would accompany him, too. Other times she would stay with me in Logan Square to socialize with my grandmother and all my cousins and occasionally an extra aunt to help referee the energetic play of the Kulieke progeny. In those days I didn't know what the Forum was; I didn't even know the meaning of the word, or of the word "sacrosanct," for that matter, but somehow I captured the spirit of the two which rapidly were associated in my mind, the those mysterious meetings my father attended obviously commanded his

respect. How I loved those Sunday afternoons! When the clan returned from 533, my grandfather Kulieke would take me with him to the corner store, ostensibly on some errand for my grandmother, but really to buy me gum, which my parents forbade at home. Only the mild-mannered benevolence of my grandfather as he peered in genuine bewilderment through his thick glasses could silence the objections of my mother and father. He found it impossible to believe that gum once a week could irreparably damage my teeth. We always stayed for supper, and I remember vividly on warm June and July evenings, with the family overflowing onto the porches, that my German grandmother would carefully count the strawberries for dessert, placing one at a time in each dish so that no individual was favored over another. Mom and Pop Kulieke, as they were known to everyone, governed that household benignly with a rare and gracious blend of fair play and understanding generosity.

So it was I grew up enveloped in two enormous families who sought to worship God and carry out their responsibilities faithfully and in the manner of their own choosing. Children were cherished; even my brother Mark, though just a baby, was valued as highly as the next, I noted, despite the fact that he couldn't talk. I'm afraid I ranked him low on my list for entertainment value, however amusing it might have been to shake rattles at him from time to time. But gifts of a material kind were not plentiful. Still on Saturday mornings my father would hold me on his lap while we listened to the music of Liszt, Brahms and Debussy, Beethoven, Smetana and Tchaikovsky on old 78's (we didn't have a piano until later; then my father would play his own arrangements of favorite pieces). My week had its most pleasurable routine, for on Mondays I was privileged to hand my mother the clothespins while she hung the wash in the back yard, somewhere between the apple tree and the rhubarb, and sang to me "In the Garden," "Abide with Me" and the Indian Love Call from "Rose Marie." All this celebration of music notwithstanding, the first record set of my own was a narration of "The Story of Jesus," which I played until it was worn out. I was entranced by the sound effects of the storm as Claude Rains recounted the parable of the man who built his house on the sand, and the gentleness of Jesus' petition, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," would move me to tears. To this day when I imagine the voice of God, it still comes to me in the rich and beautiful tones of Claude Rains.

I loved stories of all kinds and in all forms; I read voraciously even before I entered school at the age of four and a half, but I also adored the hours when my mother would read such books as *Just David*, about a young boy who recognized that his talent for playing the violin came from his father in heaven. Sometimes my mother would sew, and my father would read to us. Sacred to every Christmas season was Van Dyke's *Story of the Other Wise Man*, who found his king every day of

his life by helping others. That was upstairs. Downstairs my Grandma Edwards would indulge me as often as I pleaded with accounts of the joys and rigors of her childhood on a farm. My favorite concerned the time she mistook in the distance a post painted white for her mother's apron. It was much more exciting than the Bible story about the lost sheep. I had had little experience of sheep, but I had great experience of grandmothers, who, at all costs, should never be allowed to get away. My grandfather, on the other hand, would feel it incumbent on him to make me familiar with his displeasure over the latest activities of the Church Elders. Additionally, at that time my Uncle Marvin, one of my mother's younger brothers, who still lived at home, was developing his own special cult around baseball, and he would regale me with all sorts of pungent commentaries on the American League teams. I could be forgiven, I think, for becoming just a little confused. If any one had asked me then my understanding of the devil, who, according to my grandfather was alive and all too well, I would have explained very kindly that the devil had a number of names, but for the most part, he was called the Yankees; he was evil incarnate, in nine different forms to be sure, but someday he was to be vanquished by that mighty host of the Lord God, the White Sox. Because the devil's attempts for dominance were visible on the TV screen every summer afternoon, the entire battle for man's soul was safely externalized for me, and I was never afraid. The White Sox seemed to be taking a long time about settling his doom, but, after all, if my Uncle Marvin was not discouraged, why should I be? For years, I had watched Marvin, regular as the first robin, bound out to the spring lawn, raise his arms to the sky, and declare, "This is the year the White Sox win the pennant," which was, apparently, an item of supreme value. God could not fail

to respond in time, I was sure, for faith was always rewarded. Of course, I knew what was expected of me so that I could reap my reward. (Contrary to my original expectations, I learned this was *not* to be a pennant but admission to a place called heaven.) There was definitely a high premium placed on being good; I was to tell the truth, set the table, make my bed, and under no circumstances ever again to walk across my mother's carpet with the soles of my shoes freshly painted purple. God would be happy.

There were, inevitably, some perplexities for a young child.

My father was wont to quote Cullen Bryant, saying, "The groves were God's first temple," and take me for walks among the trees, but my grandparents were rather adamant about a church with four walls and a steeple, to be entered preferably on a Sunday morning. Nevertheless, I was given to understand that it was always proper to seek out the Almighty. In our lives, God was first, and God was last, not to mention all that came in between. God even began every day and ended every day. At 9:00 every morning and evening in Zion, the carillon from the old college building only two blocks away would sound out, and everyone and everything would stop. It was God's moment. I don't believe I comprehended the full significance, but I stopped too, because it was clearly the thing to do. My most enduring memory is of the warm, summer twilights when I would be at play with my friends. At the first sound of the chimes, I would scamper towards the house with its lights, through the trees, just pinpoints like the first stars in the violet sky, and I would know that I could enter the front door or the back door or any one of the many side doors of my home to be enfolded in loving arms. All would be safe and secure and lovely as we listened to the carillon play "Sweet Hour of Prayer."

Everyday Ethics

by Eileen Laurence

Like most of us here in this room, I lead a varied and busy professional life. I interact with a lot of people, most of whom are not *Urantia Book* readers, but many of whom are actively participating in a religious life both professionally and privately. As I go about my daily chores trying to live the concepts of the book, I have begun to ask myself some basic questions:

1. Is there a difference between morality and ethics? They are often used in the same sentence such as "the mores (religious, moral, and ethical) together with property, pride, and chivalry, stabilize the institution of marriage and family." (*939)

2. If there is a difference between moral and ethical, what is it?

3. How has our conception of morality and ethics changed since the appearance of this fifth epochal revelation, *The Urantia Book*?

4. What is being done in our present American society to address moral and ethical questions about our evolving business organizations, the connection between government and the media, ethics and chronic illness, ethics and neonatal care? Is anyone taking the time to share thoughts on ethics in the global community?

All of these questions grow out of a personal desire to be and do my best, following the example of Jesus' life to the best of my ability. Being a parent I want to take any opportunity I have to encourage our young people to think and behave on the highest level of moral and ethical understanding. Being a teacher I know that actions speak louder than words, so I am sensitive to some degree of the responsibility I have towards my students, not only in dealing with subject matter, but in the way I associate with them as sisters and brothers.

In my work, I do not normally deal with life and death situations, although some of my students would argue that point when performance time comes. My worshipful problem solving has to do with an evenness of relationships between me and my students; i.e., not playing favorites. This is an area that I approach carefully, trying to contact the divine spirit within each of them...challenging when dealing with middle and upper school students. Advanced technical knowledge and skill has led, however, to a need in our society for sound ethical thinking and decision making in such areas as medicine, law, science and finance. I do believe that the way an individual lives can affect the community around her or him, and I think we have to be sure that the speed of our communications does not impede our ability to seriously and deeply think about the repercussions of our actions. We really are a global village, drinking the same water and breathing the same air as everyone else on the planet.

Let's look at the possible difference between those two words, ethical and moral. Webster defines moral as "1. relating to, dealing with, or capable of making the

distinction between right and wrong in conduct." Synonyms are righteous, ethical. Ethical is defined as "1. having to do with ethics or morality; or of conforming to moral standards." Ethics are "1. the study of standards of conduct and moral judgment; moral philosophy." I don't find those definitions helpful in separating the meaning of the two words, ethical and moral. They seem almost synonymous; however, quotes from *The Urantia Book* do seem to differentiate.

In describing the seven developmental epochs of an average world a Secondary Lanonandek Son of the Reserve Corps said of the fifth level, the epoch of philosophy and brotherhood: "The society of this age becomes ethical, and the mortals of such an era are truly becoming moral beings. Wise moral beings are capable of establishing human brotherhood on such a progressing world. Ethical and moral beings can learn how to live in accordance with the golden rule." (*577)

In the paper on the Evolution of Local Universes, a Mighty Messenger temporarily attached to the Supreme Council of Nebadon, assigned to this mission by Gabriel of Salvington, tells us that "The Creator Son rules supreme in all matters of ethical association, the relations of any division of creatures to any other class of creatures or of two or more individuals within any given group...." (*363)

In the Foundations of Religious Faith paper a Melchizedek of Nebadon, speaking of the evidences of religion, says that "The difference in the religions of various ages is wholly dependent on the difference in man's [the person's] comprehension of reality and on his[her] differing recognition of moral values, ethical relationships, and spirit realities." (*1127)

In the final paper of *The Urantia Book* on the Faith of Jesus, a midwayer writes, "The human mind does not create real values; human experience does not yield universe insight. Concerning insight, the recognition of moral values and the discernment of spiritual meanings, all that the human mind can do is to discover, recognize, interpret, and choose. The moral values of the universe become intellectual possessions by the exercise of the three basic judgments, or choices, of the mortal mind: 1. Self-judgment—moral choice. 2. Social-judgment—ethical choice. 3. God-judgment—religious choice." (*2094) To my understanding, these quotes point to the fact that, as used in *The Urantia Book*, the word moral refers most often to the individual and ethical relates to an association of individuals or groups.

Carol Gilligan has done a lot of research in the way women think and behave. In reading *Mapping the Moral Domain*, edited by Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor, Piaget was quoted as having said, "...apart from our relations to other people, there can be no moral necessity."

In the same book Simone Weil is said to have defined morality as "the silence in which one can hear the unheard voices." Interesting, in light of our knowledge of the work of the Thought Adjuster.

Carol Gilligan has defined a justice perspective and a care perspective. Justice has to do with relationships organized in terms of equality, symbolized by balancing of scales. Moral concerns focus on problems of oppression, problems stemming from inequality, and the moral ideal is one of reciprocity or equal respect. This way of thinking and relating to others is living the golden rule as it was understood before Jesus' teachings, do unto others as you would have done to you. "To treat others as you would like to be treated demands distance and objectivity." (p.74) The care perspective speaks of a relationship connoting responsiveness or engagement, a resiliency of connection that is symbolized by a network or web. Moral concerns focus on problems of detachment or disconnection or abandonment, or indifference, and the moral ideal is one of attention and response.

In my opinion that points towards ethical behavior in a situation involving two or more people based on the moral understandings of the individuals, "working out the least painful alternative for all those involved, seeing the situation in its context, working within an existential reality and ensuring that all persons are understood in their own terms." "We can appreciate the passionate clarity of a face value judgment, the generosity of a composite picture judgment that looks for the good side, and the integrity of a multiple lens judgment that recognizes that actions that satisfy one's conscience may not be truly helpful." (p.97)

In the present-day world of fast communications and vast networking, we must realize that our behavior may have broad repercussions. We need to recognize and take that into consideration when acting. Let's examine that phrase, "integrity of a multiple lens judgment."

The word integrity comes from a root meaning wholeness, soundness, entire. It is a way of looking at matters that is found most often in a woman's way of seeing matters, according to the research of Gilligan and colleagues. To act with integrity is to bring a sense of honesty, sincerity and wholeness to our thinking and decision making.

The *Urantia Book* says in the Real Nature of Religion paper, "In and through all the historic vicissitudes of religion there ever persists that which is indispensable to human progress and survival, the ethical conscience and the moral consciousness." (*1107) Our spiritual teachers seem to be saying that before we can become responsible, ethical participants with our sisters and brothers, we must become aware of our private moral fiber and strive to improve it daily. I seem to remember the admonition that before we attempt to remove the splinter from our neighbor's eye, we first remove the log from our own.

We know that the Thought Adjuster arrives with the first moral choice we make somewhere between the ages of 5 and 6. That fragment of God is our very best friend and is an untiring guide working from within to

nurture our evolving soul. In addition to these inner urgings we have other sources of aid in our spiritual growth such as the Seraphic Guardians of Destiny, who work from the outside in. "Seraphim are mind stimulators; they continually seek to promote circle-making decisions in human mind. They do this, not as does the Adjuster, operating from within and through the soul, but rather from the outside inward, working through the social, ethical, and moral environment of human beings." (*1245)

We often joke in the Laurence household that we should be careful in our prayers. Opportunities for spiritual growth seem to present themselves constantly without our having asked for them. We are comforted, however, by knowing that the book says, "To accept the guidance of a seraphim rarely means attaining a life of ease. In following this leading you are sure to encounter, and if you have the courage, to traverse, the rugged hills of moral choosing and spiritual progress." (*1245)

In the Planetary Mortal Epochs paper at the bottom of page 597 there is a paragraph on "Ethical Awakening." "Only ethical consciousness can unmask the immorality of human intolerance and the sinfulness of fratricidal strife. Only a moral conscience can condemn the evils of national envy and racial jealousy. Only moral beings will ever seek for that spiritual insight which is essential to living the golden rule."

Later in that same section, on page 598, we read that "The quickest way to realize the brotherhood of man on Urantia is to effect the spiritual transformation of present-day humanity. The only technique for accelerating the natural trend of social evolution is that of applying spiritual pressure from above, thus augmenting moral insight while enhancing the soul capacity of every mortal to understand and love every other mortal. Mutual understanding and fraternal love are transcendent civilizers and mighty factors in the worldwide realization of the brotherhood of man[kind]." We have help on every side.

We have but to ask for it, which leads us to look at ethical prayer.

