

**Individual Ministry**  
**Community Service**

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***Walking with God***

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## **Introduction**

**As devotees of the Urantia Revelation we have chosen to explore new spiritual realities. As we each pursue our own spiritual growth through religious experience, the Urantia Book on page 1095 lists habits to discipline this process. The discipline I shall focus upon is “the recognition of religious living in others.” What is religious living and how do we recognize it? On page 66 we are given a simple and inspiring answer, “it (religion) is a living and dynamic experience of divinity attainment predicated on humanity service.” Therefore the recognition of religious living is an appreciation of this service dynamic as manifested in others.**

**Through service we gain status as universe citizens, and this is emphasized in every section of the Urantia Book. In our universe career we are told on page 316, “Service...is the goal of time and the destiny of space.” In the Thought Adjuster papers at the bottom of page 1206 we are instructed we can consciously augment adjuster harmony by “loving God and desiring to be like him” and by “loving man and sincerely desiring to serve him.”**

**In our instruction of human government we are taught “Modern society is largely held together by the industrial market. The gain motive is a might civilizer when augmented by the desire to serve.” Likewise, service and participation is the essence of the Supreme adventure. In our introduction to the Supreme papers we are told, “With the Father, sonship is the great relationship, with God the Supreme accomplishment is the prerequisite to status. One must do something as well as be something.”**

**During his sojourn on Urantia, Jesus repeatedly encouraged his followers in the service of their planetary brothers and sisters. In his teaching at Tyre He instructs us, “Self-respect is always coordinate; with love and service to one’s fellows. It is not possible to respect yourself more than you love your neighbor; one is the measure of the capacity for the other.” In His discourse on sonship and citizenship He states, “Sonship in the Kingdom (from the standpoint of advancing civilization)...should assist you in becoming ideal citizens in the kingdoms of this world since brotherhood and service are the cornerstones of the gospel of the Kingdom.” Likewise on page 2017 we are told, “Jesus taught that service to ones fellows is the highest concept of the brotherhood of spirit believers...The believers chief concern should not be the selfish desire for personal salvation but rather the unselfish urge to love and therefore, serve ones fellows even as Jesus loved and served mortal men.” Thus he replaced this ego concern with a higher transpersonal mission.**

**Throughout the Urantia Book, religion is described as this dual experience of loving god and serving man. Vertically upward and inward through prayer and worship the ascending mortal finds the Father and communes with the Adjuster. Horizontally the mortal is broadened and expanded through service and experience to discover the Supreme. In combination the edifice of a spiritual life is fashioned (Figure 1.)**

