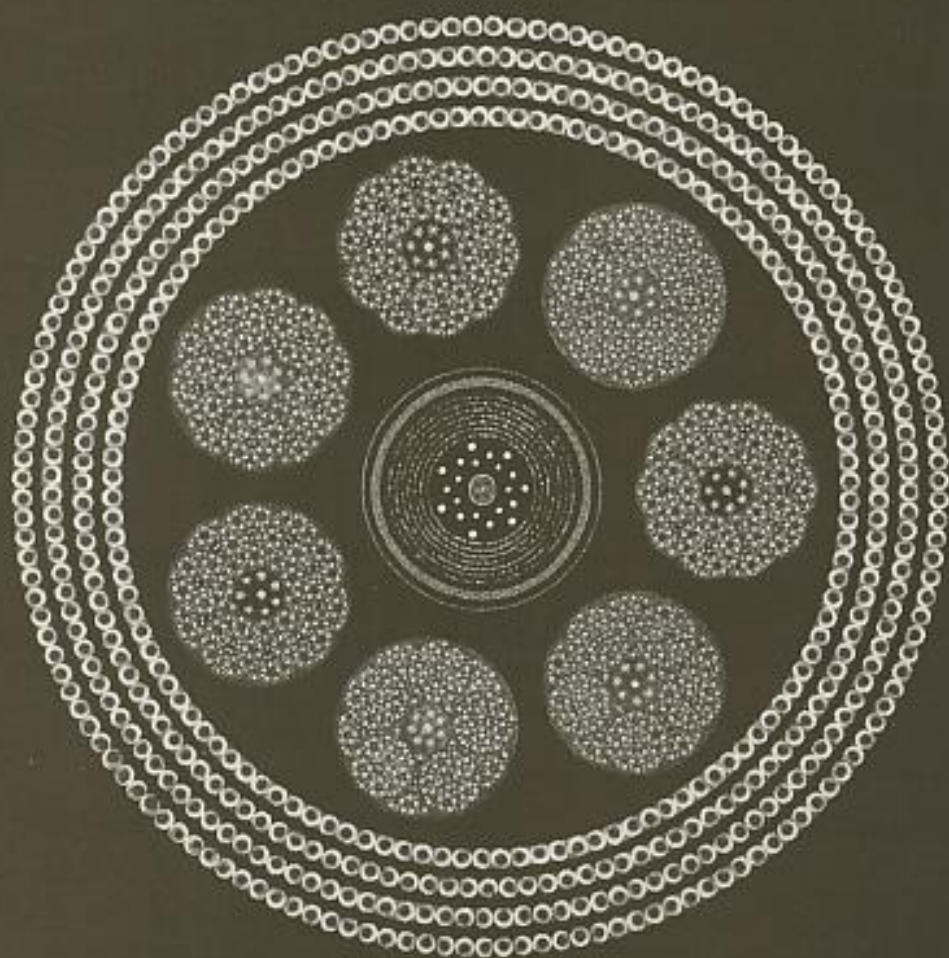


The Journal of the Fellowship

Summer, 1994
Volume 18, Number 2



The Master Universe

The Journal

The Journal is a literary and artistic as well as a philosophical and investigative publication for readers of *The Urantia Book*. It publishes works of excellence related to the teachings of *The Urantia Book* and chosen from submissions of readers throughout the world. Both content and quality are considered by editors in choosing what to publish in *The Journal*.

The publication includes poems, artwork, photography, essays, and other forms of prose, including fiction. Non-fiction may include philosophical essays, scientific articles, and speculative pieces based on issues in *The Urantia Book*.

The artwork or photography chosen for the cover of each issue must be of exceptionally high quality due to its prominence. Cover art is currently sought for the next issue.

Submitting Material

Everyone is invited to submit work to be considered for publication. But we ask that you send only a few of your best poems or a related series of poems rather than a book of many poems. Shorter essays have the best chance to get in. And it is better to send a high-quality photograph of your artwork or a camera-ready copy of your photoart that does not need to be returned. Of course, if original artwork must be sent directly to us, we will return it, though it is still preferable at least to send a photograph first to help the decision as to whether it will be published.

The Journal

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Cover Artwork:

This unique work was created by the Silent Artists. Through art, this group of artists is dedicated to achieving a greater understanding of who and what we are relative to the universe. It represents the entire universe as described in *The Urantia Book* published by the Urantia Foundation located in Chicago, IL. This unique perspective on religion, philosophy and science has inspired the Silent Artists to undertake this one-of-a-kind endeavor. The painting came to fruition through the skills and effort of some 25 individual artists. This project is dedicated to the readers of *The Urantia Book*.

Poem for Two Friends

Byron Belitsos

*Am I this child,
the child that is running to my arms,
weary, with longing eyes?
Is that the child that I was?
Or are we three this same child,
running toward each other
wanting the love that we partake
as children of God,
running to the arms of God?
Can we hold each other's hands
in a ring of delight?
Can we dance like friends
in a festival of learning
where wisdom is the invited guest?
—where the gushing wine of passion
becomes the flowing river of knowledge?
When else did nothing
become something
in the hands of friendship?
When, if not now,
did the cup of honesty
overflow with gentleness?
Are those who mourn most
not those to be most comforted?*

Insights Related to Historic Religious Conflict

Meredith J. Sprunger

Delivered April 27, 1994 at a First Society Miniconference, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

In order to understand the origins of religious conflict, we must realize that every individual has a unique mind, personality, and religious experience. When these complex individuals in various geographic centers interassociate in their religious experience, each group evolves a different social expression of their religious experience. These characteristics of human nature make diversity and conflict inevitable in all social relationships. Since religion deals with the central values in human experience, religious conflict is charged with great importance and emotion.

An Overview of Religious Conflict

It may be helpful to take a bird's-eye view of the major conflicts in world religions. Hinduism, the oldest of the world religions, has experienced many reform movements. Mahavira, the son of a Hindu rajah, protested against the domineering Brahman priesthood and bloody animal sacrifices. His efforts resulted in little change in Hinduism, but started another religion, Jainism. Gautama Buddha, another Hindu prince, rejected the hereditary caste system and the excessive ceremonialism of Hinduism. The older religion did not change much, but Gautama's efforts founded another religion, Buddhism. Nanak, a second-caste Hindu, preached tolerance between Hindus and Muslims, declaring that both worshiped the same God. His efforts did not bring much tolerance between the two religions but did start a new religion, Sikhism. Dozens of other prophets have attempted to modernize Hinduism, which has resulted in significant evolutionary changes.