We know that "No prayer can be ethical when the petitioner seeks for selfish advantage over his fellows [others]. Selfish and materialistic praying is incompatible with the ethical religions which are predicated on unselfish and divine love...Selfish praying transgresses the spirit of all ethics founded on living justice. Prayer must never be so prostituted as to become a substitute for action. All ethical prayer is a stimulus to action and a guide to the progressive striving for idealistic goals of superself-attainment." (*997)

We are advised to be persistent in our prayers. In the 11th chapter of Luke is recalled the story of the person who knocked on the neighbor's door asking for some food to feed another friend who had arrived unexpectedly. At first rejected because of the late hour, the neighbor finally answered the call when the surprised host continued to knock. "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you

then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:11-13)

In Paul's letters to the Romans we are told, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." (Romans 8:26)

The Chief of the Urantia Midwayers clearly states that "Words are irrelevant to prayer; they are merely the intellectual channel in which the river of spiritual supplication may chance to flow. The word value of a prayer is purely autosuggestive in private devotions and sociosuggestive in group devotions. God answers the soul's attitude, not the words." (*1002)

The Jews have a style of song called the Niggun where nonsense syllables are sung in prayer. I had two seniors approach me this past graduation with a suggestion of a song they wanted to sing at that celebration. The words were innocuous, but the music and style of singing was very touching and transmitted just the right message to the parents.

Which takes me back to my everyday world. Erickson has said, "to share true authority with the young would mean to acknowledge something which adults have learned to mistrust in themselves: a truly ethical potential." To Erickson, ethical concerns were a natural meeting ground between adults and adolescents, both rendered uncertain by the predicament of modern civilization. (*Mapping the Moral Domain* p. XV)

Jesus taught that the kingdom of God (the will of God) "was in itself a new standard of moral values, a new ethical yardstick wherewith to measure human conduct. It portrayed the ideal of a resultant new order of human society." (*1859) We are encouraged "to come as a little child, to receive the bestowal of sonship as a gift; to submit to the doing of the Father's will without questioning and in the full confidence and genuine trustfulness of the Father's wisdom, to come into the kingdom free from prejudice and preconception; to be open-minded and teachable like an unspoiled child." (*1861)

The young people I teach are encouraged to grow through their interpretation of the golden rule from just seeing themselves as sibling inhabitants of the same neighborhood to the recognition that this golden rule was the "positive injunction of a great moral teacher who embodied in this statement the highest concept of moral obligation as regards all fraternal [sibling] relationships." (*1950)

The *Urantia Book* further says that the "true cosmic meaning of this rule of universal relationship [ethics?] is revealed only in its spiritual realization, in the interpretation of the law of conduct by the spirit of the Son to the spirit of the Father that indwells the soul of mortal man[kind]. And when such spirit-led mortals realize the true meaning of this golden rule, they are filled to overflowing with the assurance of citizenship in a friendly universe, and their ideals of spirit reality are satisfied only when they love their fellows [cohabitants] as Jesus loved us all, and that is the reality of the realization of

the love of God." (*1950)

As for my future relationship with present day organized religious groups, I remember the advice given Jesus when he was about to embark on his mission to our planet, "As you may see fit, you are to identify yourself with existing religious and spiritual movements as they may be found on Urantia but in every possible manner seek to avoid the formal establishment of an organized cult, a crystallized religion, or a segregated ethical grouping of mortal beings." (*1330) I have sought to work within three major religious groups and be open to dialogue with others for whom religion is more than a passing fancy or a family tradition, but I still feel the need to gather as we do here in Snowmass to discuss religious ideas and experiences emanating from our study of the book.

Referring to the last question I asked at the beginning of this talk: What is being done in our present American society to address moral and ethical questions about our evolving business organizations, the connections between government and the media, ethics and chronic illness, ethics and neonatal care and ethics in the global community? Moral individuals are gathering in other parts of our world to discuss these issues.

In a publication of the World Business Academy, John Renesch from San Francisco describes an emergence of a new consciousness in the world of business, articulating some changes of thinking from the traditional ways to the emerging new trends; from controlling leadership to evoking leadership, from solving problems to creating opportunities, from a hierarchy of unequals to a voluntary association of equals, from management that supervises and intimidates employees to one that inspires and cares for teammates.

The Hastings Center in Briarcliff Manor, New York, exists to "confront and attempt to resolve the moral problems brought on by advances in the biomedical sciences and the professions. To educate the general public on the moral aspects of those scientific, medical, and professional issues that will inevitably change our own lives and those of our children. To take on some of the most difficult moral dilemmas of our society: AIDS...care of the dying...chronic illness...animal welfare...artificial reproduction...genetic screening...professional ethics...justice in health care...long-term care...ethics committees."

In the spring of 1988 the Iowa division of the United Nations Association-USA presented an international colloquium to explore "the substantial moral and ethical dimensions of choices and trade-offs to be made in order to achieve a truer ethical balance between freedom and social responsibility and how these choices and trade-offs can be translated into hope and reasoned action." Their vision of the immediate future is "firmly rooted in a present awareness that political will begins with people."

Just as we are gathering here to discuss religious ideas and think about our own moral health and habits, we are advised to apply the revelatory information from *The Urantia Book* to present day religions. I suggest that

The Avoidance of Selfishness: Living as if in the Presence of God

by Patrick Yesh

Introduction

As an educator, the main focus behind anything I teach be it art, school curriculum, or Urantia teachings must reflect the supreme purpose of education as stated in *The Urantia Book*:

"...[T]o foster and further the supreme purpose of life, the development of a majestic and well-balanced personality." (*2086)

A key word is "majestic." One doesn't normally think of oneself as majestic, but you can if you visualize yourself as a child of God, an important, evolving morontia being, a unique part of an organic living organism, the brotherhood of man. This concept of self, as majestic, is central to my talk about the avoidance of selfishness and walking with God. We cannot avoid being selfish in this life unless we have a positive and secure self-image, fulfilled in the conviction that we have everything we need in life, surrounded with God's love, and peaceful inside. We know by living faith that we are truly God's children traveling on our way home to Paradise.

Jesus taught in a special way by study, research, and by arranging known facts so they formed new ideas and meanings that would illuminate his spiritual teachings. This presentation is an attempt to coordinate information from contemporary research in education, psychological therapeutic practices, and behavioral change with the Urantia teachings on creativity, problem solving, and personality integration. This combination I hope will contribute to illuminating some ways that show us how to avoid selfishness.

I ask for your consent and commitment to begin to visualize yourselves differently, to begin to make some changes in your perceptions of yourselves. Your new self-image is becoming one of an unselfish servant, a son or daughter of God walking in living faith in the presence of your eternal Father.

PERSISTENCE • PATIENCE • PRACTICE
• ACTION • REFLECTION

* * *

To avoid selfishness, live as if in the presence of God—identify your self-image as your morontia soul, because your soul always walks in the presence of God.

Definitions and Concepts

From Webster's Collegiate:

- *Avoid* = to leave, to shun, to annul, to prevent the occurrence or effectiveness of.
- *Avoidance* = the action of emptying, clearing away, or vacating.
- *Selfish* = concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself; seeking or concentrating on one's own ad-

vantage, pleasure or well-being without regard for others; egocentric.

From *The Urantia Book*:

- *Selfishness* = "Unbridled self-will and unregulated self-expression equal unmitigated selfishness, the acme of ungodliness. Liberty without the associated and ever-increasing conquest of self is a figment of egoistic mortal imagination." (*613)
- *True liberty* = "True liberty is associated with self-respect, the fruit of self-control, and leads to altruistic service." (*614)
- *Self*. The entire self—the whole self—is material, intellectual and spiritual. These three powers—material, physical, and spiritual—must be in triune harmony of development for a maximum of light and truth to be imparted at minimal risk to the personality—balanced growth. Your mind has to be perfectly poised, housed in a body of clean habits, stabilized neural energies, and balanced chemical functions. (*1209) [And this is not easy, because it takes rugged self-control, and it usually means changing behavior—transformation of personality.]

Further references to the self in the Urantia papers include:

The psychic circles are not exclusively intellectual, neither are they wholly morontial; they have to do with personality status, mind attainment, soul growth, and Adjuster attunement. The successful traversal of these levels demands the harmonious functioning of the *entire personality*, not merely of some one phase thereof. The growth of the parts [of the personality] does not equal the true maturation of the whole; the parts really grow in proportion to the expansion of the entire self—the whole self—material, intellectual, and spiritual. (*1209)

and

It is the creativity of the inner world that is most subject to your direction...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. Inner creativity contributes to ennoblement of character through personality integration and selfhood unification. It is forever true: the past is unchangeable; only the future can be changed by the ministry of the present creativity of the inner self. (*1221)

Did you know that your progressive spiritual development is built into your master tissues anyway?

The possibility of the unification of the evolving self is inherent in the qualities of its constitutive factors: the basic energies, the master tissues, the fundamental chemical overcontrol, the supreme ideas, the supreme motives, the supreme goals, and the divine spirit of Paradise bestowal—the secret of the self-consciousness of man's spiritual nature. (*1229)

The Avoidance of Selfishness

From one of the above definitions, it seems that we can avoid selfishness if we have self-respect and self-control, combined with a desire for altruistic service. If we are to avoid selfishness, we must first understand what is meant by the concept "self." It is no wonder therefore, that the revelators also emphasize and make clear to us their definitions about self, self-identity, and self-worth. There are three pages of derivatives of self in the *Concordex*, third edition, pages 410–412.

The *Urantia Book* generally uses the word "self" in two ways: the human ego self and the morontia soul self. The writers make very clear and strong statements about which sense of self our spiritual guides want us to eventually identify with. Choosing to identify with our associated morontia self is our goal if we truly desire to avoid habitual selfish pursuits. In comparing human beings to the Havona citizens, the Divine Counselor of Uversa says that Havona citizens never gain such levels of unselfish experience by the magnificent conquest of a belligerent self. (*52)

What are some methods which can help us to change the selfish behaviors of our "belligerent selves"? Webster defines "belligerent" as "warring, combative, hostile, quarrelsome, contentious, assertive, aggressive, and truculent." One wonders why God would create us human will creatures with such an incredible monster of an ego, that we have to fight through it to get to spiritual illumination. Not only do we have to do battle with the external world, we are created so that we have to temper our mind, will, and soul by conquering our own inner, human mind and creating a link-up with our premorontia soul mind.

According to the above quotes, one method of changing our behavior is to first *bridle* our "self-will" and then *regulate* our self-expression. We must exercise an "ever-increasing conquest of self" to attain true liberty, which the revelators and Jesus equate with the conquering of selfishness. We must have self-respect and self-control which lead to our desire for altruistic service. One writer (a Mighty Messenger of experiential survival of a system rebellion) encourages us to think hard about the meanings of true liberty and selfishness and their relationships. Liberty and unselfishness are wedded to social equality, cosmic fairness, universe fraternity, divine obligations, material justice, intellectual fairness, social forbearance, moral duty, and spiritual values.

Rodan said that prejudice is inseparably linked to

selfishness. Prejudice can be eliminated only by the abandonment of self-seeking and by substituting, therefore, the quest of the satisfaction of the service of a cause that is not only greater than self, but one that is even greater than all humanity—the search for God, the attainment of divinity (see p. 1774).

A critical method of establishing a supreme self-image along with a modicum of self-control is contained in the following quote:

The material self, the ego-entity of human identity...selfhood of survival value is only evolved by establishing a potential transfer of the seat of identity of the evolving personality from the transient life vehicle—the material body—to the more enduring and immortal nature of the morontia soul. (*1229)

Some key words here are "ego-entity" of human identity, the phrase "morontia soul," and the qualifier "potential."

The *Urantia Book* has come through the field of psychoanalytic theory, which uses the concept of ego. A popular definition of "ego" paraphrased from psychological texts is the following:

EGO = [Id-Ego-Superego] The ego is our conscious transformer which deals with the demands of our outer reality and our inner reality. The ego coordinates our unconscious instinctive impulses, which seek immediate gratification, with our superego, which is our internalization of the morals and standards of our parents and society.

Our superego is something more. According to *LIB* writers, our spiritual contact zone is also located in the superego (superconscious). The writers also acknowledge conscious, unconscious, and subconscious parts of the mind.

According to current psychological theory, your ego is weak or strong depending on how well your ego integrates the impulses of your impulsive id with the ideals of your superego as you confront your outer reality. In reacting to your external world, if many of your inner urges are incompatible with your internalized standards and values, you may experience anxiety, internal conflict, and possibly depression. If you give too much importance to your human ego self, you can become trapped in pride and become egocentric, having too much egotism (exaggerated self-importance). Egoism means self-interest is the valid end of all your actions. A healthy ego, in psychological terms, achieves unity and harmony of all levels. A healthy ego acquires positive self-esteem—feelings of self-worth. These last two ideas are reflected in the definition of a healthy "personality" in *The Urantia Book*.

Changing Our Self-Perception and Behavior

Let us review some contemporary psychological concepts combined with *Urantia Book* ideas, which could help us to transform our self-image:

- Identify your current self-images

- Identify and heighten your self-esteem
- Identify your supreme value systems which make up your self-image and determine how and why you make the kind of decisions you do
- Goal setting with spiritual self-imagery
- Transformation practice in visualizing your morontia self-image
- Creating and setting personal spiritual affirmations at the intellectual, feeling, and doing levels of personality. [*Knowing, feeling, and doing* are the foundation of our cosmic educational training curriculum.]

Just how do we effect permanent change in our attitudes, behaviors, and mental processes? If we are to change from selfish individuals to altruistic servants of the brotherhood of man (our spiritual sisters and brothers), are we not addressing one of the most difficult tasks a human being can undertake—personal change, rugged self-control, and self-mastery?

You must first make a deep personal commitment to begin the process of mastery of self. Please make that commitment. Do it now.

FIRST VISUALIZATION

Close your eyes, relax, and breathe deeply; Jesus asked us to practice relaxed attention.

Please take a moment to visualize in your mind your present self-concepts. What are your self-images?

How do you think you are seen by your family members...by your friends...and in your community?

...Pause and reflect on these.

How do you feel about each of your self-images?

Internally, do you hold yourself in high self-esteem?

Do you like yourself as a parent, spouse, friend, co-worker, boss or community member?

...Pause and reflect on these.

Do you look in the mirror and say, "I like myself, I love myself, I'm terrific!"? Do any of your human egotistical self-concepts *really* have any value now that you have begun to understand and internalize the Urantia teachings? Or should you be looking at yourself through different eyes—your morontia soul's eyes?

In contrast to your human identity and self-images, now focus on your associate premorontia soul identity.

With eyes closed and your mind focused inward, just imagine your already existing morontia soul-self. It was born when your Thought Adjuster arrived and it has been growing ever since.