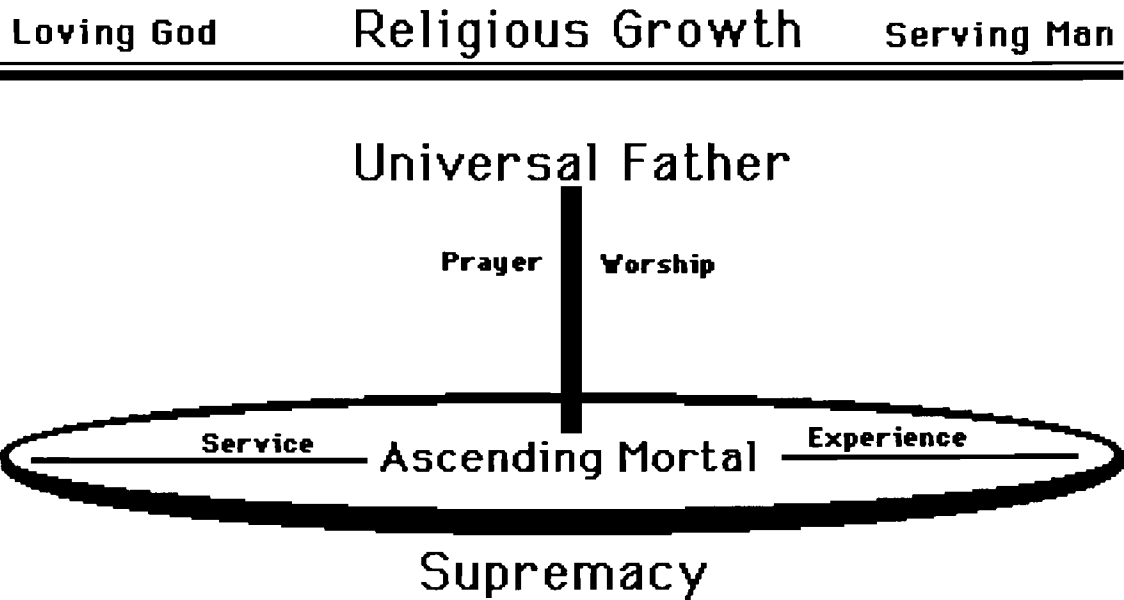


Figure 1

This discussion will focus on the service dimension and will be divided into two parts. Part I entitled “Individual Ministry” will undertake six historical character studies and examine their service to humanity as an outgrowth of their religious lives. Part II entitled “Community Service” will explore four communities, two historical and two contemporary, whose common bond has given them spiritual unity and enhanced their mission in the world. At the close, applications to our individual and collective spiritual lives will be considered.

## Part I - Individual Ministry

### Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale appeared on the scene in 1854 and created the profession of nursing as it is known today. Prior to her efforts, care for the sick had been performed by soldiers, nuns, Christian lay women, and the latter day “Sairy Gamps.” This ministry ranged from enlightened care given by some to the inability to provide basic needs by others. The common denominator of the pre-Nightingale era was the absence of any formal; preparation for nursing.

**She was born May 12, 1820 in Florence, Italy of well-to-do English parents. This was an advantage in that she received an excellent education and the proper social connections. When only a young girl of eleven she received a vision, a “call from God to His service.” With the eventual blessing from her family, and at a time when few women worked outside the home, she set off on her crusade. She is most well known for her efforts and leadership during the Crimean War. Her nightly rounds with the lantern are even celebrated in a poem by Longfellow entitled “the Lady with the Lamp.”**

**She was a great success in that along with her visionary zeal she was also practical. She possessed powers of organization, observation, and concentration; and had a wide range of interests in philosophy, politics, and religion; all of which she brought to bear in establishing the nursing profession. In this way, her service to humanity has touched nearly every life on the planet, and she has become one of the most celebrated women of all time.**

### **George Marshall**

**As a soldier, as a statesman, and as a human being, Gen. George C. Marshall may be the greatest American since Lincoln. His personal and professional integrity during World War II and his post war accomplishments towards peace and prosperity are models of service to humanity of which we are still reaping the benefit.**

**Born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, December 31, 1880, he attended Virginia Military Institute at the age of 16. As a young officer he began to cultivate his many talents the most important being an excellent judge of men. He was religious but in a private sense. He regarded his abilities apart from the ego as talents God had given him to manage. Those close to him claim he never lied, tricked anyone, nor made a promise he did not keep. He never wrote his memoirs because an honest account of scandals by his associates would have caused too much pain. Honesty, modesty, and virtue were the keys to success in a more innocent age, but during his life it made the journey ten times more difficult.**

**His great service to humanity was the Marshall Plan. In his commencement address to Harvard, June 5, 1947, he set down the conditions for the plan. It was in the best tradition of his lifelong philosophy, and in essence the message was that God helps those that help themselves. This fundamental trust in the re-emergence of industry and freedom among these war torn peoples through responsible investment is the great success story of the post war era. As we witness the opening of Eastern Europe, this message of “swords into plowshares” has again echoed in our time.**

## **Eleanor Roosevelt**

Eleanor Roosevelt was one of the outstanding women of the Twentieth Century and has been considered virtually an American saint. Her great service lay in her pioneering efforts toward the social equality of all humankind. She had amazing ability to walk with kings and keep the common touch. Because of her life, many others experienced a new sense of possibility.