These new religions founded in India were also divided by conflict. Jainism witnessed a struggle between the White-clad sect in the north who wore clothes and the Sky-clad sect in the south who wore no clothes. In Buddhism there was a struggle between the followers of the Lesser Vehicle, Hinayana Buddhism, who had an atheistic religion, and the devotees of the Greater Vehicle, Mahayana Buddhism, who regarded Buddha as a divine savior. Sikhism is divided between the Quietistic Group who follow Nanak and the Militaristic Group who follow the tenth Guru, Govind Singh.

In China Confucianism was opposed by Taoism. In Japan Shintoism is divided by Sectarian Shinto, which is a religion, and State Shintoism, which is a patriotic cult. Judaism is segregated into three groups: Orthodox Judaism, Conservative Judaism, and Reformed Judaism. In Islam we have the orthodox, traditional Sunnis, the

Shiites, who follow Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, the Sufis, who are mystics, and the Baha'i, which was founded by the Bab, who claimed to be the twelfth descendent or Iman of Ali, and his disciple, Bahauallah. Baha'i has become an independent religion. Christianity, as you know, is divided into hundreds of divisions and sects. This brief and oversimplified survey of religious conflict and division in the world's religions illustrates the basic divisiveness of evolutionary religion.

Historic Christian Conflicts

Conflicts are indigenous and pervasive in the social expression of religion. It may be instructive to examine some of the major conflicts in the history of Christianity.

1. *The Apostles of John and the Apostles of Jesus.* The most serious disagreement between the apostles of John and Jesus was the place of baptism in the new teachings. The acceptance of baptism was the price which the followers of Jesus were required to make in order to win the loyalty of the followers of John. A secondary question centered around the priority of repentance and belief.

These characteristics of human nature make diversity and conflict inevitable in all social relationships.

"John's apostles preached, 'Repent and be baptized.' Jesus' apostles proclaimed, 'Believe and be baptized.'" (1625)

2. *Abner and Paul, et al.* There was a traditional antipathy between the Jews in Jerusalem and the Jews of Philadelphia. Abner disagreed with Peter and James over the administration of the Jerusalem church, and he parted company with Paul over differences in philosophy and theology. "Abner was more Babylonian than Hellenic in his philosophy, and he stubbornly resisted all attempts of Paul to remake the teachings of Jesus so as to present less that was objectionable, first to the Jews, then to the Greco-Roman believers in the mysteries.... In his last years Abner denounced Paul as the 'clever corrupter of the life teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the living God.'" (1831-2)

3. *Mithraism and Christianity.* During the third century A.D., Mithraic and Christian churches were in close competition. They were very similar in appearance and ritual, although Mithraism encouraged militarism and early Christianity was ultrapacific. The triumph of Christianity over the mystery cults was due to Paul and his successors' organizational ability and willingness to

make compromises with Mithraism, such as accepting the birth date of Mithras as the birth date of Jesus, and the admission of women as full members in the Christian church.

4. *Gnosticism*. Gnosticism was a pre-Christian syncretistic mysticism. The Gnostics believed in a "special" source of knowledge. They denied the real humanity and actual death of Jesus. Jesus' body only appeared to be material—a view known as *docetism*. Gnostics taught the dichotomy of matter and spirit; matter is evil and spirit is good.

5. *Marcion (Scripture)*. Marcion was one of the first church reformers. He protested legalism in the church, rejected the Old Testament and its God, and proposed a list of truly Christian writings to be canonized. Marcion was excommunicated in 144 A.D. and started his own church. His reform movement was largely responsible for the emergence of the Christian canon of scriptures and a united Catholic Church.

The triumph of Christianity over the mystery cults was due to Paul and his successors' organizational ability and willingness to make compromises with Mithraism...

6. *Montanism (Channeling)*. Montanus proclaimed himself an instrument through which the Holy Spirit spoke and declared the beginning of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. People claiming to be new mouthpieces of the Spirit announced themselves and declared the end of the world was at hand. They protested the worldliness of the church and promoted asceticism, which was later carried on in the monasticism of the Middle Ages. They were condemned by synods in Asia Minor around 160 A.D. but troubled the church for a long period of time.

7. *Arian Controversy (Christology)*. Arius believed Christ was a lower God—not one with the Father in essence. He thought that Jesus was neither fully God nor fully man, but a substance in between. A church council assembled in Nicaea in 325 declared that Christ was one of essence with the Father. The dispute continued for more than a half century. A council met in Jerusalem in 335 and voted to restore Arius to full church membership, but before the formal ceremony could take place Arius died suddenly. The bitter dispute continued for decades. A church council met at Chalcedon in 451 and adopted a new creed which has ever since been regarded as the orthodox solution to the Christological problem. The *Chalcedon* creed declares that our Lord Jesus Christ is "truly God and truly man...consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the manhood...in two

natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably, the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one person and one subsistence."

8. *Pelagian Controversy (Original Sin and Free Will)*. Pelagius believed in the freedom of the human will and denied any original sin inherited from Adam and Eve. Augustine believed humanity was contaminated by original sin, that he had been saved by irresistible grace and predestination from sin which he could never have overcome by his own strength.

A church council met at Carthage in 418 and decided that Adam became mortal by sin and passed this sin on to his progeny. Children should be baptized for the remission of original sin, and grace was necessary for right living.

A synod met at Orange in 529 and adopted a *Semi-Pelagian* position. They affirmed that humanity is under original sin and stressed the importance of grace, but rejected predestination. In spite of original sin, humankind has freedom of will.