It's five yours younger than your human self. This is that part of you which unfailingly desires to do the will of God the Father, and that part of you which joyfully does the will of the Father. Feel the presence of your associate morontia soul, which is the dual creation of your Thought Adjuster and you. While you are visualizing your premorontia soul, be aware of the following paraphrased quote from the Thought Adjuster section:

During the life in the flesh the evolving soul is

enabled to reinforce the supermaterial decisions of the mortal mind. The soul, being supermaterial, does not of itself function on the material level of human experience...[however, with the collaboration of the Thought Adjuster or some spirit of Deity, this subspiritual soul (your morontia soul)] can even function above the morontia level.

This morontia soul can make final decisions while in material association with the mortal mind when and as this material mind [your conscious human mind] willingly and freely delegates such authority to your morontia soul of associated function. (*1219)

...Pause and reflect on this.

THIS IS AN AMAZING STATEMENT! THEY ARE SAYING THAT YOU CAN DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO YOUR SOUL-SELF TO MAKE ANY FINAL DECISION AT ANY TIME IN YOUR LIFE. I personally define a final decision as meaning anything that deals with the welfare of my spiritual existence, and that could be just about anything.

If you identify yourself in this life with only your human ego-concept of yourself—your material self—as one normally does, then you will never transcend your problems, nor will you have health or tranquillity, or efficiency, nor can you be a fully functioning personality, nor will you begin to traverse the seven circles of spiritual attainment available to all of us here on Urantia. (*1209)

The methods of changing our self-concept from a material sense to a spiritual one can be found by studying the Thought Adjuster papers, and of course by following the examples of Christ's life and by being obedient to his teachings. We operate within the Holy Mother Spirit's influence when we are "obedient" to Christ's teachings. When Christ finally mastered his human mind, he did it through a concentrated and consecrated act of his will. And the UB writers tell us that mind is about all we have of cosmic reality that is subject to our will. And Jesus said that we can use his mind to do what he did with his mind, simply by accepting his ideas as our own.

The Thought Adjuster section is filled with twenty-first century spiritual-psychology and the Christ section holds our essential spiritual education. It is in these sections that we can find the practical tools to avoid the twentieth century's greatest illness: too much concentration on the self and too much material gratification. It is here we find out how to avoid selfishness in the unselfish service of family and the brotherhood of man. In these sections we find real methods of how to transcend the selfish human ego-self-image.

Our Premorontia Soul

A Solitary Messenger of Orvonton says that, "During life the mortal will, the personality power of decision-choice is resident in the material mind circuits; as terrestrial mortal growth proceeds, this self, with its

priceless powers of choice, becomes increasingly identified with the emerging morontia-soul entity; after death and following the mansion world resurrection, the human personality is completely identified with the morontia self. The soul is thus the embryo or the future morontia vehicle of personality identity.... The soul partakes of the qualities of both the human mind and the divine spirit but persistently evolves toward augmentation of spirit control and divine dominance through the fostering of a mind function whose meanings seek to coordinate with true spirit value.... The mortal career, the soul's evolution, is not so much a probation as an education [in faith in the survival of supreme values; the union of supreme values and cosmic meanings as a realization of universal reality]. (*1219)

The Qualitative and Quantitative Levels of Soul Growth

The qualitative level of soul is our value level of awareness. "Quality" (value) is felt! That which feels (your soul) is the mutual creation of mind (your mind) which knows, and the associated spirit (your Thought Adjuster), which "reality-izes." The qualitative level of soul is in every decision you make which impedes or facilitates the function of your Thought Adjuster. Likewise do these very decisions determine your advancement in the circles of human achievement. The qualitative growth of the morontia soul is wholly dependent on the grasp of living faith upon the Paradise-potential fact-value that mortal man is a son of the eternal God.

The quantitative growth of the morontia soul is the comprehension of supreme meanings, plus the number and frequency of spiritual decisions. The quantitative aspect of soul growth is the number of decisions, frequent repetitions [of decisions], and persistent repetitions [of decisions] which are also essential to the habit-forming certainty of such reactions. (*1210)

SECOND VISUALIZATION

According to current psychological research and *Urantia Book* teachings, to begin to make effective changes in behavior and personality, one must place his or her visualizations at the feeling level (not just the intellectual level) of one's being.

...the material (personal) self must choose to co-operate with the indwelling Adjuster in creating and fostering the morontia self, the evolutionary and potentially immortal soul. (*1216)

Please, relax, visualize and feel your partially sub-spiritual-morontia soul self (no matter how slightly) for a few moments, while I guide your thoughts further....

Feel your morontia self. It doesn't matter how slightly you sense your soul, within or without, whether you see it in a shape or light or color, or hear it in music or sounds. Just sense and feel the presence of your soul. Your material body is just the cocoon—inside and outside your body exists your associated morontia soul.

...Pause silently.

Take this opportunity to *delegate*, right now, willingly and freely to your associate morontia soul, the right to make final decisions about any matter in your life. Your morontia soul is that part of you which is essentially who you really are—that part of you which you can trust to unfailingly do the will of God.

...Pause for meditation; dedication.

Take this opportunity to make the following affirmations:

- I am my morontia soul.
- I feel my morontia soul.
- Every decision I make facilitates the function of my Thought Adjuster.
- With full conscious awareness I delegate freely and willingly full authority to my morontia soul to make any and all final decisions in my life.
- I yield increased cooperation to my Thought Adjuster's spiritual mission.
- I permit my Thought Adjuster to complete the association of my human identity with my morontia soul here and now.
- I feel the loving presence of God. I feel my love for him.

...Pause silently; worship with your soul.

After meditation and communion with your self and after joint worship of the Father, gently return to your earth consciousness and your normal awareness. Happy soul birthday!

Urantia Method of Spiritual Goal Setting and Achievement

To make yourself feel more at ease about accomplishing such a difficult task as changing your own human behavior and mental operations, know that our spiritual teachers have a great affection and understanding of the human predicament. Note the following, that they ask us to "evolve" to our new selfhood, our morontia soul, and that our actions are a "potential" transfer of the seat of identity of our evolving personality. We do not have to do it all at once. It seems, in any case, that our human condition inhibits us from doing anything all at once in any case.

- It is not so much what the mind comprehends as what the 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.
- It is not so much that man is conscious of God as that man *yawns* for God that results in universe ascension.
- What you are today is not so important as what you are *becoming* day by day and in eternity. (*1217)
- Doing the will of God is nothing more or less than an *exhibition* of creature *willingness* to share the inner life with God—with the very God who has

made such a creature life of inner meaning-value possible. *Sharing* is Godlike—divine. (*1221)

Also remember that you are not alone in this struggle for self-control and the avoidance of selfishness. You have quite a bit of helpful companionship, namely:

- Your Thought Adjuster.
- The gifts of your own creative personality, your soul, your will, and your faith, plus your awareness of your awareness [which, I suspect, is really all there is that we can truly label as our "I"]. Your awareness of your awareness can also exercise your will; your superconscious has access to incredible will-power. Your soul has will-volition.
- Your adjutant mind spirits, access to the Holy Mother Spirit's mind.
- Christ's Spirit of Truth; you can always substitute Christ's mind for yours by the simple human technique of other-mindedness, whereby you accept another's ideas [Christ's] as your own. (*863)
- The ministry of two guardian seraphim (who represent the presence of the Holy Mother Spirit), plus a sanobim and cherubim. And as you become involved in the various service areas of life, you also may connect with and consciously cooperate with the different orders of angels.
- Visiting spiritual beings such as midway friends, students, and celestial artisans, and
- The integration of all these in the presence of the evolving Supreme Being.

Finally, in considering the difficulty of personal change from selfish to unselfish behavior, the *UB* writers tell us, "Don't take your self too seriously." This is good advice in any case, even though the writers do make it implicit that we should take our "selves" seriously sometimes. We should develop a good sense of humor about our human selves (I imagine that means one's ego self, one's nonreal self.) We must begin to laugh at our "selves," our cultural roles, at our sometimes outrageous, animalistic, primitive, human, creature-like behaviors.

What is that part of the self-image that we are to take

seriously? I think it is our morontia surviving self, the nonselfish self, secure in the Father's grasp of loving mercy, that part of ourselves which is overflowing with love and with the burning desire to serve.

SUMMARY: Methods of Overcoming Selfishness

1. Become increasingly busy about the work of unselfish service to your brothers and sisters within and without the spiritual brotherhood, so you won't have too much time to think about yourself.

2. Daily practice bearing the *fruits of the spirit*. Jesus said, "...the fruits of the spirit are the essence of the highest type of enjoyable and ennobling self-control, even the heights of terrestrial mortal attainment—true self-mastery." (*1610)

3. Learn how to problem solve by Rodan's and Christ's methods. *Study the teachings; become a knower.* (*1772-74) Walk as if in the presence of God, solving your problems with an eye single to the glory of God. Take time daily to frequently bond with him through joyful worship and communion to gain strength for your struggles at self-discipline and problem-solving; and subject and *yield* your creature will *daily* to his will, thus consecrating and perfecting your human will.

4. When you worship and bond with God, do it at the feeling level to make quality changes in your personality. *Become a feeling child of God—feel his love—feel your love for him ever increasing.*

5. Get into an intimate relationship with someone fast, get a partner, get married, be around lots of children, join a service club, *become a doer of love*. Do not be alone in your thinking or your living. Intimate association with your fellows and family and community helps you to avoid selfish pursuits. Solitary life is fatal to happiness; even families and nations will enjoy life more if they share it with others. (*1776)

6. And Jesus said, "Your secret of the mastery of self is bound up with your faith in the indwelling spirit, which ever works by love. Even this saving faith you have not of yourselves; it also is the gift of God. And if you are the children of this living faith, you are no longer the bond slaves of self but rather the triumphant masters of yourselves, the liberated sons [and daughters] of God." (*1610)

Avoidance of Selfishness

by James G. Johnston

The following essay was given in the form of a workshop at the 1990 conference. It is a summary of the subject matter discussed in the workshop.

"Forewarn all believers regarding the fringe of conflict which must be traversed by all who pass from the life as it is lived in the flesh to the higher life as it is lived in the spirit. To those who live quite wholly within either realm, there is little conflict or confusion, but all are doomed to experience more or less uncertainty during the times of transition between the two levels of living." (*1766)

There is life in the flesh and there is life in the spirit. The first represents thoroughgoing selfishness, the second thoroughgoing unselfishness. Most people live somewhere between the two in the contentious arena of intellectual conflict, confusion, and moral quandary. There is complete intellectual stability in either of the two, but not both together. Purely selfish people have no difficulty making moral choices—they always choose what appears to be in their best interest. Thoroughly unselfish people have no conflict. They always choose what appears to be in the best interest of the people they love, and they love most people.

The distinction between life in the flesh and life in the spirit is one of the great distinctions of life, and yet most of us live with those distinctions continually blurred. We frequently live oblivious to the various selfish reaction-habits that have taken possession of our lives. Our lives are frequently used by the selfish reaction-patterns inherent in the electrochemical machines we call our bodies. The body is a finely tuned machine desperately concerned about its own survival. It is designed to beligerently protect "the self" and will take any position to do so, including lying, cheating, stealing, fleeing, fighting, or being noncommittal. Its first and foremost responsibility is "self" protection, and the material self protects itself assiduously. It is constantly on the alert for what appears to be its own best interest.

It is in this self-serving circumscription, the life in the flesh, that we persons abide. Yet we are also free to choose the spirit-sponsored life. The distinctions between the life in the flesh and the life in the spirit are many, but a few can be briefly summarized. The material self or ego identity ("self") is me-oriented while the spiritual self or soul identity ("soul") is other-oriented. The self uses others while the soul is used for others. The self sees relationships as "me or you" while the soul sees relationships as "we." The ethic of the self is "do as much as you can get away with," while the ethic of the soul is love others with a God-like affection. The self is self-aggrandizing while the soul prefers to share. The self is selfish while the soul is unselfish.

Often our lives are insidiously pervaded by self-

ishness. As children, we knew that if we ate the whole pie without sharing, we were selfish. But selfishness as adults is far more subtle. Selfishness (self-centeredness) takes a host of forms that, on the surface, do not appear to be selfish. Equivocation is one of my favorites.

Equivocation, the inability or unwillingness to make a commitment, is fundamentally self-centered. It is self-centered because it keeps the self from being at risk. If there is no commitment, then there is no fear of being ridiculed, rejected, or bound to the commitment, and there is no need to take responsibility for anything other than one's own welfare.

Self-righteousness is another deceptively selfish habit. The self strives to be right, no matter what, even if it means that everyone else must be wrong. It is a form of pride that is characterized by closed-mindedness and self-justification, both of which are fundamentally self-centered.

Prejudice is also selfish. Prejudice denigrates anyone who doesn't meet a particular set of standards. Prejudice is simply another way that the self seeks to set itself apart as superior, stronger, smarter or better than other people. Prejudice places the self on the pedestal that automatically lowers the level of others. It is a habit born of a sense of inferiority rather than the more apparent pretense of superiority.

Intolerance, like prejudice, separates people by a wall of arrogance. Intolerance is fundamentally the inability or unwillingness to sympathize with another. Intolerance is safer and easier than tolerance, and it is fundamentally self-centered rather than other-centered. Tolerance requires work and leaves the self exposed and vulnerable.

Envy is a special form of selfishness. It is primarily a concern for one's own welfare. It is again born of the fear of being inferior in some respect and manifests itself as discontentment and a longing to have something, possessed by others, that may elevate the status, position, or social approval of oneself.

Slothfulness is a less covert form of selfishness. It is the avoidance of doing work or taking responsibility, taking the easier path of lesser resistance, for oneself.

Vanity, an excessive interest in looking good, is clearly self-centered.

Greed is an obvious form. It is an incessant, ongoing, self-aggrandizing commitment that is frequently blind to ethics, morality, or the needs of others.

Pride is perhaps the greatest obstacle to a spirit-dominated life. It is an all-pervasive, self-justifying mechanism that consistently isolates the self from others—protects the self from the vulnerability of being wrong. Pride denies truth, shrouds error, and avoids ridicule. When pride is chosen, a fog of confusion settles over the clarity of courageous honesty. Pride is obedient to the desire for approval and is the bond servant of self-doubt.

Without a conscious commitment to a life in the spirit, selfishness is the default mechanism that unconsciously controls reaction-patterns. It is automatic—an addiction. The self is addicted to selfishness like an alcoholic to alcohol. Modern society is too frequently structured to keep the alcoholic self drunk with selfish pursuits.