She was born to an aristocratic Victorian family less than twenty years after the Civil War ended. As a painfully shy adolescent, she looked for meaning beyond the life of leisure. Always a champion of her husband's programs, it seems she came onto most prominence after his death. She is most noted for her appointment by President Truman as a United Nations delegate. In this capacity she chaired the commission on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Her life is exemplified by one of her quotes, "The thing which counts is the striving of the human soul to achieve spiritually the best that it is capable of and to care unselfishly not only for personal good, but for the good of all those who toil with them upon the earth."

## **Anwar Sadat**

At the time he was taken from us by an assassin's bullet, Anwar Sadat was considered the worlds wisest and most courageous leader. His great service to humanity was his role in initiating the peace accords between Egypt and Israel. The Camp David Accords grew out of his desire for peace which was in turn a reflection of his profound religious convictions.

He was born in 1918, a peasant brought up on the banks of the River Nile. He enjoyed village life and it was his first source of religious inspiration. He joined the Royal Military Academy in 1938 and participated in the struggles to liberate Egypt.

Early in his career he was imprisoned and placed in solitary confinement for a crime he did not commit. His experience in "Cell 54" was a transforming event which he termed "the liberation of self." In essence his heart was emptied of anxiety and filled with love. He began to look to the Creator as a friend and all other relationships with mutual trust.

## **Mother Teresa**

In the current ebb tide of institutional Christendom, the only Roman Catholic order growing is the Congregation of the Missionaries of Charity, led by one of the best known and loved figures in the church today, Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Beyond the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, her followers take a forth vow, a promise to give "whole hearted free service to the poorest of the poor to Christ in his distressing disguise."

Although India is her adopted country, she was born into a peasant family in Albania in 1910. At age fifteen she was inspired to work in India, and while teaching there in 1946 she received a “call within a call...to leave the convent and help the poor by living among them.” Her following has now grown to a community of 700 sisters and 100 brothers in 50 houses around the world but mostly in India.

All that have met her comment on the power of her personal presence. When asked about government participation in relieving the poor she responds, “What we offer is something more, Christian love. Welfare is for a purpose whereas Christian love is for a person.” Her great service to humanity is the out stretched hand of Christian love beyond all castes, creeds, poverty, and illness to the depths of human existence. For this extravagance of human tenderness and the resulting fruits of the spirit she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

### Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the principal leader in the Civil Rights Movement from its inception. His accomplishments have changed the manner in which we view our multiracial society. His non-violent methods which emanated from his religious conviction have served as a model in the struggle for other human rights. His courage has been an inspiration of Black people worldwide. At the beginning of his crusade discrimination was a way of life and today these barriers by and large no longer exist. His great service to humanity was the extension of spiritual equality beyond the race barrier. For his tireless efforts he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

### Summary-Part I

Through these brief character studies one can picture the steady expanding of human consciousness in the endeavors of science, philosophy, and religion. In the science of human endeavor, Florence Nightingale and George Marshall gave an enlarged meaning to the concept of professional service. As statesperson-philosophers Anwar Sadat and Eleanor Roosevelt promoted peace and participation on a global basis. Through their religious convictions Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King, Jr. gave us a larger view of the human family erasing the barriers of race and station.

These great lives serve as patterns to inspire us, but let us not forget that each life is valuable. Every mortal is unique and forms a thread adding beauty to the fabric of human destiny.

## **Part II - Community Service**

Jesus always encouraged us to pursue our higher duty of “obtaining increased yield of the fruits of the spirit as they are manifested in the service of man and the worship of God.” With his disciples this mission on earth was accomplished through the vehicle of community life. Four communities will be studied with a similar pattern of spiritual unity.