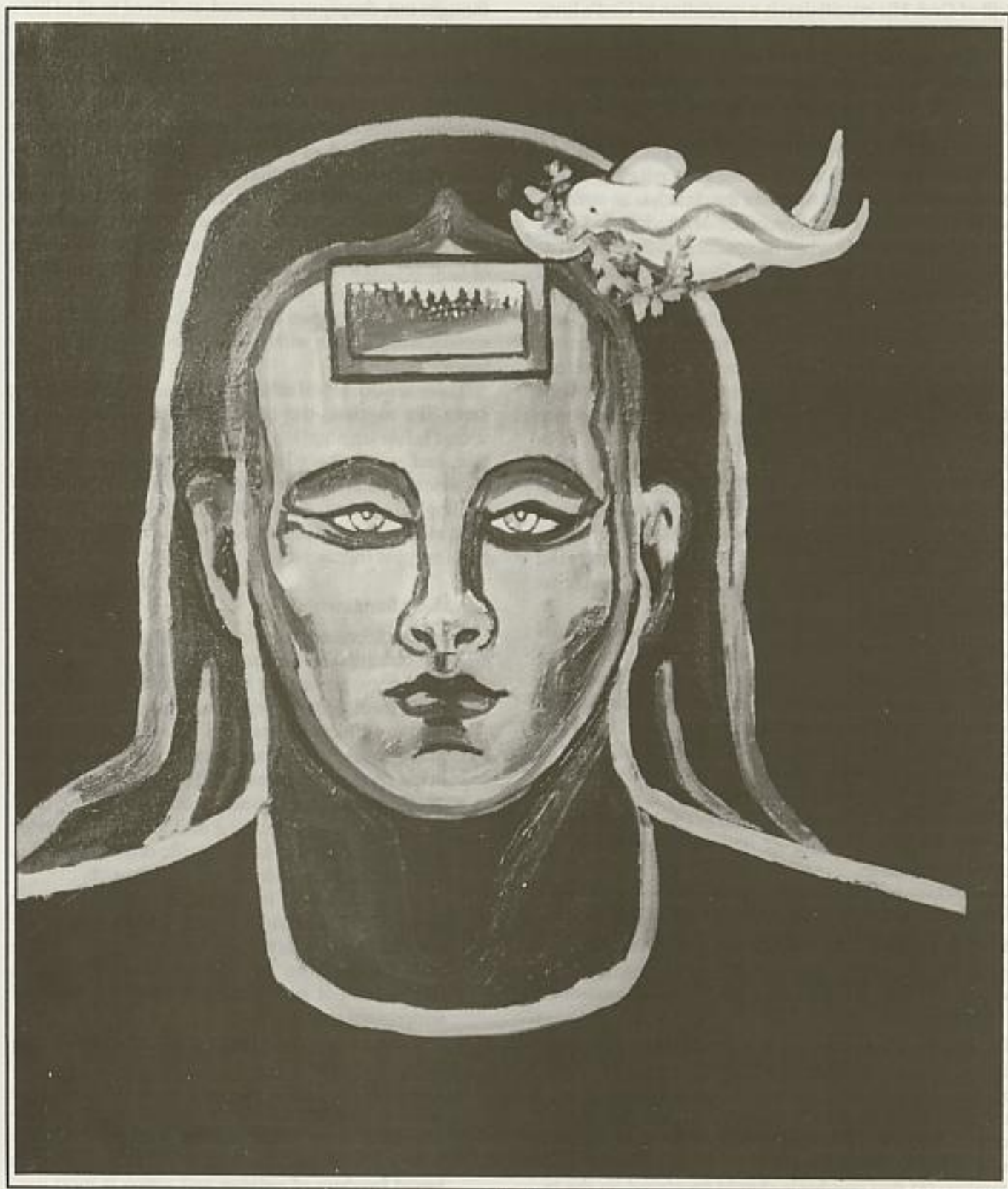
This issue appeared again in the Reformation period under the title of *socinianism*. Socinus (Sozzini) and his Protestant followers asserted that human beings have free will and rejected original sin and predestination. Another form of this controversy in the Reformation period is known as *Arminianism*. Arminius and his followers protested against the Calvinistic doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace. They held that divine foreknowledge enables God to foresee what human beings will do, but God's foreknowledge does not foreordain or predestine that choice. Humankind has true freedom of choice.

9. *Atonement Controversy*. The historic atonement controversies, as one would suppose, tend to parallel the original sin and free-will controversies.

The Anselmic or Satisfaction Theory. This theory maintains that the necessity of the atonement is grounded in the holiness of God. Adam and his progeny's sin against an infinite being requires infinite punishment. Such punishment to satisfy the divine holiness is only possible for a God-man, Christ. Christ is humanity's substitute satisfying divine justice and holiness. We are saved by accepting what Christ has done on our behalf.

The Socinian or Loving Example Theory. This theory holds that willful human sinfulness is the only barrier between humanity and God. God does not need to be reconciled or appeased, only man needs to change through repentance and reformation. Christ saves and inspires us through his noble example of loyalty to the

(Continued on page 6)



Noah
from Swedenborg Urantia
Artist: Packy Eckola

will of God. His crucifixion is a revelation of God's love. God's love supersedes God's holiness.

There are many other atonement theories, but all can be classified basically under one of the above theories.

10. *The Reformation Controversy and Broad Theological Positions:*

Roman Catholicism.—The Roman Catholic Church holds the conviction that it is the true religion whose dogma is infallible, and therefore the church is an authoritative body demanding obedience of officials and laity. The Pope is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*—as the representative of Christ on earth. The church claims that it is one in doctrine, authority, and worship; it is holy in observing God's will, universal in its constituency, and apostolic in its ancestry. Through its seven sacraments it provides grace. The Mass is the central act of worship.

Protestantism.—While agreeing at many points with Roman Catholicism, Protestants believe their views are closer to New Testament Christianity. In contrast with the Roman Church, they hold four distinctive convictions: (1) the sense of immediacy in the relationship between God and man; (2) the concept of the universal priesthood of believers; (3) use of the Bible as the "Word of God"; and (4) belief that God works through the natural relations of human experience, rather than in rites and dogmas.

Fundamentalism.—Reaction against the changes brought about in the church by modern science and new fields of study, such as biblical criticism and comparative religion, was initiated when a series of pamphlets entitled, *The Fundamentals*, began to appear in 1909. Fundamentalists stress five doctrines: (1) the infallibility or inerrancy of the Bible; (2) the deity of Christ and the virgin birth; (3) belief in a substitutionary atonement; (4) the physical or bodily resurrection of Christ; and (5) the bodily Second Coming of Christ to establish his kingdom on earth.

The greatest degree of unity and cooperation is achieved when ideals, purposes, and goals are emphasized rather than theological agreement or polity conformity.

Liberal Christianity.—While there is no set of doctrines that can be called the tenets of many mainline Christians, there are positions which they are likely to emphasize. They believe: (1) that Christianity is a dynamic and growing religion; (2) that revelation is progressive and continuous; (3) that God is personal and one with whom humankind may have fellowship and communion; (4) that emphasis should be placed on the inherent worth and dignity of human beings as children of God; and (5) that the struggle against evil is both personal and social. Religious faith must be carefully

thought out, deeply experienced, and lived in all of life's relationships.