If a person has no commitments to higher values, then money, power, and prestige—all fruits of life in the flesh, will be pursued pre-eminently. The pursuit of selfishness has many very powerful benefits. They are usually obvious.

For example, when you are selfish, you almost always can arrange to have things *your* way. Self-sacrifice need not even be considered. You also get to be right, even when you are dead wrong—pride and self-righteousness will see to that. You need not take responsibility for anything outside yourself. You can be as slothful as you like. You need not do the work required to be sympathetic. Selfishness is, in a word, easy. It comes “naturally” and seems, on the surface, to be the obvious choice.

What is much less obvious is that selfishness carries severe penalties. Selfishness, as a way of life, simply is not real. It has no foundation in the reality of the spirit “world.” It comes as the inborn response of the material mechanism, from dust, and will someday return to dust. The selfish individual, in choosing that which is not real, is in danger of becoming unreal—dead.

Religion teaches that we are material and possess spirit. From the spiritual view, it would probably be more accurate to say that we are spirit and have bodies. The spirit is the central enduring reality, the body is simply a navigational device for living in a material hologram. The material world appears more solid, more real than the spiritual, but it always passes away. To identify with what is real, with what produces a peace that passes all understanding, one must *grow* the identity of the soul.

The costs of choosing what is unreal or selfish are manifold.

Friendships are lost out of selfishness. No real happiness occurs without relationships. Relationships are the only true end in life, everything else is a means. The unhappiness and sense of loneliness that comes from the loss of relationships is a deep enduring sadness.

Selfishness results in disappointment, sorrow and emotional suffering. Selfish behavior, not being real, cannot produce real joy. It produces instead a transitory pleasure or displeasure associated with the desire of the self.

Selfishness will also destroy families. Family life demands unselfish service. It is an intense experience in learning to serve and forgive others. A selfish parent, like an alcoholic parent, will debase and destroy the bonds of loyalty and love that are the outgrowth of service and forgiveness.

If allowed to run rampant, selfishness will destroy civilization. Modern day society is thoroughly dependent upon those who serve unselfishly.

The spiritual illumination of God is eclipsed by selfishness. A thoroughly selfish person simply cannot

know God. One precludes the other. In eclipsing the light of God, the soul is made dark and dead, unresponsive to the constant promptings from the First Source of the universe, the presence of God. “The lamp of the body is the eye; if, therefore, your eye is generous, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is selfish, the whole body will be filled with darkness. If the very light which is in you is turned to darkness, how great is that darkness!”

Friendship with God is not available to one who has chosen to place himself first. At the entry to a Boy Scout camp in southern Michigan, there is a sign that reads “Me Third.” It is there to remind all who enter that their ideal commitment is to God first, others second, and themselves third. The ego-self would have that order reversed.

The self putting itself first is much like the story of the servant living in Persia. The story portrays a servant who, while walking through the courtyard of the home of his master, encounters “Death.” The servant turns and runs in abject terror. He finds his master and begs him to loan him his best horse so that he may ride to Tehran to escape “Death.” His master gladly grants his request, inviting him to take whatever he needs for the journey. Later, the master also walks through the courtyard and sees “Death.” The master confronts him, “Why did you frighten my servant?” And “Death” responds, “I did not mean to frighten your servant. I was only surprised to see him here. I expected to see him tomorrow in Tehran.”

The self is always looking for the fastest horse to Tehran. Like the servant, the self is pre-eminently concerned with its own survival, not knowing that seeking to save itself is the surest course to its own death. We all pass through the experience of mortal death, but abject selfishness is the surest course to real death—spiritual death. Truly, he who seeks to save his own life shall lose it.

To choose a spirit-led life, an unselfish life, is to choose the way of God. The fruits of the spirit are service, unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, fairness, honesty, undying hope, confiding trust, forgiving tolerance, goodness, and enduring peace.

Self-mastery is a matter of mastering a belligerent addiction to selfishness. One of the great paradoxes of human life is that we become who we are, not by what we get in life, but by what we give away.

“This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

“I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

“I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no ‘brief candle’ to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.” —George Bernard Shaw

Working to Resolve the Dynamic Tension between Selfishness and Selflessness

by Marilyn Kulieke

Author's note: This presentation was an exploration of the conflict between egoism and altruism. What follows is a series of quotations from The Urantia Book which provided the basis for the discussion that took place within the workshop. In the first appendix (A), there is a copy of the worksheet that was passed out as the organizer for the workshop. Appendix B contains two visual representations which attempted to integrate the content presented in the workshop.

Thesis for the Presentation

Moral choosing is usually accompanied by more or less moral conflict. And this very first conflict in the child mind is between the urges of egoism and the impulses of altruism. The Thought Adjuster does not disregard the personality values of the egoistic motive but does operate to place a slight preference upon the altruistic impulse as leading to the goal of human happiness and to the joys of the kingdom of heaven. (*1131)

What Are the Components of the Self?

It would be helpful in the study of selfhood to remember:

1. That physical systems are subordinate.
2. That intellectual systems are co-ordinate.
3. That personality is superordinate.
4. That the indwelling spiritual force is potentially directive. (*1227)

Parts of the self may function in numerous ways—thinking, feeling, wishing—but only the co-ordinated attributes of the whole personality are focused in intelligent action; and all of these powers are associated with the spiritual endowment of the mortal mind when a human being sincerely and unselfishly loves another being, human or divine. (*1228)

In the human organism the summation of its parts constitutes selfhood—individuality—but such a process has nothing whatever to do with personality, which is the unifier of all these factors as related to cosmic realities. (*1227)

The purpose of cosmic evolution is to achieve unity of personality through increasing spirit dominance, volitional response to the teaching and leading of the Thought Adjuster. Personality, both human and superhuman, is characterized by an inherent cosmic quality which may be called "the evolution of dominance," the expansion of the control of both itself and its environment. (*1229)

The material self, the ego-entity of human identity, is dependent during the physical life on the continuing function of the material life vehicle, on the continued existence of the unbalanced equilibrium of energies and intellect which, on Urantia, has been given the name *life*. But selfhood of survival value, selfhood that can

transcend the experience of death, is only evolved by establishing a potential transfer of the seat of the identity of the evolving personality from the transient life vehicle—the material body—to the more enduring and immortal nature of the morontia soul and on beyond to those levels whereon the soul becomes infused with, and eventually attains the status of, spirit reality. This actual transfer from material association to morontia identification is effected by the sincerity, persistence, and steadfastness of the God-seeking decisions of the human creature. (*1229)

What is Moral Choice?

Material mind is the arena in which human personalities live, are self-conscious, make decisions, choose God or forsake him, eternalize or destroy themselves. (*1216)

[But] intelligence alone cannot explain the moral nature. Morality, virtue, is indigenous to human personality. Moral intuition, the realization of duty, is a component of human mind endowment...Man's mentality far transcends that of his animal cousins, but it is his moral and religious natures that especially distinguish him from the animal world. (*192-193)

The human mind does not create real values; human experience does not yield universe insight. Concerning insight, the recognition of moral values and the discernment of spiritual meanings, all that the human mind can do is to discover, recognize, interpret, and choose.

The moral values of the universe become intellectual possessions by the exercise of three basic judgments, or choices, of the mortal mind:

1. Self-judgment—moral choice.
2. Social-judgment—ethical choice.
3. God-judgment—religious choice. (*2094)

When man fails to discriminate the ends of his mortal striving, he finds himself functioning on the animal level of existence. He has failed to avail himself of the superior advantages of that material acumen, moral discrimination, and spiritual insight which are an integral part of his cosmic-mind endowment as a personal being. (*193)

Virtue is righteousness—conformity with the cosmos. To name virtues is not to define them, but to live them is to know them. Virtue is not mere knowledge nor yet wisdom but rather the reality of progressive experience in the attainment of ascending levels of cosmic achievement. In the day-by-day life of mortal man, virtue is realized by the consistent choosing of good rather than evil, and such choosing ability is evidence of the possession of a moral nature. (*193)

Man's choosing between good and evil is influenced, not only by the keenness of his moral nature, but also by

such influences as ignorance, immaturity, and delusion. A sense of proportion is also concerned in the exercise of virtue because evil may be perpetrated when the lesser is chosen in the place of the greater as a result of distortion or deception. The art of relative estimation or comparative measurement enters into the practice of the virtues of the moral realm. (*193)

Man's moral nature would be impotent without the art of measurement, the discrimination embodied in his ability to scrutinize meanings. Likewise would moral choosing be futile without that cosmic insight which yields the consciousness of spiritual values. From the standpoint of intelligence, man ascends to the level of a moral being because he is endowed with personality. (*193)

Moral acts are those human performances which are characterized by the highest intelligence, directed by selective discrimination in the choice of superior ends as well as in the selection of moral means to attain these ends. Such conduct is virtuous. Supreme virtue, then, is wholeheartedly to choose to do the will of the Father in heaven. (*193)

When a moral being chooses to be unselfish when confronted by the urge to be selfish, that is primitive religious experience. No animal can make such a choice; such a decision is both human and religious. It embraces the fact of God-consciousness and exhibits the impulse of social service, the basis of the brotherhood of man. When mind chooses a right moral judgment by an act of the free will, such a decision constitutes a religious experience. (*1131)

Morality can never be advanced by law or by force. It is a personal and freewill matter and must be disseminated by the contagion of the contact of morally fragrant persons with those who are less morally responsive, but who are also in some measure desirous of the doing the Father's will. (*193)

...The ability to choose between the emerging values of good and evil—moral choice. (*1187)

The highest moral choice is the choice of the highest possible value, and always—in any sphere, in all of them—this is to choose to do the will of God. (*435)

What Is Moral Conflict?

Many of the temporal troubles of mortal man grow out of his twofold relation to the cosmos. Man is a part of nature—he exists in nature—and yet he is able to transcend nature. Man is finite, but he is indwelt by a spark of infinity. Such a dual situation not only provides the potential for evil but also engenders many social and moral situations fraught with much uncertainty and not a little anxiety. (*1221)

The courage required to effect the conquest of nature and to transcend one's self is a courage that might succumb to the temptations of self-pride. The mortal who can transcend self might yield to the temptation to deify his own self-consciousness. The mortal dilemma consists in the double fact that man is in bondage to nature while at the same time he possesses a unique liberty—freedom of spiritual choice and action. On material

levels man finds himself subservient to nature, while on spiritual levels he is triumphant over nature and over all things temporal and finite. Such a paradox is inseparable from temptation, potential evil, decisional errors, and when self becomes proud and arrogant, sin may evolve. (*1222)

Self has surrendered to the intriguing drive of an all-encompassing motivation which imposes heightened self-discipline, lessens emotional conflict, and makes mortal life truly worth living. The morbid recognition of human limitations is changed to the natural consciousness of mortal shortcomings, associated with moral determination and spiritual aspiration to attain the highest universe and superuniverse goals. (*1217)

The Adjuster bestowed upon man is, in the last analysis, impervious to evil and incapable of sin, but mortal mind can actually be twisted, distorted, and rendered evil and ugly by the sinful machinations of a perverse and self-seeking human will. Likewise can this mind be made noble, beautiful, true, and good—actually great—in accordance with the spirit-illuminated will of a God-knowing human being. (*1217)

...Before a child has developed sufficiently to acquire moral capacity and therefore to be able to choose altruistic service, he has already developed a strong and well-united egoistic nature. And it is this factual situation that gives rise to the theory of the struggle between the "higher" and the "lower" natures, between the "old man of sin" and the "new nature" of grace. Very early in life the normal child begins to learn that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." (*1131)

Man tends to identify the urge to be self-serving with his ego—himself. In contrast he is inclined to identify the will to be altruistic with some influence outside himself—God. And indeed is such a judgment right, for all such nonself desires do actually have their origin in the leadings of the indwelling Thought Adjuster, and this Adjuster is a fragment of God. The impulse of the spirit Monitor is realized in human consciousness as the urge to be altruistic, fellow-creature minded. At least this is the early and fundamental experience of the child mind. When the growing child fails of personality unification, the altruistic drive may become so over-developed as to work serious injury to the welfare of the self. A misguided conscience can become responsible for much conflict, worry, sorrow, and no end of human unhappiness. (*1131)

Moral acts are those human performances which are characterized by the highest intelligence, directed by selective discrimination in the choice of superior ends as well as in the selection of moral means to attain these ends. Such conduct is virtuous. Supreme virtue, then, is wholeheartedly to choose to do the will of the Father in heaven. (*193)

The early evolutionary mind gives origin to a feeling of social duty and moral obligation derived chiefly from emotional fear. The more positive urge of social obligation derived from the direct impulse of the divine spirit indwelling the human mind. (*1133)

The idea-ideal of doing good to others—the impulse to deny the ego something for the benefit of one's neighbor—is very circumscribed at first. Primitive man regards as neighbor only those very close to him, those who treat him neighborly; as religious civilization advances, one's neighbor expands in concept to embrace the clan, the tribe, the nation. And then Jesus enlarged the neighbor scope to embrace the whole of humanity, even that we should love our enemies. And there is something inside of every normal human being that tells him this teaching is moral—right. Even those who practice this ideal least, admit that it is right in theory. (*1133)

What Is Ego and Altruism?

All men recognize the morality of this universal human urge to be unselfish and altruistic. The humanist ascribes the origin of this urge to the natural working of the material mind; the religionist more correctly recognizes that the truly unselfish drive of mortal mind is in response to the inner spirit, leadings of the Thought Adjuster. (*1134)

But man's interpretation of these early conflicts between the ego-will and the other-than-self-will is not always dependable. Only a fairly well unified personality can arbitrate the multiform contentions of the ego cravings and the budding social consciousness. The self has rights as well as one's neighbors. Neither has exclusive claims upon the attention and service of the individual. Failure to resolve this problem gives origin to the earliest type of human guilt feelings. (*1134)

Human happiness is achieved only when the ego desire of the self and the altruistic urge of the higher self (divine spirit) are co-ordinated and reconciled by the unified will of the integrating and supervising personality. The mind of evolutionary man is ever confronted with the intricate problem of refereeing the contest between the natural expansion of emotional impulses and the moral growth of unselfish urges predicated on spiritual insight—genuine religious reflection. (*1134)

It is fatal to man's idealism when he is taught that all of his altruistic impulses are merely the development of his natural herd instincts. But he is ennobled and mightily energized when he learns that these higher urges of his soul emanate from the spiritual forces that indwell his mortal mind. (*1134)

...And so it is that a living faith in the superhuman origin of our ideals validates our belief that we are the sons of God and makes real our altruistic convictions, the feelings of the brotherhood of man. (*1134)

Unbridled self-will and unregulated self-expression equal unmitigated selfishness, the acme of ungodliness. Liberty without the associated and ever-increasing conquest of self is a figment of egoistic mortal imagination. (*613)

Self-control leads to altruistic service; self-admiration tends towards the exploitation of others for the selfish aggrandizement of such a mistaken individual as is willing to sacrifice righteous attainment for the sake of

possessing unjust power over his fellow beings. (*614)

The urge to be altruistic is to be fellow-creature minded. (*1132)

What Tools Can You Use to Deal with Moral Conflict?