### **Early Christian Communities**

Will Durant said the Roman Eagle made straight the way for Christ, and many think Christianity filled a spiritually impoverished empire. On the other hand, history is nearly silent regarding the spiritual fragrance and its persuasive power in these early Christian communities. People from every station and all walks of life were fully accepted into the community, as they announced the spiritual equality of mankind. Women for the first time were given responsibilities in the community. They were orderly, industrious, and financed other impoverished communities. They upheld a strict moral code for the time, ate many common meals together, and above all they loved and cared for each other.

Little is written about these communities prior to Constantine. John Bennett offers the most fascinating account, and according to him they existed in the Jewish communities of the diaspora; in Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor. The inspiration and ethic of Christ offered hope and happiness and was the common bond which held them together. Their spiritual power arose not from their individual strength but by their love and sacrifice for one another, not by their civility but by their service to one another, and not by their tolerance but by their wholehearted acceptance of one another. They were governed not by rules but by a new attitude and pattern of living.

Their great strength arose from living by the tenets of the Sermon on the Mount. These principles of living gave these communities an inner life not subject to disruptive forces. Against all odds they won the day, and by AD 300 a network of spiritual communities served as a foundation to disseminate the message of Michael to Urantia. At the end of this era Tertullian, one of the Fathers of the Latin Church, stated “We are only of yesterday, but already we fill the world.”

## Alcoholics Anonymous

Bill W., the co-founder of AA, for years struggled with alcoholism unsuccessfully. He regained his sanity only when he accepted his condition and “turned it over” to a higher power. And he found he could only maintain his sobriety by helping other alcoholics. In association with Dr. Bob, AA was founded, has since spread internationally, and has transformed millions of lives.

AA is a true community of kindred souls with a secular religious teaching at its core. Success occurs because it calls on two of the greatest reservoirs of power known to man, religion and association with ones fellows. Members are average citizens from all parts of the world and represent many of its occupations. Among members there is a common fellowship. True community results from having shared a common peril, and this serves as the cement which binds them together. Service is seen as a pathway to health and sobriety. Therapy is based on the kinship of common suffering. For members life takes on new meaning; to watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, and to see a fellowship grow up about you.

The nature of God is not so important as ones relationship to Him. Like rays of color in the spectrum of light, there are a multitude of paths in finding a relationship to the Creator. For most this evolves unconsciously over a period of time. In summary, through “the program” the alcoholic “overcomes his excessive concentration upon himself. Learning to depend upon a higher power and absorb himself in his work with other alcoholics, he remains sober day by day. The days add up to weeks, the weeks into months and years”

## The Holocaust

The images of genocide from the Nazi concentration camps are well known to us. In spite of these adverse circumstances, communal efforts toward survival and spiritual growth are noteworthy. In his book, “Man’s Search for Meaning,” Victor Frankl portrayed how a group of men with nothing left could find bliss. A man it was discovered, could get used to anything, and these lives of endurance and sacrifice engendered a redefinition of the human character. Soon after admission to the camp the situation separated the “saints from the swine;” those with an inner spiritual life survived and those spiritually impoverished were destroyed.

The concentration camp experience enhanced group wisdom. Everything not connected with the immediate task of keeping oneself and ones closest friends alive lost its value. Many helped train each other to have a sense of humor as one of the soul’s weapons an the act of self-preservation. Living with the certainty of suffering and possibility of death every minute, life took



on new meaning. These men experienced a fundamental change in their attitude towards life, “it did not matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us.” They learned their sacrifices, suffering, and dying had meaning, and if they survived with their bones intact, this experience would be an asset in the future.

### The Castro

The AIDS epidemic in the San Francisco Castro district took on many characteristics of the Holocaust. The Castro was a direct descendent of the Haight Ashbury district and gay settlers began arriving around 1972. San Francisco being a tolerant city, the Castro became a focus of Gay Liberation. With liberation self restraint gave way to self expression and the AIDS epidemic hit near the end of 1981. A devastating loss of young productive lives ensued.