Neoorthodoxy.—A mainline theological movement which has been critical of both fundamentalism and religious liberalism, known as Neoorthodoxy or crisis theology, subscribes to the following beliefs: (1) the Bible is the Word of God, as interpreted by literary and historical criticism; (2) revelation is the primary source of Christian faith—faith has priority over reason; and (3) the transcendence and sovereignty of God has priority over God's immanence—our most reliable knowledge of God is God's self-revelation in Christ. They emphasize human sinfulness, especially pride and idolatry. Crisis theology stresses the tragic alternatives of life. In society, compromise with evil appears necessary. Justice is always relative.

There are dozens of other religious conflicts covering areas like baptism, the Lord's Supper, salvation, hell, sexual behavior, abortion, political involvement and action, and war. But we have probably sampled enough historic religious conflict to get a feel for the dynamics of theological, ethical, and polity disagreements. As we look at these disagreements, a number of generalizations suggest themselves.

Summary Statements

Conflict, differences of opinion, is a constant and characteristic condition in all social religious relationships.

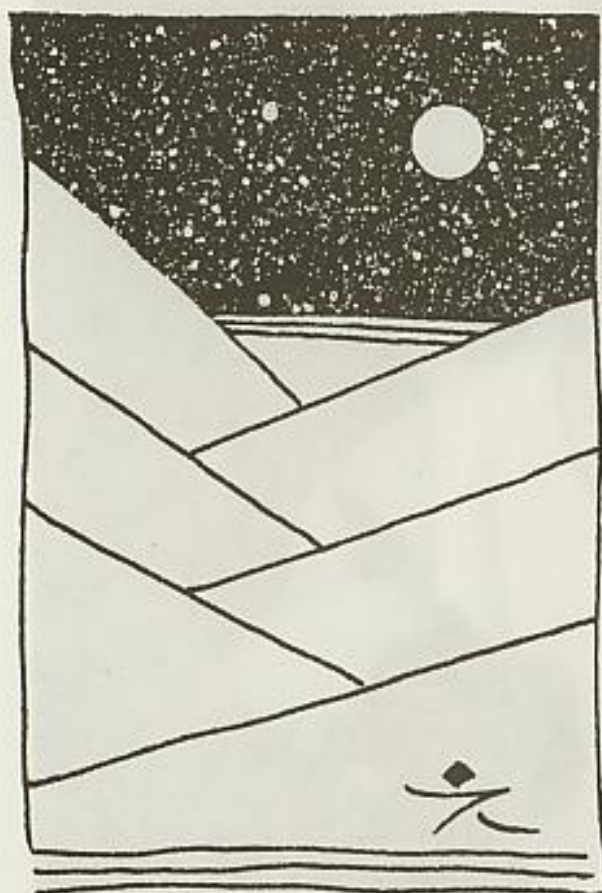
- Authority, power, or majority opinion does not settle theological or organizational differences, but it is an effective means of social control. Often power and control are more important to participants than the theological issues.
- Authoritarian, fundamentalistic, literalistic, and simplistic thought guiding attitudes and behavior may facilitate short-term specific objectives, but is detrimental to long-term spiritual growth.
- Truth is dialectical in nature. When extremes are emphasized, divisions occur. Consensus rather than authority or arbitrary majority coercion is the best atmosphere in which understanding is facilitated, but such dialogue usually slows and temporizes group action.
- The same basic truth issues tend to be raised century after century.
- The greatest degree of unity and cooperation is achieved when ideals, purposes, and goals are emphasized rather than theological agreement or polity conformity. Theological balance along with broad freedom of opinion and action is most conducive to constructive relationships.

The conflicts of evolutionary religion are most effectively transcended by epochal revelation. □



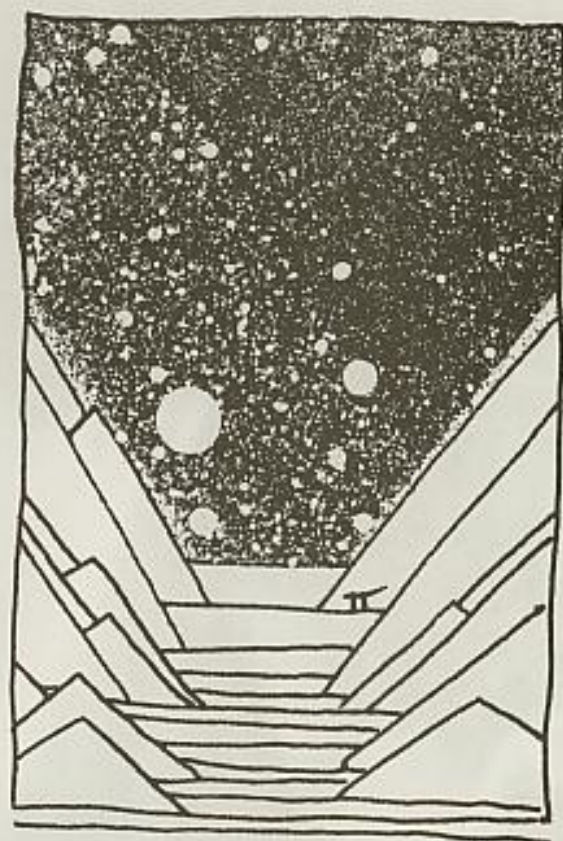
Photo by Mary Rector

COME
AN R TOON



1 *[Handwritten signature]*

Flee with me
and freely be
a song
upon the night . . .



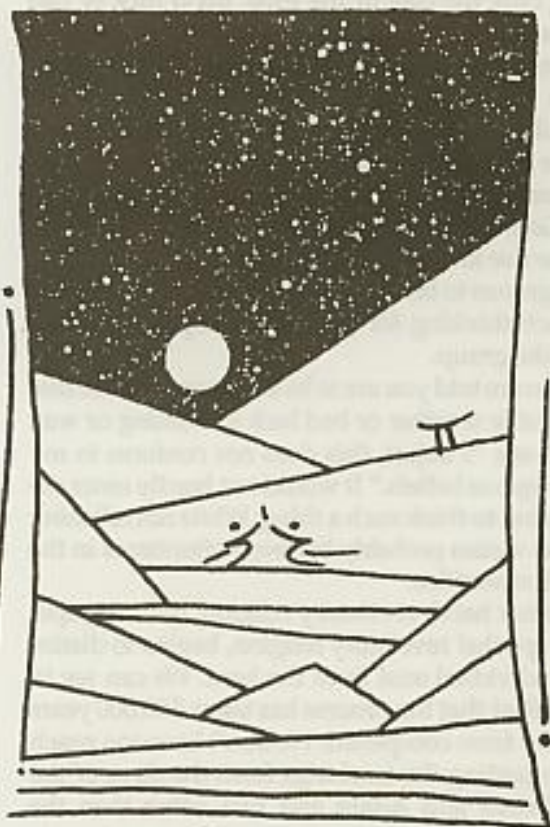
2 *[Handwritten signature]*

Gift your secret
sacred self
with reverie
and flight . . .