The atmosphere of the communion provides a refreshing and comforting period of truce in the conflict of the self-seeking ego with the altruistic urge of the indwelling spirit Monitor. And this is the prelude to true worship—the practice of the presence of God which eventuates in the emergence of the brotherhood of man. (*1133)

Prayer is not designed as a technique for aggrandizing self or for gaining unfair advantage over one's fellows. A thoroughly selfish soul cannot pray in the true sense of the word. (*1639)

Prejudice blinds the soul to the recognition of truth, and prejudice can be removed only by the sincere devotion of the soul to the adoration of a cause that is all-embracing and all-inclusive of one's fellow men. Prejudice is inseparably linked to selfishness. Prejudice can be eliminated only by the abandonment of self-seeking and by substituting therefore the quest of the satisfaction of the service of a cause that is not only greater than self, but one that is even greater than all humanity—the search for God, the attainment of divinity. The evidence of maturity of personality consists in the transformation of human desire so that it constantly seeks for the realization of those values which are highest and most divinely real. (*1774)

[In reference to Jesus' decision as to what to do with his creator prerogatives as he resumed his work] This great decision of Jesus portrays dramatically the truth that selfish satisfaction and sensuous gratification, alone and of themselves, are not able to confer happiness upon evolving human beings. There are higher values in mortal existence—intellectual mastery and spiritual achievement—which far transcend the necessary gratification of man's purely physical appetites and urges. 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)

Spirituality becomes at once the indicator of one's nearness to God and the measure of one's usefulness to fellow beings. Spirituality enhances the ability to discover beauty in things, recognize truth in meanings, and discover goodness in values. Spiritual development is determined by capacity therefor and is directly proportional to the elimination of the selfish qualities of love. (*1096)

God is not only the determiner of destiny; he is man's eternal destination. All nonreligious human activities seek to bend the universe to the distorting service of self; the truly religious individual seeks to identify the self with the universe and then to dedicate the activities of this unified self to the service of the universe family of fellow beings, human and superhuman. (*67)

...You will learn that you increase your burdens and decrease the likelihood of success by taking yourself too

seriously. Nothing can take precedence over the work of your status sphere—this world or the next. Very important is the work of preparation for the next higher sphere, but nothing equals the importance of the work of the world in which you are actually living. But though the work is important, the *self* is not. When you feel important, you lose energy to the wear and tear of ego dignity so that there is little energy left to do the work. Self-importance, not work-importance, exhausts immature creatures; it is the self element that exhausts, not the effort to achieve. You can do important work if you leave yourself out. (*555)

APPENDIX A

Working to Resolve the Dynamic Tension between Selfishness and Selflessness

Thesis

Moral choosing is usually accompanied by more or less moral conflict. And this very first conflict in the child mind is between the urges of egoism and the impulses of altruism. The Thought Adjuster does not disregard the personality values of the egoistic motive but does operate to place a slight preference upon the altruistic impulse as leading to the goal of human happiness and to the joys of the kingdom of heaven. (*1131)

- Key Concepts
- What are the components of the self? 1227-1229
- What is moral choice? 1221-1222, 1100, 1217, 1131, 193, 1187, 435
- What is moral conflict? 1221-1222, 1217, 1131-1134
- What is egoism and altruism? 613, 614, 1132
- What tools can we use to deal with moral conflict or tension? 1133, 1639, 1774, 1519, 1096, 67

Questions

Generate a list of values which might influence a decision to act in an egoistic and altruistic way.

In the story of Jesus cleansing the temple (Paper 173, Section 1), what were the moral conflicts or tensions for Jesus in this portrayal?

What do you personally need to do to achieve a balance between ego and altruism in each of your own lives?

APPENDIX B

EVOLUTIONARY MIND: Physical system

- Emotional fear
- Social obligation
- Moral obligation

Ego Desire
Self-will

DOING GOOD
TO ONESELF

TENSION

Mind is the referee

Family • Neighbors
Clan • Tribe • Nation

DOING GOOD
TO OTHERS

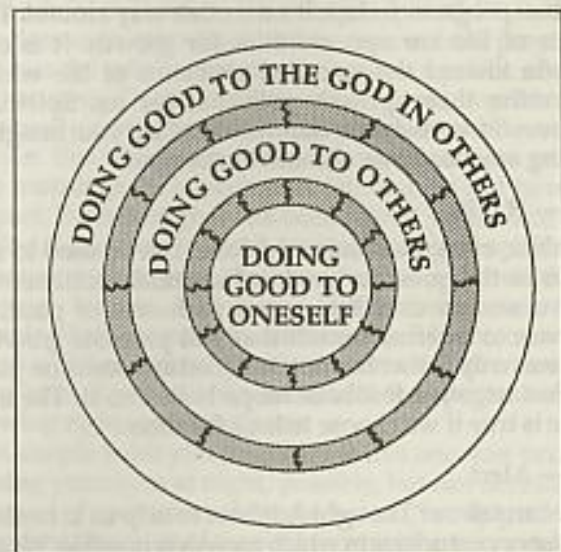
ALTRUISTIC URGES

Other than Self-will:

- Thought Adjuster
- Spirit of Truth
- Other spirit influences

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Doing Good to the God in Others

C.H.A.N.G.E.S.—Practice Makes Perfect

by Brent St. Denis

One of the miracles of our relationship with the heavenly Father is that in barely one hour of space-time in this room we can together comprehend a little of the potential of our eternal and infinite loving parent-child relationship with the Creator of all things. (I recently read Guy Murchie's book called *The Seven Mysteries of Life* and when he describes, in relative terms, some of the fabulously unimaginable numbers which scientists have discovered in their measurements of astronomical and subatomic occurrences, the mind boggles. It can be downright intimidating.) Like the love and nurturing provided us by our earthly parents to help us over the fears of childhood, no less is the love of our Father also with us in an embrace which can render us fearless and powerful in the ascent to him in Paradise.

I want to focus on a few practical attitudes of daily living which can constantly remind us of the miracle of our existence and of the endless possibilities which are consequent upon our individual choosing to do his will. I will begin by listing a few things I have learned in the midst of my own struggles.

"C" — Chances

There is nothing that can "happen" to us during this earthly life that, of itself, can in any way impede our spiritual progress. In fact, it's the other way around. The events of life are opportunities for growth. It is our attitude toward the so-called problems of life which determine their growth potential for us. Spiritual progress is entirely in our hands. Can you imagine making any headway without challenges?

"H" — Habits

Habits, even unconsciously done, can be used to assist us in the quest for personal spiritual fulfillment. I believe we can establish neural pathways of positive response to external stimuli that will promote growth. Our heavenly Father has not designed an ascension plan that has negative feedback loops built into it. The opposite is true if we choose to look for them.

"A" — Alert

We can ask our Thought Adjuster to help us to be alert to those opportunities in which growth is possible. We are taught that it is our own free will which reigns supreme in the making of spiritual choices, but I have concluded we can each make a pre-fusion choice to grant our Thought Adjusters the right to intervene in order to remind us of what is really important at that moment.

"N" — Now

I cannot find God tomorrow, nor shall I find him in yesterday. I can only find him as a living reality today, at this moment.

"G" — God's Will

I am convinced that *The Urantia Book* is right when it declares that "The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God—with the very God who has made such a creature life of inner meaning-value possible." (*1221) I want to emphasize for you the words *creature willingness*.

"E" — Ego

Our egos can severely impair our ability to see the light which shines forth constantly from the First Source and Center. I liken the ego to the mindal equivalent of the material body. It does serve a purpose during this life, but its current essence is material; nonetheless it can be transmuted.

"S" — School

The Urantia Book teaches us that the mansion worlds are more like training schools. It occurs to me that the earthly sojourn is no less a school, too! I have found it helpful to look at life's events as assignments designed to serve a purpose in this life and the next as educational opportunities and experiences. Assignments ignored or done half-heartedly are lost opportunities which we may regret having forgone when at some future time we are part of a team of ascenders charged with fulfilling some project in Orvonton.

Before continuing, I would like to summarize these C.H.A.N.G.E.S.:

- C(hance)—Life's events are growth opportunities.
- H(abits)—Growth habits can be developed.
- A(djuster)—Thought Adjuster can help us be alert to spiritual opportunities.
- N(ow)—You can only find God in the present.
- G(od's Will)—Doing the Father's will = *willingness* to share the inner life.
- E(go)—Ego can be transmuted.
- S(chool)—Earth is a school for mortals.

The Urantia Book begins and ends with reference to the fatherhood of God. Jesus teaches us that the brotherhood of man is a consequence of this fact. Both of these realities require the existence of individual God-seeking mortals for their fulfillment as fact in time and space. There can be no father without children, there can be no brotherhood without brothers and sisters. Each of us has a responsibility to do our part as best we can as children of God. Our responsibility starts within our own minds wherein are bred the attitudes of life which will make us increasingly more conscious of our important place in the cosmic plan. After all, there is no other personality quite like any of us who can interpret God's love to

others in exactly the same way. While God is no respecter of persons in that he puts no one of us ahead of the other in his love, there is, nonetheless, something special about each of us that no other can provide. I want to emphasize that we do have a responsibility.

We begin our mortal careers as potentially perfect unconscious beings. As we grow into consciousness, we begin the adventure of becoming consciously perfect even as the Father is perfect. We have not been abandoned in this task. We have the tools we need to achieve this perfection, including an eternity within which to accomplish it. In keeping perfection as our goal, we need only keep the next curve in the road in our sight. We are not expected to become perfect now or even tomorrow. It is only required that we desire that perfection. It therefore makes sense to develop practical attitudes which can assist us in maintaining an orientation towards the Father.

Let us examine more closely the attitudes I outlined a few minutes ago which I have found to be helpful to me in my practical day-to-day living. I would like to be "on track" at all times, but as these attitudes pass through my consciousness at various times and in seemingly random order, they do bring me back to that place where I can more readily remember that this life is a truly wonderful adventure and let's be on with it. Let's not waste any more time with pointless trivialities.

As I prepared for this session with you, I wondered what impact, if any, there might be on its content, because I was approaching my fortieth birthday. Frankly, it added an air of anticipation to my thinking. What would the effect be on my thinking when my Thought Adjuster became my Thought Controller? My conclusion thus far is that the change in phase passes with the same notice by self that was the case when our Mystery Monitor first arrived around the age of six. Over time, however, I fully expect that this quiet experience will manifest itself in a more complete list of attitudes. But for now, here is what I know.

Growing in Life...Chances

All too often we seem to consider the events of life as problems. As we mature spiritually, I believe we can learn to look at all the events of life as "learning situations." *The Urantia Book* teaches us that there is no challenge that we will face that is beyond our mortal capacity to cope. I believe the secret here is that every one of life's events contains a lesson that we can learn. As surely as the treasures of this world cannot accompany us beyond this life except that they be spiritual treasures, then just as surely there can be no material problem that can detract from our progress in spirit. In fact, the contrary is the case. The degree to which we face the events of life with a joyous willingness to learn something new, then, shall be the measure of the growth potential contained in that event.

This is not stoicism. This is simply accepting life for what it is, one of the best chances we will ever have to face faith challenges which it is doubtful are available on

any other planet in all of Nebadon. As agondonters we should rejoice at having this chance to really test our faith. I am willing to wager that many ascenders from other worlds would gladly trade places with any of us. This is not to suggest that we should go out looking for problems because there are ample opportunities for each of us in our daily lives if we will only look. We can learn what we need to learn!

A corollary of this particular point is that nothing can be achieved by avoiding the problems of life, but there is most assuredly something of infinite value in every test.

Spiritual Habits

Generally we do not associate habits as being helpful in developing our spiritual selves—our souls. I suggest to you that we can develop habits which can widen our mind's door to spiritual thoughts which can then lead us to spiritual action. After all, we cannot serve/love our fellows without first thinking about it and deciding to do so. Nonetheless we can predispose our minds to spiritual action by using simple techniques of autosuggestion. I'm not talking about mystical phenomenon here, merely the same type of trick you would use to wake yourself at a certain time each morning. The mind is a vast reservoir of power, and we can employ this to our spiritual advantage as readily as we do for material gain and pleasure.

From personal experience I can tell you that the year which preceded my discovery of *The Urantia Book* was a year during which I was required to say the Lord's Prayer each morning. As homeroom teacher in a public high school in Jamaica, it was my responsibility to lead my class each morning in a few moments of prayer as this was the cultural practice in Jamaican public schools at that time. Outside of this requirement, my life was spiritually quite bereft of much pleasure and devoid of prayer. But this few minutes of required form prayer five mornings each week over ten months did have an impact. Even though it has been fifteen years since that period, I can clearly recall an awakening of spirit consciousness that year that has been a watershed experience for me. I have not looked back since. This morning habit seemed to act like a small hammer on my mind which eventually cracked open an otherwise stubborn refusal to wake up and smell the spiritual coffee brewing right under my nose.

A simple habit you might try is this one: just prior to closing your eyes at night, possibly, but not necessarily as a part of your internal "wake-up call," simply ask that your first thoughts of the next morning be very positive. Be specific. Choose something like a beautiful scene or phrase such as "thanks for another day of school."

Alertness

One of the problems our human minds appear to have difficulty with is one of remaining alert to subtle things when there are so many macro events occurring around us all the time. Too often we miss loving opportunities because we are preoccupied with the big things. The perspective of our minds assumes—in default of

instructions to the contrary—that something must be big and complicated to be good. We have many good examples of situations in which an alertness to the apparent little things can lead to some spiritually big events. Just remember when Jesus took time from his sermons to stop and spend a few moments with a nearby child. Normally we wouldn't do that, but his actions time and again demonstrated the spiritual value of the little things as he went by. I believe we are not naturally alert as mortals to these opportunities. I believe we must train ourselves to be alert for these seemingly small events.