The response of this community to the immense challenges of this epidemic is truly remarkable. The inclusive and fully integrated programs of health care and social services will serve as a model to other communities. The Shanti Project, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, and Hospice provide housing, counseling, help with medical bills, and home care for AIDS patients. Through education community consciousness has been raised to encourage safe sex practices and prevent transmission. The churches have opened up to the community and the AIDS Interfaith Network was formed. New and original expressions of religious faith have arisen to embrace life as precious even with the spectre of death ever present.

This struggle encouraged a new community attitude of growth, a new intimacy, a new maturity, and a sense of interdependence. Today political enthusiasm has given way to personal relations - friendships. Circles of friends function as families and true community is continuing to grow from this foundation of mutual trust.

## Summary - Part II

These four communities were chosen because of their unique formation under adverse and challenging circumstances. Through religious living each developed a pattern of spiritual unity through service to the larger benefit of humankind. These patterns are pure in the sense they have paid their social and political gravity debt to project over time to serve a future age. The spiritual community offers an enlarged and transcendent pattern beyond individual religious growth (Figure 2.)

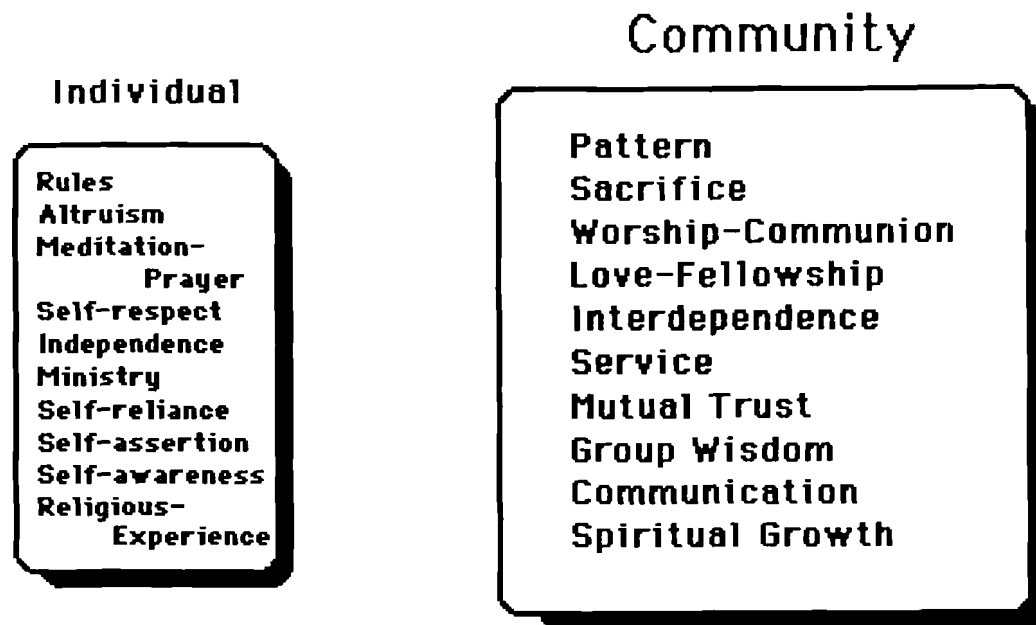


Figure 2

## **The Future**

**What can we learn from this study as we struggle toward spiritual community in the Urantia Movement? Are we ready to make the sacrifice necessary and surrender to the larger spiritual pattern? It is interesting events on the world stage should coincide with the metamorphosis in the Urantia Movement. In a recently publicized article entitled “The End of History?”, the author claimed history has reached an end point with the success of democratic society. The goals of past human adventurism are now provided for by the global economy. Society will soon be reduced to the role of perpetual care taking. An ardent critic observed little consideration had been given to the higher needs of society now crying for expression, namely the longing for spirituality and community. It seems a spiritual awakening has called upon nations to discard the shackles of repression and for us to evolve a larger sense of spiritual community. Through struggle and conflict we are being prepared to stand at the vanguard and offer this revelation of truth to a world made ready for its reception.**