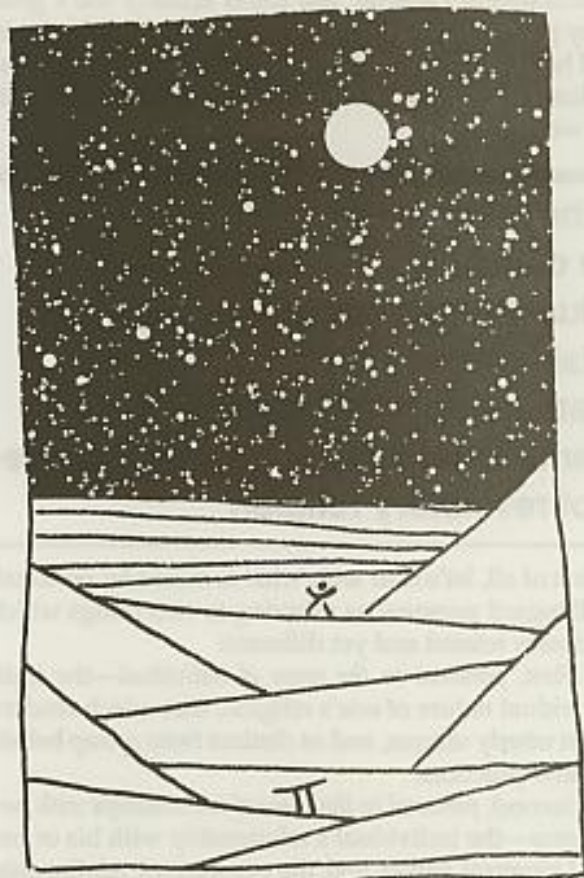
Origin of Personal Religion

by Mark Kallala

Delivered June 28, 1992 at Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois



3



4

Quick!
Take time away from time
to touch
your transcending spark . . .

**Take time
and time again
to treat
your wondering heart.**

The above "R Tbon" is by Richard Preiss.

Origin of Personal Religion

by Mark Kulieke

Delivered June 28, 1992 at Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois

The subject for the day concerns the origin of personal religion and will involve a focus on Papers 158 through 167. This means starting with "The Mount of Transfiguration" and going through "The Visit to Philadelphia," which takes us up to just prior to the resurrection of Lazarus. You could actually use a great many papers in *The Urantia Book* in support of this topic, but I have limited myself to examples from these papers to illustrate my main points in keeping with the plan of this workshop.

“

...the personal element of religion, the concept of the value of the individual human will creature and the establishment of that creature's relationship with his or her creator, seems to be a product almost entirely of revelatory religion

First of all, let's deal with what is meant by personal. I will regard personal as referring to two things which are closely related and yet different:

- First, *personal in the sense of individual*—the individual nature of one's religion, that which renders it utterly unique, and as distinct from group beliefs and practices.
- Second, *personal in the sense of relationships with persons*—the individual's relationship with his or her Universal Father and the consequent relationship of the brotherhood of man and cosmic citizenship—the relationship of the individual to all other creators and creatures.

I think the first thing that I see is that the personal element of religion, the concept of the value of the individual human will creature and the establishment of that creature's relationship with his or her creator, seems to be a product almost entirely of revelatory religion—not of evolutionary, meaning man-made religion. Now, of course, revelatory and evolutionary religion are heavily admixed and have been for a long time. But to me, the indications are that primitive evolutionary religion is almost exclusively concerned with the good of the whole. Evolutionary religion seems to embrace and

foster group beliefs and practices. Propitiation of the gods is a group matter. Taboos and fetishistic practices, development of mores and morals were all group matters. After all, since social and political units were small, embracing only the clan or the tribe, good luck or bad luck often affected the whole group, so doing something about it was a group matter. And acting in this manner was also a means of control. It was the main form of social regulation. The individual is sacrificed for the good of the many. It is evolutionary religion that develops shamans and priesthoods—the middlemen between men and God. Variation from the norm seems to result in either the rise to shaman or to ostracism or death. It is highly dangerous to be different. You aren't supposed to do too much thinking for yourself in coping with the matters of the group.

When you are told you are to be a human sacrifice due to the miserable weather or bad luck in hunting or war, you do not say, "I object, this does not conform to my personal religious beliefs." It would not hardly enter the primitive mind to think such a thing. While not relishing the idea, the victim probably believed oftentimes in the efficacy of the sacrifice.

On the other hand, revelatory religion, referring specifically to epochal revelatory religion, begins to distinguish the individual soul from the herd. We can see in *The Urantia Book* that the process has taken 500,000 years and is still far from completed. We don't have too much evidence regarding the teachings from the days of the Planetary Prince and Adam and Eve, other than the indication that the morality of seven commandments was taught. These commandments seem to concern personal human conduct and thus begin the process of personalization of religious experience.

“

We can see in *The Urantia Book* that the process has taken 500,000 years and is still far from completed.

We have some greater implication of a personal element in the teachings of Melchizedek in that salvation by faith is taught and faith seems to us an individual matter. However, the various cultures didn't get the point entirely. In those days, faith itself seems to have been often viewed as a group matter. Consider the many

Old Testament writings where God punished the entire race or people, usually the Hebrew people, because of the reversion to heathen practices on the part of only some, because certain ones broke the covenant. In those days, the whole group still stands or falls together much of the time, with a few exceptions. In any event, Melchizedek's real focus was on monotheism—preparing the way for Jesus. So it is not until the fourth and fifth epochal revelations that the theme of the personal nature of religion really comes to the fore, really becomes prominent. Think of it: Mortals have been around for 994,000 years and we're just beginning to get the picture about personal religion in the last 2000. It is said on page 2092 that "Jesus founded the religion of personal experience in doing the will of God and serving the human brotherhood...." We see Jesus teaching sonship with God and that he many times told his followers that "the kingdom of God is within you." And on page 2084, it is said: "'The kingdom of God is within you' was probably the greatest pronouncement Jesus ever made...."