I have no doubt that our Thought Adjusters can and will help us with the problem of alertness to spiritual opportunities. We must only ask. It does not require eternal fusion with the Thought Adjuster to seek cooperative undertakings. You only need to give your Adjuster the right to intervene at any time and place to point out that an opportunity for loving service is at hand. While it is a fact that our individual wills reign supreme in matters spiritual, it must be obvious that we have a resource available to us which can assist in circumventing the tendency of mind (as driven by ego) to ignore the spiritually obvious.

God Now

Should it be obvious that one can only find God in the present? After all, is there anything wrong with planning to do something tomorrow? No, of course not! But the fact is, your plan is no more than that until tomorrow arrives to become today and you put your plan into action. You've no doubt all heard the expression, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions." I suggest that our plans for tomorrow are within the material realm and that it is the current moment that is important. I'd rather say, "Procrastinate tomorrow."

Your experiences of a spiritual nature which you lived yesterday will constitute valid and important memories which you can recall for encouragement and pleasure as the moments pass by. But even as memories it is their recall in the present which provides spiritual pleasure and refreshment.

Even if we do not agree on the merits of past and future spiritual experiences, I believe you will accept that without there being the search for God in the present, it is doubtful that past and future experiences are of much value to you as a continuum until they are joined as a single life experience by the search moment-by-moment as we go about our daily affairs.

The search for God *now* does not imply a life devoted to silent meditation; rather it is a life bathed in trust and confidence that, when all is said and done, things will always work out for the best. It is a life of conscious faith.

Willingness to Share the Inner Life with God

I think we are often confused in our thinking about the Father's will. We wonder if we are doing his will at this time or that and worry whether we actually know what it is. I say, "Don't worry, be happy!" It is simply your desire to do his will as demonstrated in your desire

to share the inner life with him. It would require infinite wisdom to consciously know the fullness of the Father's will at each moment. His will is infinite; to know it in its fullness at each moment would mean knowing the outcome of your action/spiritual response for the eternity to follow. For our heavenly Father, the I AM, who contains time and space, this is an easy matter but not one possible for us. The trick is to not try to understand the moment with the rational mind but rather to simply give the moment to him and leave comprehension to follow in the fullness of time.

Our gift to the Father as ascending mortals is the first step of faith. I am not aware that we must understand his will in order to do his will. It is usually our fear of the unknown which demands to know the consequences of any given undertaking. I suggest that in matters spiritual it is sufficient to know that the outcome in eternity is to find oneself in the presence of God. In the short-term, trust the spiritual intuition which is your heritage.

Transmuted Ego

I believe ego serves a useful purpose during the mortal career. I am not certain how long we carry our egos with us, but I suggest that the ego may in fact be an integral part of our identity which will be a part of our conscious selves throughout eternity. At this point in our universe careers, ego has earned itself a bad name. If we imagine that ego embodies our own will, then because our will does not always agree with the Father's will, there results confusion. I believe our egos can subsume to the Father's will and still exist as a positive element of mind. The difficulty, though, is that ego is quick to respond to time-space stimuli and therefore too often gets the upper hand in our dealings with people and events. I see ego preoccupied with our material existence because it may be that element of mind most closely related to our animal-origin selves. If you think about it, ego does act to protect. The problem is that it's like keeping a vicious guard dog around your house which keeps the neighbors away, too.

I believe we make a mistake in trying to bury our ego. It exists as fact, so I suggest we work to transmute it instead. This is where good spiritual habits can come into play. Our egos like to feel good, like to feel wanted and loved, to feel important and special. Well, these are all things that can be derived from spiritual living if such things can be seen from a broader perspective. After all, does God not love us, is he not thrilled when we are found after being lost, are we not special in that what we bring to the growth of the Supreme is very special, indeed, unique? I am convinced that if the ego is fed spiritual fruit rather than material food it can serve a higher purpose and will continue as a functioning part of mind throughout the universe career serving to protect us spiritually.

When we observe that one of our fellows appears to live "with his/her ego in their back pocket," so to speak, it seems they have no ego. I suggest their ego has been commissioned for higher service.

Earth as School

It would appear to follow naturally that our time on this planet Urantia is really time in school. It makes sense to me that if the next stages of our universe career involve participation in the schools of the mansion worlds, why would our lives here be any less a schooling experience? This idea is further supported by the fact that the departure that most Urantia mortals will make in transit to the mansion worlds will be in the company of thousands of earthmates with whom we will advance through the morontia worlds. It is even common knowledge that we "learn from our experiences." Remember the School of Hard Knocks?

Why look at the earth life as time in school? Simple! It can alter one's attitude toward life's experiences to consider oneself a "student." One is more apt to be more open to learning, more willing to try in spite of possible failure, more open to new ideas and perspectives, more generous to fellow students who also struggle with life's lessons, and more likely open to prodding and leading on the road to spiritual knowledge.

I believe that when I have eventually regained consciousness on the mansion worlds, and when I have rekindled by memories of the earth life, I will feel some regret at not having taken greater advantage of the learning opportunities afforded by life in the flesh. This is a natural feeling that many of us can relate to when we remember our own high school days. We ask: what if I had switched courses when it was suggested to me? why did I spend so much time in the pool hall after school? We seldom dwell negatively on these memories,

but there is sometimes a quiet sense that a little better use of time might have proven to be very helpful indeed. We'll not utilize our time here in an ideal way, but it is important to remain conscious of the value of time in the flesh as providing endless beneficial chances to refine our spiritual skills.

In my sharing with you today, I wanted to emphasize a few practical things which any of us could use to spiritual advantage. I hope you will keep the handout I've given you and that you will each seek your own set of unique life attitudes which will help you optimize the spiritual opportunities this short time on earth provides. I like to dub this set of attitudes as "Be-Attitudes." Because the search for God must be undertaken in the present, if we can each live our lives humbly, bravely and joyously aware that by being conscious:

- that this moment has great potential value in eternity;
- that a willingness to share the inner life with God is his will;
- that ego has its place;
- that growth opportunities abound each day;
- that this life is a soul school;
- that some habits can be good; and
- that we can be alert to spiritual events.

Then we'll likely not have too many regrets when we awaken on the mansion worlds.

Living as in the Presence of God: Making the Effort

by William Wentworth

I'd like to begin by congratulating the Americans on their national day—Independence Day. I think that it illustrates something about the organisers of this conference, who are Americans, that they should schedule me, a foreigner, to address you on America's national day. In doing this they give clear recognition of the fact that the Fifth Epochal Revelation to mankind is intended for *all* men, irrespective of national and cultural loyalties, so I think they deserve some congratulation for this gesture towards that fact. The gesture does not surprise me, mind you, but I would like to give it some recognition all the same.

I am to talk to you about "Living as in the presence of God," and I'd better start by admitting that I don't know any more about it than any of you. How could I? Everything to do with our relationship with God is in the nature of personal experience. It is simply not possible for one human being to have much direct understanding of another human being's relationship with God, because relationships between personalities are things in themselves—unique. And if this is true of our relationships with one another, how much more true is it of our relationships with God? If, as the Solitary Messenger tells us, all true relationships have survival potential, that they are never merely part of the transient scaffolding destined to wither away upon a material death, then this must also be true of our relationship with God, upon which the possibility of survival itself hangs. So we can only communicate the quality of our relationship with God to our fellows obliquely, through the osmosis of empathy, and rarely with much precision.

It follows that "Living as in the presence of God" is going to mean rather different things to different people. Generalisations about it will be pretty tenuous. Nevertheless, such generalisations can provide focal points around which we can compare our personal experience, so I'll tell you some of the things I've been thinking about this topic, some of the generalisations I've made and the conclusions I've reached. It is up to you to say when my thinking connects with yours in some way: when you agree or disagree, take a different approach, or feel that I've missed the point.

Even though generalisations are suspect, we have to start somewhere, and to me the obvious starting point is the clear and unequivocal acknowledgement that we are all, continuously, in the presence of God, whether we live as if this were the case or whether we don't. Here on Urantia, every normal-minded person is indwelt by a Thought Adjuster, an actual fragment of pre-personal Deity, which shares our life and seeks our co-operation. Every normal-minded person is, whether he knows it or not, whether he believes in God or not, actually in the presence of God from the moment of his first moral choice until his physical death. All students of *The Urantia Book* recognise this as one of the great revelations the

book makes to us. And it means that "Living as in the presence of God" constitutes conscious recognition of something which is a fact. We all actually live in the presence of God. "In him we live, move, and have our being." This is a fact. To live "as if" in his presence is thus to make conscious recognition of the fact, to make real to ourselves something which really is.

Well, if we are in the presence of God, why don't we all live as if what we know is actually true? If we know it, why don't we live it?

Here's my story. When, eight or nine months ago, I discovered that my subject today was to be "Living as in the presence of God," I decided to try to develop my talk upon the foundation of first-hand experience. "Right," I thought, "I'm now going to spend a few months really intensively living as in the presence of God so that when I get to Snowmass, I can really give them something to think about." Every day I made the decision half a dozen times, and every day I kept failing to do it, and the more often I made the decision the more often I promptly forgot about it, and after a while things began to look a bit desperate, because I began to realise that I was going to have to stand up here today without knowing what I was talking about. Was I face to face with the possibility that Murphy's Law is of universal application rather than merely a planetary phenomenon?

Well, as you can see, I still don't know what I'm talking about. But eventually I reached the conclusion that "Living as in the presence of God" is just not something that I could do at will. I was reminded how the Melchizedek author of Paper 100 emphasises that we cannot love our fellows by a mere act of will. Neither, it seems, can we live as in the presence of God by a mere act of will.

In my own case the question arose as to why I wanted to live as in the presence of God—what was my motive? Clearly, the hope that I would be able to talk to you today without making a fool of myself is not an adequate reason.

As I reflected on this, it occurred to me that something rather peculiar was going on. I knew for a fact that I was in the presence of God. We all are, all the time. Yet I seemed unable to make this real enough to myself to actually live as if it were the case. It's something that's familiar to me in another form. Students of *The Urantia Book* recognise the distinction which is made between belief and faith. Belief in God is the intellectual acceptance of the fact of God, while faith both incorporates belief and puts it into practice. It is quite possible to believe in God without allowing this to have much effect on our attitude, behaviour and habits. But not so faith. Faith indicates that belief has become real to us to the extent that our lives are transformed, our behaviour and habits are altered, our efforts to live up to our ideals are intensified. Faith in God implies that we trust him, that

we accept that what he wants is the best thing which can be wanted and that the attempt to do what he wants is thus the best possible thing to do. Faith is lived out. Belief is a purely intellectual phenomenon.

So I think you can now see why I was having so much trouble in cultivating the habit of "Living as in the presence of God." I believed it all right. I believed I was in the presence of God. But I obviously didn't have faith in it because I wasn't doing it. Action is the test of faith; is it happening? In my case it wasn't.

But wait, the story has a happy ending. A bit of hindsight helps.

It's now clear that my own efforts to gather material for this talk by living as in the presence of God were futile because I was trying to do it for all the wrong reasons.

I was very frustrated, but I continued to work on the talk—I knew I had to say something—and gradually it began to occur to me that living as in the presence of God must be pretty similar to worship. I myself was not trying to do it in order to worship God, but primarily to save myself embarrassment here today. I did not suddenly develop the ability to move into worship mode whenever I felt like it. I've never been able to do that, and I still can't. But when I do worship, I find myself communing with God—just being a child spending time with the most wonderfully perfect parent, and this really is "living as in the presence of God." The book refers to this as "a conditioned spiritual reflex," by which it means, I think, that the effort to live in God's presence, when successful, induces the attitude of worship.

Now in my own case, as I begin to feel about me for the presence of God, there seems always to arise a suggestion of Jesus. He taught that no one approaches the Father except through him. Michael of Nebadon is "the way, the truth and the life" for a whole local universe, and his life here as Jesus is our clue to contact with God. Anyone who has seen a Paradise Creator Son has seen the Father, and we have figuratively seen Michael as Jesus. There is no better guide into the presence of the Father than Jesus, and *The Urantia Book* reveals Jesus rather well. The way to living as in the presence of God, our indwelling Adjuster, is through Jesus.

It has been a great relief to me to discover this fact, which now seems so obvious. The presence of God which is inside us all the time—our indwelling Adjuster—remains a trifle mysterious to us because it functions on the prepersonal level, a level of which we personal beings are not directly conscious. But the personal presence of Michael of Nebadon is something much less mysterious to us, something we respond to more readily both because of his life as Jesus, and because of the functioning of his Spirit of Truth.

Who but Michael would abrogate the law of Murphy by the act of mercy, as we find the presence of the Adjuster through Jesus? He really is "the way, the truth and the life." And as a result I've had something to talk to you about!

I've always thought that one of the privileges of leading a discussion is that one gets to introduce one's pet

themes into the discussion at hand. One of my pet themes is to add a little cautionary note when extolling the virtue of doing God's will. I do not think that "Living as in the presence of God" is a legitimate way of having God make your decisions for you. The indwelling Adjuster—God inside each of us—is not cultivating a spiritual yes-man. When the Chief of Midwayers advises us to "not be so slothful as to ask God to solve your difficulties," he is simply reinforcing this idea. The Adjuster hopes to achieve personality by fusion with us and probably wants a robust, active and confident fusion-partner who brings something of his own experience and nature into the fused entity. The Adjuster, I suggest to you, is not hoping to fuse with a supine moral jellyfish without real individuality who wants to be told what to do all the time. The Adjuster would prefer us to try, fail, and learn from the experience than to do nothing because of being uncertain about God's (i.e., the Adjuster's own) will in the matter. The Adjuster dominates only by consent, when we ourselves have accepted that the Adjuster's guidance (God's will) is the best course of action. And this requires that we engage in trial-and-error decisions, finding out for ourselves that God's way is the best way. "Living as in the presence of God" is thus not to be seen simply as a way of having all the right decisions made for us. Rather should we look at it as a stimulus to worship, from which we derive the strength and determination to continue to make our own decisions. It really is a free-will universe. God might give us all sorts of help, but we ourselves actually decide.

So far we have been dealing with this topic from the standpoint of a solitary person seeking the presence of God. It occurred to me that way, I think, primarily because of the connection, in my own mind, between the presence of God and worship. But most of our lives are lived in the company of other people, and it can be rather difficult or inappropriate to achieve the communion of worship in a busy office, at a noisy party or in many of our day-to-day social situations. Nevertheless, it is often these situations which call for our best efforts. Here we are talking about the attitude of service, where we find our best opportunities for helping our fellows by putting our ideals into practice, by living out our highest concepts of truth, beauty, and goodness. This is where we can live out brotherly love, and in the process lend beneficial influence to the institutions our civilisation has evolved to regulate our relations with one another. This sphere of active service is where we have the opportunity to participate in the process of causing spirit to dominate matter through the exercise of mind in the presence of unifying personality.

In this way we tend to contribute more effectively to social progress if we go about our daily lives "as in the presence of God." This reminds us that all effort sincerely motivated by spirit, by the urge toward truth, beauty and goodness, is worthwhile in some way. We may not be able to see the results of our efforts or be able to understand just how they may be worthwhile, but to make these efforts, "as in the presence of God," is to be

encouraged to go on trying anyway. We gain the confidence to press on without knowing the results of our actions, trusting in the knowledge that the truth we live, the beauty we create and the good that we do somehow register in the Supreme, contributing to his growth, being of service somehow, sometime, somewhere. To go on doing our best in the absence of direct positive feedback can be very discouraging unless we bear in mind that nothing worthwhile is ever lost. Even if we, ourselves, as personalities are lost, and fail to survive, anything worthwhile we did during our lives is preserved as part of the Supreme. Trying to do whatever we do "as in the presence of God" helps us to keep this encouraging reality in front of us.

And like me, I suspect, you have discovered that this presence of God at the back of our minds is Michael, whom we know as Jesus. We know enough of how he lived and worked, of how he interacted with his fellow men, to perceive clues and insights into the handling of any and every earthly situation or experience. The life he lived and the gospel he taught equip us with assistance which is so general in nature that its application is universal. No matter what we do, we can improve upon our performance by keeping his teaching in our mind. Because he lived his life in a finite material setting, it is fairly easy to place him in most of our own situations.

So even though our lives are too busy to spend much of our work day in worshipful communion with our indwelling Adjusters, we can always make room in our minds for the inspiration of Jesus, and this is how we

"live as in the presence of God" in the active and social parts of our lives.

Well, that gives you an idea of how I've been thinking about "Living as in the presence of God." It's a habit which, in solitary contemplation, can lead us into worship as we seek to strengthen ourselves and seek wisdom for more effective service. On the other hand, in those parts of our lives where we have the opportunity for service, the habit stimulates and encourages us to persevere.

And this is appropriate when we consider the fundamental message of the gospel of Jesus, that we know God as our spiritual Father and men as our brothers, in a family relationship of love, defined as the desire to do good to others. This truth, the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, is mirrored in the two foci of our attention, the worship of the Father and the service of our fellow men.

I thought I'd finish up with this story. At a conference at Noosa, Queensland, Australia in 1989, the final speaker pointed out that we had spent three or four very fruitful and enjoyable days together, studying, discussing, socialising and generally pooling knowledge and experience. For three of four days we had been very co-operative and fraternal, and this final speaker pointed out that what we had in fact done was to spend a few days together living as we are meant to live.

And I suppose that says in a nutshell what it is like to "live as in the presence of God." It is simply to live as we are meant to live.

Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Family Peace! (Ha, Ha)

by Arlene & Buck Weimer

The Deities must have a sense of humor! Here we are on a planet with a double default as imperfect beings, living with a species of the opposite sex incapable of understanding each other, allowed to have children that are belligerent by nature, no preparation or rehearsal, then asked to play god—and be a peacemaker.

Tension and conflict are natural within a family unit. It's how we respond that's important. As parents, we spend much of our time being referees and umpires. In the end, children do what they see their parents do. Jesus said: "The Son does only those things which he sees the Father do." (*644) If we are physically present and emotionally there, if we strive for attitudes of being positive, authoritative, and consistent, we can be a finite reflection of our Universal Father and Christ Michael.

Our theme is simple: What families—and the world—need most is fatherly love. To illustrate this theme, we'll call your attention to the four supreme reactions of fatherly love as part of the Sermon on the Mount. The first two we will focus on the relationship between the parents, and the second two will be on the family as a whole.

1. "Happy are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (*1575) This is an emotional reaction of tenderheartedness and being responsive to human needs. This reaction is especially needed to bring some semblance of peace in the husband-wife relationship. "Male and female are practically regarded as two distinct varieties of the same species living in close and intimate association. Their viewpoints and entire life reactions are essentially different; they are wholly incapable of full and real comprehension of each other." (*938) Some of these male-female differences seem to be that females are more intuitive and emotional than males, while males are somewhat more logical and have greater difficulty expressing feelings. In a marriage these differences result in males having more difficulty sharing intimacy, while wives enjoy emotional talk. Women, on the other hand, have greater difficulty expressing their needs. The good news is that sometimes in middle age there is a reversal of these trends if the individuals are willing to attain a healthier balance within.

How then, do we resolve these differences and conflicts and attain some peace? If we are emotionally responsive to each other's needs, we can maintain unity and peace. We need to accept that we are different—and not take the conflict as a personal attack. We can be unified in our wholehearted dedication to doing our Father's will, always asking God what is best for all concerned. When there is disagreement, emotionally respond by first being calm so we can listen and hope-

fully achieve an understanding without judging. We can then brainstorm a solution that is comfortable for all and have a win-win situation. In many family conflicts there are no quick fixes, so praying for guidance—separately and together—helps.

Why then, when we have all this knowledge on how to live in unity and peace, do we criticize and become emotionally unresponsive? One answer to this question is that we all have some degree of *shame*. This is a belief and feeling that we are not good, are not loveable, and don't belong. Shame builds walls, as we hide our feelings of self-doubt from others. When in conflict, we become defensive and angry in order to feel control and power. We need to work on healing our shame, as a way to heal our relationship and prevent it in our children.

2. "Happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (*1575) The mercy Jesus discussed here has to do with true friendship. Is your spouse your best friend? It's easy to forgive children, but so often the children observe parents hating and resenting each other. Jesus is quoted on page 1740: "...but the measure of your human strength of character is your ability to resist the holding of grudges and your capacity to withstand brooding in the face of sorrow."

Developing within yourself a *willingness* to forgive is, perhaps, the most important aspect of this beatitude. This willingness to forgive is based on the belief in a *just* and *merciful* universe; that everyone experiences the consequences of their behavior. You don't have to be the judge, jury, or executioner.

However, steps to forgiveness can be taught. For your consideration, here is one example of the forgiveness process:

Step #1: *See the need.* If any past or present experience brings up within you a negative feeling of any kind, it is a good indication that the need exists.

Step #2: *Review the history of that particular event.* Take a look at events leading up to what happened, and how it happened. Be as objective as possible.

Step #3: *Understand the motive.* As best you can, understand why that person did whatever they did. Many people get stuck at this step because they don't allow themselves to understand. Some possible motives are: (a) an error, evil; (b) purposely trying to hurt you, sin; and (c) defiant or insane, iniquitous.

Step #4: *See them in a "new light."* Here we must see that person in a way different than before we started this process. Steps 3 and 4 represent a *change* that is necessary for this to work.

Step #5: *Say something positive about that person.* Everyone has good qualities. Say a prayer or praise their Thought Adjuster.

Step #6: Direct the forgiveness energy toward that person. Hate and anger are poisons; forgiveness is healing—self healing.

You will know if your efforts have been sincere by checking in with your feelings when you see that person or recall the incident.

3. "Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." (*1575) Children can be easily taught to act as peacemakers. They enjoy team activities and playing together.

Family peace can be enhanced by encouraging team spirit within the family. How do we practically achieve this team spirit? First, a team has a coach; parents need to take the role of an authoritative leader and show children the way. On page 941, *The Urantia Book* gives three causes of insubordination in today's youths. One is because the parents are absent from the family picture too much of the time, so the children have much difficulty gaining culture by imitating parents. Second is by overprotecting children, and hence they do not experience the natural consequences of their foolish behavior. The third has to do with the racial mixture.

Another way to enhance team spirit is through family meetings. In a family meeting, decisions affecting the family are made by consensus. Consequences for breaking the rules are agreed upon before the rule is broken. To gain more specific knowledge about family meetings, we suggest reading *Family Meetings* by Bob Slagle.

A third way to encourage team spirit is through play and humor. We need wholesome diversion, rest, entertainment, recreation, and competitive games to prevent boredom, which often results in children fighting. Also, we can take ourselves less seriously (*547) and laugh at our struggles more often.

4. "Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (*1575) Love can be a dangerous and semi-selfish trait in parents (*1922) which can add to insubordination in

children. And, too often, we punish children when we are angry. The most common word a child hears is NO.

This beatitude is reflected in a story Will Rogers once told: When he was sixteen years old, he thought his father was an idiot. When he was twenty-one years old, he thought his father was just a little dumb. By the time he was twenty-five, he figured he was somewhat smart. When Will had reached the age of thirty, he was certain his father was a genius.

Children often display anger toward each other and their parents. Family peace is greatly served if parents don't interfere in the petty quarrels of the children, and at the same time refrain from returning anger for anger. Instead, return a wise love.

We must be careful and not take ourselves too seriously. This can be helped by coming to terms with our disappointments by making fewer plans that concern others and by accepting our lot once we have done the best we can. In our quest for Havona, we become "disappointment proof." (*290)

I am intrigued by the dual relationship Jesus had with his natural brothers and sisters—as a brother and as a father. This is the same dual relationship he seems to have with all of us, as our creator and also as one with the Universal Father. In his early life on Urantia, Jesus experienced much mental distress—during the ages of twelve, thirteen, and fourteen—while trying to adjust his own views to the beliefs of his parents. (*1372-3) Family peace can be greatly fostered by allowing each member to have their own views, and by seeking a balance in your relationship with your children between being their parent, and being their brother/sister with our Universal Father.

Conclusion

Family peace is a humorous affair, of course, because it is something happening between the periods of conflict. Parents will serve this peace best by being an example of fatherly love while negotiating differences.

Thank you for sharing this time together.

Walking with Humankind

by Larry Mullins

They *always* forget to mention that I was mustered into the reserve corps at the age of eighteen. (It was the Marine Reserve Corps, but that was the best I could do.) Recently I was working on an evolution project with Jesusonian. I noticed that the Life Carriers had designated various ages with a descriptive term, such as the Age of Fishes or the Age of Ferns or whatever. Surely if the midwayers name this period of the Urantia movement it will be the Age of Missives.

Not Missiles—Missives!

I dearly hope that the celestial observers have a sense of humor. So many people are going to be first in the kingdom. So many reservists blowing their cover. I saw a T shirt today that said "Activated Reservist." Another said "Approach at Own Risk—I Am Nearing Fusion."

The kids are picking up this attitude, too. One little girl was drawing in the nursery and I asked her what her picture was. She said, "I am drawing a picture of God." I gently told her that no one really knew what God looked like. She replied, "Now they will."

I think we should pause to recall that Jesus washed the feet of his apostles to demonstrate leadership. Recently I saw a movie with a great leader in it. She was a very old lady. She stood among the elite of this planet; she was stooped and clothed in a faded blue sari and worn sandals. And she accepted an award from a king in a great hall of crystal and gilded glory.

The most brilliant people on the planet were there, the richest, the most elegant, talented and gifted looked on and politely applauded. And amid all the formal black and gorgeous gowns was the tiny figure of Mother Teresa, an impoverished nun, standing modestly in her sari and sandals.

What did this servant of the poor tell us? Mother Teresa said: "We can do no great things, we can only do ordinary things with great love." ... *We can do no great things, we can only do ordinary things with great love.*

I think Mother Teresa walks with God. And she shows us how.

Why should we seek to walk with God?

Because we were not designed to run as closed systems—we cannot function well without God's help. Closed systems are prone to suffer from decay within. We have seen evidence of this principle in recent events.

When I first became a member of the council, I was awed. But just as Harry Truman said he was awed by the Senate and wondered how he ever got there, after awhile he wondered how everyone else got there. I suggested in those naïve days that the council permit a representative from every society and even large study groups to at least sit in on our meetings. This alarmed everyone. (They'll find out what we are doing!)

I talked in Washington, D.C. several years ago and remember a big discussion about whether 533 should be called the "Soldiers of the Circles" or the "Servants of

the Circles." *Can you believe it?* I suggested they ought to be the *Servants of the Servants*. But nobody got it.

But we have grown a great deal since then. And now we can do things we could never do before. Wasn't that collection for books for Estonia incredible? Now we can move toward openness and democracy. We can invite people to see us deliberate and function. We can establish the means for more openness and more real participation.

Now let us talk about more important things. Let's talk about Walking with God.

The Urantia Book says we need more firsthand religion. I have only firsthand religion to offer today. I have no important theories. I told a wise man once that I felt I had made a terrible mess of my life. He replied that lives are like the history of a country. The United States, for example, has a terribly messy history. If it were someone's life, it would read like an unbearable tragedy. But in spite of all that, we have a great country. A country that hopefully has learned from its mistakes and follies. A country with a real chance to do great service for this planet. What is true of a country is also true of a human life. Our lives are vindicated not by their episodes but rather by what we become because of these episodes.

I believe I have learned a few lessons from my life.

Someone asked me why I called my talk "Walking with Humankind." I so named my talk because I have yet to learn how to do this. And I think we must learn to walk with each other before we presume to walk with the Creator.

Of course, I am not known for appropriate titles. When I was invited to speak at the symposium on "Discovering Your Inner Potentials" in Tennessee, the title of my talk was: "He Who Seeks to Find His Inner Potentials Shall Lose Them." I wasn't kidding. After years of studying self-actualizing theories I am convinced that real growth takes place when you are busy doing something else.

Most of us need to get off of the seat of our identity. Now about twenty years ago I did not believe this. In fact, it was over twenty years ago a man named Clyde Bedell handed me a large blue book. I was destined to work with Clyde and Barry for a couple of years. In the process I became aware of *The Urantia Book*.

But I did not believe this book. For ten years I read it and wanted it to go away. I could not quite get the nerve to simply dismiss it. It seemed to me rather sad that someone had gone to all this work and not included concepts like reincarnation. Also, it professed a very immature doctrine: the idea of a Father-God.