On page 1862 of *The Urantia Book*, it says that:

"The religion of the kingdom is personal, individual; the fruits, the results are familiar, social. Jesus never failed to exalt the sacredness of the individual as contrasted with the community. But he also recognized that man develops his character by unselfish service; that he unfolds his moral nature in loving relationship with his fellows."

Mortals have been around for 994,000 years and we're just beginning to get the picture about personal religion in the last 2000.

"By teaching that the kingdom is within, by exalting the individual, Jesus struck the deathblow of the old society in that he ushered in the new dispensation of true social righteousness. This new order of society the world has little known because it has refused to practice the principles of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. And when this kingdom of spiritual pre-eminence does come upon the earth, it will not be manifested in mere improved social and material conditions, but rather in the glories of those enhanced and enriched spiritual values which are characteristic of the approaching age of improved human relations and advancing spiritual attainments."

Let's take a brief look at some of the personal elements of Jesus, his religion and his teachings in Papers

158-168 as I think they may relate to the subject. As we do this, let's bear in mind a very important underlying truth: Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. What does that mean to the subject at hand? It means that on the one hand, Jesus lived and taught a personal religious perspective as a man among men. But being divine, we are also getting a very thorough glimpse of the personal response of God and all his dominion—the superhuman family of ministers to the mortals of time and space. Jesus, as he responds to various individuals, groups and situations, mirrors God himself. In Jesus, we are seeing God in action. I will talk about this further as we go on.

In Jesus, we are seeing God in action.

I want to focus on a handful of the experiences which occur in Papers 158-168. They are illustrations and there are many others in the book. But even in these ten papers, there are many remarkable things, sufficient to provide a good study of God and man.

Jesus routinely personalized his teachings to the individual or group before him. He also helps to provide a diversity of personal experiences. In "The Mount of Transfiguration," he chooses certain apostles to share in the experience of the transfiguration, while others remain behind. Later, because the apostles comprehend his status as a son of God, Jesus frankly tells them what will befall him in the days to come—again the message is personalized to his audience and is given when they are reasonably prepared to hear it.

In Paper 159, "The Decapolis Tour," Jesus has a significant meeting with Nathaniel where he imported much of the truth about the Scriptures to this apostle alone. It was not infrequently that Jesus shared more with Nathaniel than others of the apostles. In Paper 167, "The Visit to Philadelphia," Jesus reveals much about angels to Nathaniel. In each case, it appears to be because Nathaniel was interested and had the capacity to appreciate the answer. It is an illustration of the parable: "To him who has much, more is given."

This makes it a little more difficult to comprehend why in Paper 160, "Rodan of Alexandria," a very different outcome results. Jesus declined to enter into a conference with Rodan and turned the matter over to two apostles. And yet Rodan was such an advanced and accomplished individual, to all appearances the equal of Nathaniel, and someone who could and did become a leader in the years to follow. What was different here? Perhaps the difference is that Rodan had the capacity to work out the intellectual/spiritual problems which he had identified without recourse to specialized instruc-

tion from Jesus. He did not really require Jesus' assistance. Perhaps he had already attained some sort of maximum limit beyond which Jesus would not go. Or it could be that his own discovery of some truths would be more rewarding than being handed them. And Nathaniel and Thomas no doubt benefitted much from attempting to match wits with Rodan. The bottom line is that Jesus had another unique response to a unique individual.

66

Jesus is consistent, but not predictable.

Rodan himself stands as a superlative example of how far an individual mortal can develop essentially on his own. He had a philosophy and art of living which would be advanced in our own time, and he appears to have developed it largely unaided by Jesus teaching.

In the Paper, "At the Feast of Tabernacles," when the woman taken in adultery is presented to Jesus, he resorts to another unusual approach. It is an attempt to entrap him by the Sanhedrin and Jesus writes in the sand three times for the benefit of three different individuals or groups and they all disperse without a word, leaving the woman standing alone with Jesus. Actually this is an amazing story. What could he have scribbled in the sand in a few seconds which would cause a fair number of diverse and not very spiritually inclined people to depart without a word? But they don't tell us.

Jesus has a facility for making use of the situation at hand. At "The Feast of Tabernacles," when the scene is illuminated by candelabras and torches, he says, "I am the light of the world." When he is a breakfast with the Pharisees at Philadelphia in Paper 167, he employs a parable about a great supper as well as a teaching about not seeking the place of pre-eminence at a feast.

66

...Jesus adapts his action and response to fit every individual and group of individuals which he encounters in such a way as to maximize the situation for all those involved. Everyone stands to gain in accordance with their receptivity.

Jesus is consistent, but not predictable. Josiah is healed in Paper 164, "At the Feast of Dedication." But we are told the man did not ask for healing. This was entirely planned in a premeditated manner by Jesus as a faith challenge to the Sanhedrin. What is of interest at the moment is that Jesus makes an odd ceremonial experience out of this healing. He makes use of clay and spittle and directs Josiah to wash in the pool of Siloam. It is revealed that one of the reasons for resorting to this approach was to make use of the man's superstition to induce him to act.

One last episode to focus on is found in Paper 167, "The Visit to Philadelphia." On page 1837, Jesus announces his plan to go into Judea, to Bethany, to heal, actually to resurrect, Lazarus. In stating his intentions, Jesus said: "I would do one more mighty work for these Jews; I would give them one more chance to believe, even on their own terms—conditions of outward glory and the visible manifestation of the power of the Father and the love of the Son." Imagine that. Jesus will give these people a chance to believe on *their* terms, not following his own plans, but accepting *their* terms.

The aforementioned episodes are just a sampling of some very diverse experiences of Jesus' public career. Let's briefly summarize aspects of these various episodes:

1. Jesus provides a differential of experience to his immediate followers as well as to all other individuals and groups with which he comes in contact in consonance with their own stages of personal religious development.
2. Certain of his revelations to Nathaniel go well beyond any information imparted to other men or women. At the same time, for Rodan of Alexandria, he has little to impart.
3. He is so effective that scribbling in the sand gets evil and misguided men to depart in silence even though they mean him harm.
4. He deliberately employs the superstition of a man to heal him.
5. He frankly admits that he will appeal to people on their terms to win them to the kingdom, meaning their mistaken or distorted notions of reality.