I was far beyond that. I was a big shot. I had a good job, drove a Mark IV, had a nice little wife and family and a girl friend. And, I had earned it. I had fought my way up from poverty—at least by American standards.

I had two beautiful girls, one thirteen and the other nine.

Then a nightmare began. This nightmare would become worse and worse and my arrogant philosophy would crumble before it. My thirteen-year-old, Vicki, suddenly got into drugs. The family went to pieces. Vicki, that perfect child, that wonderful artist had to go to the hospital, to the psychiatric ward. She was uncontrollable, sniffing aerosol substances among other things. Her mother virtually disowned Vicki, who was always my favorite, and I left the house.

I was putting my clothes in the car when the nine year old, Kathi, came to me and asked me what I was doing. "Oh, I'm just going on a little vacation," I said, "I'll be back." That lie was to torture me for years.

My plan was to take Vicki and begin a life somewhere else when she got well. I imagined that I was still in charge, still strong, still tough. Then one day I left the hospital after visiting Vicki. I waved to her as she stood there with her cowboy hat cocked to the side. And I walked down the hall unaware that I had seen Vicki alive on this planet for the last time.

The next day my wife called and said there was a problem at the hospital. When we arrived the psychiatrist met us at the door of the ward and told us: Vicki Mullins was dead. Vicki and another girl had been given a plastic bag by an attendant and left unsupervised for several hours. They sniffed deodorant. And now Vicki was dead.

I got through the funeral, but I was disintegrating, unraveling inside. The process was entropy—I was a closed system. I picked up my *Urantia Book* for some reason and I read it from cover to cover in the next few months. When I put the book down I believed it. And I begged God to help me. I wrote a long poem called "Penumbra" and the final lines were:

I realize now there is no master standing on the path.

I see only a terror-filled child who is too high up the mountain.

Who dares not descend

Who dares not go higher.

And now I hear the silent cry of his abandoned human heart.

"See me God? I am faithful.

Help your barefoot boy.

He is simply alone, that's all.

And he wants very much to come home.

I wish I could say that I became very spiritual and enlightened, but I did not. I did become involved with the *Urantia* study group in Tulsa. I did meet Berkeley Elliott and found a kind of second home and acceptance among Oklahoma City Urantians.

But there was no thunderbolt of insight, no great happening. The pain, the resentment, anger and guilt flourished in my heart. Within five years my first wife would be buried next to Vicki, her body riddled with cancer.

And my daughter Kathi would come to live with me and my new wife. Those were very unhappy years for all of us. But Kathi and I began to develop a relationship at last. And, instead of languishing in the guilt I felt for having left her I began to do something about it. I began to actually take some time and help her. Kathi was pronounced learning disabled at thirteen and barely graduated from high school.

But Kathi was a believer in the power of God. When the doctors said her mother would not last another week, Kathi prayed and believed her prayers gave her mother another six months of life.

Those six months permitted Kathi and myself to make amends to her mother and care for her. And Kathi believed God gave her mother a final two weeks of total rationality near the end so she could have her real mother back for just a little while. And Kathi believed that on the last day of her mother's life, when the nurse could find no vital signs and no pulse, that God gave her mother the strength to come back for a moment and answer Kathi's phone call and to tell her she loved her. And the instant her mother put the phone down she was dead.

Kathi believed that God could do anything. So Kathi decided to go to college. And she decided to study engineering. Now the dropout rate for engineers is about 95%.

It took Kathi a while, she quit for a couple of years to go on the road with a fundamentalist religious program as a dancer in a dramatization of the atonement doctrine. Then she went back to school and struggled with the incredibly difficult engineering program. Kathi calmly listened to God and trusted him. She did not give up.

And this May, Michelle and I proudly watched her graduate from Oklahoma University as an engineer. Kathi got special recognition because she had been elected president of the engineering club in her senior year. Kathi has landed a great job in Dallas. She is a beautiful woman, inside and out. Her mother is very proud, I am sure.

Kathi and God accomplished this. But let me give you a hint or two if you want to help your children. First, *tell them uplifting stories*. Children who hear stories from an adult they trust learn to set goals and overcome obstacles. Do as Jesus did: tell your children stories.

Second, *answer their questions carefully, and never give advice unless they ask for it*.

But now I want to tell you of another miracle. And I must backtrack to tell you of it.

Kathi's mother was still alive when our lawsuit against the hospital where Vicki died came to trial. It was an ordeal. And the hospital had two brilliant attorneys who managed to confuse things enough to defeat us. Big stories ran in the Tulsa paper. It was I who was guilty. My alternate oppressive controlling and wanton neglect of my family caused Vicki to turn to drugs and eventually to die. I went to work the next day in utter humiliation. Later one of the hospital attorneys was appointed a federal judge. The trial cost me all of my savings and put me into debt.

I tried to put all that behind me and began my own business.

Eventually I moved to Oklahoma City to be close to more of my Urantia friends and business associates. The next thing I knew I was in a bitter divorce that dragged on and on. The business went sour when the stock market crashed and I very nearly went bankrupt.

Harry McMullan had a nickname for me back then. It was based upon a little cartoon of a mangled dog that said: "Lost: Little dog, one eye, most of his hair has been burnt off, three legs, and his tail has been cut off. Answers to the name of Lucky."

But, you know, I really was lucky. I was to find out that God did not need my poems or writing or things I tried to do for the Urantia movement. I was fortunate enough to discover that he wanted me. That was all. Without me nothing I did for him mattered. God wants us first of all and primarily, not our works.

So it was that *apparent circumstance* was to allure me into a program, an organization that must remain anonymous. It is a program that has twelve steps in it.

One of those steps requires the reciting of all the wrongs we have inflicted and all the resentments we carry against others.

This soul baring must be done to another human being. I wanted a total stranger to talk to, so I arranged through an individual in the program to talk to someone I had never met in Tulsa. Berkeley Elliott and Susan Cook went with me to Tulsa, but I was to learn that there was another presence with me that day. By chance we listened to a tape in which the speaker declared that we could not prove the existence of God, but we could set up the circumstances by which God could prove his existence to us.

We drove past St. Francis, the huge hospital in Tulsa where Vicki had died, and the anger rose in me as I thought "That's where they killed my little girl."

When I was finally alone with the man who was to listen to my confession, it was early afternoon. He was a retired doctor with a very nice house. I told him I had a fourteen-year-old resentment that I had that even God could not remove.

I told him the story of Vicki and the terrible aftermath. His face grew pale. I thought his concern was because he had no ready cliché or soothing words that could heal my heart. But when I finished the story he looked at me for minutes with deep sad eyes and I will never, never forget his words: "You know, there is no place on earth you should be today but here, and no one you should be talking to but me." I asked why.

He said: "I am the doctor who led the team that tried to save Vicki's life that night. I'll never forget her. I thought we had succeeded in saving her, but then her heart went into fibrillations and she slipped away. For months I searched my soul and asked myself if anything could have been done. I can assure you that we did everything, we did our very best. I am glad to tell you this at last face to face."

We held hands for a long time after that. I don't remember what we said.

But I do remember driving back to Oklahoma City with Susan and Berkeley and when we passed St. Francis hospital I thought: "That is where they tried to save my daughter's life." These two dear friends listened to my story with awe. And God put his hand upon my shoulder and said to me in the silence of my heart, "Arise now my son and walk with me."

That command I hope someday to be able to fulfill.

I wish I could say that my life became a wonderful spiritual flow after that, but it did not. I was only at a starting point. I had to grieve Vicki's death. I had to grieve the death of my first wife. And then I had to sacrifice the soap opera I had been living all my life. But I was at a starting point at last.

In most lives this crisis occurs, this starting point. Usually it is later in life. I recently read a book called *Flow* in which the author likened this realization to having a dinner in a nice restaurant when the waiters begin to suddenly clear the tables and put the chairs atop them. One day we look in the mirror and realize the party is winding down. And we think, "Wait a minute. I'm not finished. Where is all the money I was supposed to make? Where are all the great things I was supposed to do?"

The first thing I learned was that we cannot do great things, but we can do ordinary things with great love. And the next thing I learned destroyed my soap opera: *we create our own experience. We create our own experience.*

This ability is the key to the never ending process of spiritual transformation. It is this ability that gives the believer dominion over the kingdom of the mind. *We create our own experience.*

Thus it was that Lou Gehrig, barely able to stand on his wasted legs, his life and career curtailed by multiple sclerosis, could tell a crowd at Yankee Stadium: "There are those who say I got a bad break. But I can tell you today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

And thus Saul of Tarsus would fall to his knees on the road to Damascus and sway in the dust with blinded eyes, and then rise again to walk with God as Paul.

And, yes, Wilma Rudolph, born with afflicted legs and confined to braces, would discard those braces and learn to walk. And then to play basketball. And then to run. And then to make the olympic team and to win a bronze medal. But she would return again and win three gold medals because Wilma Rudolph created experiences that empowered her.

Adversity? How about Viktor Frankl, who made two momentous decisions standing in the freezing rain at Dachau at three in the morning. Frankl was in a Nazi death camp, and his odds of surviving were very small. His family was gone—dead. And his belongings and his business and his home were all gone.

Frankl realized that he had a single dignity left—one that no being in the universe could abridge. He had the right to choose his own attitude toward the situation he was in. And with this decision came a vision of himself in a comfortable auditorium telling his experiences at Dachau. This vision sustained him.

Frankl knew he would have to survive to make his dream come true. He thought of others who had given up and died. In each case they began to say the same thing: "Life has nothing to offer me anymore. There is no meaning to it." Frankl's second decision was based upon another insight. He decided that the question: "What is the meaning of Life?" is not a question we should ask. It is a question that *life asks of us*. We must answer it. He decided that his death camp experience would have profound meaning.

Viktor Frankl began to create a positive experience for himself. He began to walk with God. Where some saw only brutality and terror, Frankl saw nobility and selflessness. He saw people with one crust of bread share it with others. He chose to love his captors.

So our ultimate human dignity is our right to create our own experience. And the ultimate question is asked by life of us. Life asks us, "What is the meaning of life?" And we live our answer day by day.

C.S. Lewis said that if you seek peace, you will find neither truth nor peace, but if you seek truth you will find truth and peace.

We learn to walk with God by learning to walk with humankind. This I am trying to begin to learn to do. At last. I watch the few Urantians like Susan Cook who work with ordinary people—people no one else wants. These Urantians work without recognition. And their victories are ordinary. Simple victories like learning to love one more person each day. Not great things, but ordinary things done with great love.

We here are at a starting point. *We have an opportunity to serve humankind*. We have an opportunity to do some ordinary things with great love.

Yes, I know these are wondrous days here at Snowmass, days we shall not forget. Let's go back and tell people what happened here.

In the musical play *Camelot* there is a scene that was a favorite of John F. Kennedy's. The last time I mentioned it was at the World Peace conference Oklahoma City presented at Lake Murray a few years ago. In this play King Arthur sees the destruction of his beloved Camelot. He is forced to go to war with those he loves. Just before the battle a young boy appears and tells Arthur he wants to be a knight, he wants to fight. "And what do you know of Knighthood?" "Oh, everything. I know the stories people tell." "From the stories people tell, you want to be a knight?"

Arthur commands the boy: "You will not fight in the battle. You will hide behind the lines and when it is over you will return home to England alive—to grow up and grow old. And you will do as I the King command you:

"Each evening from December to December,
Before you drift to sleep upon your cot,
Think back on all the tales that you remember,
of Camelot.

"Ask every person if he's heard the story,
And tell it strong and clear if he has not,
That once there was a fleeting wisp of glory,
called Camelot.

"Now say it out with love and joy:

"Camelot! Camelot!"

Yes, Camelot, my boy.

Where the rain it never fell till after sundown.

By eight AM the morning fog had flown.

Don't let it be forgot,

That once there was a spot,

For one brief shining moment,

That was known as Camelot!"

Let us remember these bright and shining days. They foretaste light and life. They are a prelude to what ought to be, what will be one day.

I have long believed that the reason we have two brains is that one brain is to see things the way they are, to see the *facts*, so to speak. The other brain sees things the way they ought to be. And between these two perceptions we are empowered to bring into being God's glorious patterns—his will.

So perhaps Don Quixote was not so mad after all.

He roamed the parched lands of Spain seeing only good. He was obviously mad and a doctor and a priest were sent to bring him back home to his embarrassed family. In the ensuing discussion the doctor admonishes Quixote: "You must come to terms with life as it is." Quixote's reply is unforgettable:

I have lived nearly fifty years, and I have seen life as it is. Misery, pain, hunger—cruelty beyond belief. I have heard the singing from taverns and the moans from bundles of filth in the streets. I have been a soldier and seen my comrades fall in battle or die more slowly under the lash in Africa. I have held them in my arms at the final moment. These were men who saw life as it is, and yet they died despairing. No brave last words, no gallant sayings. Only in their eyes a confusion, and whimpering the question: "WHY?" I do not think they asked why they were dying, but why they had lived.

When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies? Too much sanity may be madness. To surrender dreams, this may be madness. To seek treasure where there is only trash. But maddest of all—to see life as it is, and not as it ought to be!"

It is not an issue of a Book, but an issue of a task that has not yet been completed. It was begun billions of years ago, and it was carried forth on the hot and dusty roads of Israel. It was a task that was pushed forward on a terrible hill called Golgotha. And now this task is in our hands.

It is not an issue of who owns the Circles. It is not an issue of who will feed the flock, but rather who will serve the flock. Perhaps Jesus would tell this generation today: "Serve my flock."

One final bit of advice, not from Goethe or Dante, but from a contemporary book called *All I Ever Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*:

When you go out in the world watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.

Be aware of wonder.

Now we must leave Snowmass. Let's hold hands and stick together.

At the end of Camelot, King Arthur knights the little boy and a general approached him. "What are you doing Arthur? You have a battle to fight!" Arthur replies, "I have won my battle! And here is my victory! What we did will be remembered." And off scampers the little boy.

The general asked Arthur: "Who was that?" And

Arthur says: "One of what we all are. Less than a drop in the great blue motion of the sunlit sea. But it seems that some of the drops sparkle! Some of them do sparkle!"

Let us go now and sparkle the best we can. Let us go out and create our own experience. Let us answer the question with elegance and grace: *What is the meaning of life?*

Above all, let us learn to serve, to do ordinary things with great love. Dear God, please teach us to do ordinary things with great love.

God bless all of you. I love all of you.

Via con Dios—walk with God.