Now all of these episodes and circumstances are essentially adding up to the same thing: that Jesus adapts his action and response to fit every individual and group of individuals which he encounters in such a way as to maximize the situation for all those involved. Everyone stands to gain in accordance with their receptivity. These are, in a sense, all human adaptations to life's situations that Jesus made. But we must also consider that they are something more. Bear in mind once again that Jesus is divine. He who has seen him has seen

the Father. Jesus mirrors God. It is like seeing God in action among men. And look what he does. His response is always so versatile, so uniquely adapted to the situation and the person or persons involved and is always so remarkably effective. He will make use of olden teachings, even superstitions to further his aims and he will even appeal to us on our terms if necessary. Is this amazing or what? If Jesus does these things, we know that God will do them. We know that superhumans high and low will do them within their ability to do so. There is some amazing versatility in God and all his host. Not only is the mortal upreach personal and unique, but so also is the divine downreach personal and unique. Both are personal and unique, because both are in a relationship that is personal and unique.

"Religion is ever and always rooted and grounded in personal experience. And your highest religion, the life of Jesus, was just such a personal experience: man, mortal man, seeking God and finding him to the fullness during one short life in the flesh, while in the same human experience there appeared God seeking man and finding him to the full satisfaction of the perfect soul of infinite supremacy. And that is religion, even the highest yet revealed in the universe of Nebadon—the earth life of Jesus of Nazareth." (p. 1128)

Yes, Jesus taught about the individual nature of the religion of the kingdom. But Jesus was often thwarted in teaching as he truly desired to teach. He could only give the bare elements of the concept of a universal family of God, sonship with God, and the corollary brotherhood of man. In his own day, his followers unwittingly resisted his teachings and subsequent generations submerged them by focusing on a religion *about* Jesus. We only know about much of the life and teachings of Jesus, the fourth epochal revelation, due to their restatement in the fifth epochal revelation. Jesus lived a life which was a demonstration of the individual nature of religion and the individual response of God unified in a single personality. And the completion of Jesus' bestowal released the Spirit of Truth to our planet and signaled the universal outpouring of Adjusters to all normal-minded will creatures. Perhaps that was the setting of the stage.

Now in our own century, the fifth epochal revelation of truth comes to us, relating once again the real life and teachings of Jesus with the personal element in tact and carrying the theme much further. *The Urantia Book* is able to greatly amplify the concepts that Jesus could in some cases only briefly introduce. The printed word can give some teachings of Jesus a much larger audience than heard him in his day. Perhaps it is only in the last few thousand years that we had the capacity to grasp a concept of personal religion. Maybe it requires

hundreds of thousands of years to prepare for this point and it is simply an idea whose time has come. Perhaps the Spirit of Truth and universal bestowal of Adjusters is the essential stepping off point for a personal concept of religion. Perhaps personal religious liberty can only follow in the wake of true social and political liberty which are only recently at hand.

Back in the 1950's, Dr. Sadler prepared a paper wherein he enumerated seventy-two major concepts which appear for the first time ever, so far as we know, in *The Urantia Book*—seventy-two unique major concepts. Someone else doing the same kind of study might isolate more or less concepts. The point is that there is a great deal of material never before taught. And of all the concepts in this fifth epochal revelation, none seem more important, whether they be new or restated, than those having to do with the importance of the individual in the eyes of God, the value of the individual, the sovereignty of the human will, the vast extent to which



"...they 'stand at the door' of consciousness 'and knock' and delight to come in to all who will 'open the doors of their hearts'...." —*The Urantia Book*, page 26

Photo by Carol Herren

human will is respected, how the celestial overseers go very much out of their way that human will never be tampered with, and the fact that we are all individually indwelt by God. We have a direct and continuous connection to the Universal Father himself. A spirit fragment, the Thought Adjuster, is sent to indwell each one of us.

These concepts, and all they imply are, I believe, the most essential new teachings of this revelation. To some extent they've been taught before, but almost completely lost to sight. Over the millennia, we keep obscuring the personal nature of religion. I conjecture that we do this out of fear. As a people, we keep meddling in the personal religion of others. At the same time, we keep foisting what should be our personal experience only out upon all humanity.

Jesus could only hint at the Thought Adjuster. In the *Urantia Papers*, we have five papers devoted to this being and concept alone, about fifty pages of material. We have papers about God's relation to the individual, papers which outline the ministry of various angelic orders to individual progressing mortals, the scheme of ascendent progression from mortal to finaliter, teachings on the real nature of religion, as well as the lengthy recitation of the personal religion of one who was both fully human and fully divine—Jesus of Nazareth, who ultimately poured out his spirit upon all flesh. More than just a melody, the value of the individual and the

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personal nature of religion is the very measure, the drumbeat of the entire fifth epochal revelation beneath the themes and variations. And beyond all else, it is this truth which sets us free, that "faith liberty of those civilized mortals who are superbly conscious of sonship with the eternal God." "Old things are passing away; behold all things are becoming new."

We know from Jesus' teachings and *The Urantia Book* that our connection with God is close and direct. God is in us and we are in him. "The kingdom of God is within you." So one of the most important lessons in the book is that we need not yield to any guiding authority, whether it be a priest, an ordinary layman, a self-proclaimed prophet, or some sacred writings. We can yield to authority if we want. That's our free will choice and, for some of us, it is a hard habit to break. But if we are thinking straight, we know we don't need to, and that it is our choice if we do. It will always be nice to have teachers and teachings accessible to us and we can pick and choose what we like from among them. When we get to the mansion worlds and beyond, we will probably accept them pretty regularly. But we well know that we need no middlemen, no shamans or priests, no authority to interpret God to us. Our guiding authority is within. This guiding authority is the presence of God via the Thought Adjuster and is personal in a sense.

"The spirit of God that dwells in man is not personal—the Adjuster is prepersonal—but this monitor presents a value, exudes a flavor of divinity, which is personal in the highest and infinite sense." (p. 1130)

"Belief fixates, faith liberates." "Beliefs may become group possessions, but faith must be personal. Theologic beliefs can be suggested to a group, but faith can rise up only in the heart of the individual religionist." (p. 1114)

Now while we are focusing on the personal aspect of religion, we can't forget that there are important social aspects. We are constantly taught balance in all things. On page 1090, it says:

"While religion is exclusively a personal spiritual experience—knowing God as a Father—the corollary of this experience—knowing man as a brother—entails the adjustment of the self to other selves, and that involves the social or group aspect of religious life."

Also:

"There is no danger in religion's becoming more and more of a private matter—a personal experience—provided it does not lose its motivation for unselfish and loving social service."

"While your religion is a matter of personal experience, it is most important that you should be exposed to the knowledge of a vast number of other religious experiences (the diverse interpretation of other and diverse mortals) to the end that you may prevent your religious life from becoming egocentric—circumscribed, selfish, and unsocial." (p. 1130)

Since each one of us is indwelt by a Paradise Thought Adjuster, this means that personal revelation, literally the wisdom of the universe, is available to us at any time that we are open and have the capacity to receive it. We may often garble the message, but we slowly learn to clean up and fine tune the communication process. And there are two corollary basics which result from the knowledge of being thus indwelt: (1) We don't have any business judging or evaluating the personal religious experience of another individual and vice versa; and (2) That individual does not have any business in trying to pass his religious experience off on us in an attempt to make it our experience and vice versa.

The concept of the Adjuster involves the mutual respect of all individuals for each other and implies religious equality. It is this concept which may most change the world in the centuries to come. And it has been almost a million years in coming. We have it now and we mustn't lose the focus. This is an essential element in the Gospel of Jesus.

If the message of the Urantia Papers succeeds, it will be to emblazon the truth that religion consists of the individual's relationship with his or her spirit Father, that we are all unique in this relationship and all entitled to our uniqueness, and because we are all unique, there is an implication of equality in this total diversity. If all paths to God are unique, it is hard to draw comparisons.

We've had a lot of trouble down through the ages minding our own religious business. The world in some places is still stoning sinners and burning witches and a large part of the world is regularly determining who are the faithful and who are not. So it is important that we held effect this final freedom of man's soul. This could well be our most important mission. And then, as they say on page 2063, "At last, true religion is delivered from the custody of priests and all sacred classes and finds its real manifestation in the individual souls of men."

From page 1091: "Since true religion is a matter of personal spiritual experience, it is inevitable that each individual religionist must have his own and personal interpretation of the realization of that spiritual experience. Let the term 'faith' stand for the individual's relation to God rather than for the creedal formulation of what some group of mortals have been able to agree

upon as a common religious attitude. 'Have you faith? Then have it to yourself.'"

The intimate personal nature of religion is an important fact and truth which must be spread to all the world. This beyond all else is the good news we bear: the personal relation of the individual will creature with his or her spirit Father and the consequent relations with all other created beings in the universe. This is the message which must go to the uttermost parts of the world. In the last twenty years, I have talked with hundreds upon hundreds of people regarding their religious journey and how they came to *The Urantia Book*. The single most unvarying factor which impressed them was how the book seemed to speak so directly to them, so personally and uniquely. This is the draw of this epochal revelation. People want the freedom to build their own personal religion. Rather than living in fear of the odd reception the book may sometimes have, we should celebrate the diversity of response. This diversity reaffirms that man is a "liberated volitional son of the Universal Father." He is not an automaton in a "mathematical cosmos," but a Son of God and forever a unique part of a vast configuration, a universe organism which stretches into infinity and grows into the eternal future. We need not fear for God loves each one of us personally. His spirit speaks to us saying: "I am here now. I am always with you. I will never desert you nor forsake you. You are loved now and forever. Heal your soul in this knowledge and this truth. Help others to know this truth and be free." □

Trying to Touch

*The whole in the sky
Spinning frost-like between the trees
Telescoping me to everything else with
Eternity just beyond my grasp.
My outstretched fingers not quite
Touching it;
But it blankets me
As I lie on the
Leaf and twig strewn carpet and
Float suspended
Between the earth and the
Friendly universe.*

—David L. Kuliehe

Poems by Paula Garrett Thompson

Life Carrier

I am a woman.
I have conspired with eternity,
Fraternalizing with the infinite creative forces
to bring LIFE into existence.
I have suffered to bring it.
I have nurtured it
and tenaciously kindled its precious flame.
I cannot turn my back on it
nor say it came not through me.
I know from whence it came.
I will take responsibility for it.
Though I may often bear this yoke alone,
I will not betray this trust.
This LIFE I have given the world
permeates my being.
I would sooner have the living heart torn from me
than to see it suffer or die.
Ask not then why I abhor the futility of war,
or disgust the advent of violence.
These things represent only the unthinkable pain
of a sister's greatest loss.
The thought of which makes me shudder in bitter fear,
though I think myself courageous.
A loss that would reduce even the strongest woman
to a quivering mass of anxiety.
The pain of it reverberates to every woman
from every woman who ever had to bury her heart
in the comfortless cold of the Earth.
A woman's heart is full of the reality of LIFE,
the respect of LIFE,
and the love of LIFE,
for we have carried LIFE
and brought it forth upon the Earth.
The Eternal God has gone in partnership with us,
LIFE's earthly guardians.
Think not that women are weak,
nor judge us when you see a tear in our eye,
but remember,
everything we do
or say
or think
is in some way conditioned
by our responsibility for LIFE.

Fear Not

Fear not,
for the hand that holds eternity holds also you.
The thread is not lost to the weaver,
nor is the drop lost to the ocean.
Neither can they be separate
lest they lose their purpose of existence.
The drop alone has no power,
but the ocean is mighty.
The thread alone gives no warmth,
but the garment is useful.
If, then, you are but a drop in the ocean,
rejoice that you are as necessary as all other drops.
If you are merely a thread in the vast fabric of creation,
rest assured that you too are an integral part of the
grand tapestry of life.
Know in your very fiber that the light that lit you
loves you as itself.
For you are truly alive in the infinite love of the creator,
and the flame of eternity burns within you.

This My Prayer

Heavenly Father,
this my prayer to you:
Let me finish the work that I have to do.
Then when at last my work is done,
grant me the rest I've so willingly won.
Take care of us Father,
for in our fear
we fail to keep sight of the things we hold dear.
We allow life's trifles to distress us so.
It seems we're the prisoners of what we don't know.
Oh Wondrous Creator,
my petition is small.
Let me stay here until I'm not needed at all.
Then when at last my seeds have been sown,
spare me the darkness of being alone.
For when you need my help Lord,
I will do whatever I can.
I will be there willing to lend a helping hand.
And as long as I can serve a purpose that is true
I will say this my prayer, my Lord, to you.