

MARRIAGE AS PORTRAYED IN THE URANTIA BOOK

by

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On behalf of the First URANTIA Society of Los Angeles, my brother Jim McNelly, my good friend Bob Boden, and all three of our wives, I would like to personally welcome each of you to the beginning of the second day of the First Western URANTIA Conference.

Our presentation this morning on 'Marriage and the URANTIA Book' has a particular spiritual meaning to Jim, Bob, and me, since we all have been married just since the beginning of 1973, and all three of us are fortunate to have married beautiful, intelligent, and spiritually oriented women, all three of whom are members of the First URANTIA Society of Los Angeles like ourselves. We all feel privileged to be able to share through our marriages the joys of teamwork in spreading the gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man as we live out our lives in the flesh on this most amazing planet, URANTIA. This fact alone in our lives conditions one of man's most supreme adventures, but the joys of looking forward to our future family life with the URANTIA teachings as a spiritual guide in our homes make the value of raising cosmic citizens, giving sons and daughters to the Father, becoming pro-creators with the very creators of the universes, is an experience beyond expression in human language; its truth can only be lived.

The URANTIA Book, perhaps more than any other single factor, was the spiritual catalyst which caused the reactions of time, place, and circumstance that brought my wife and I together. Using faith, love, and wisdom, we both hope to fulfill our love for one another through the supreme experience of parenthood, the trust of bringing new life into existence, bringing children into a family where the love of the Universal Father will ever dominate the spirit of our mutual love and devotion for one another. The theme of 'Marriage and the URANTIA Book' not only serves as the topic for this particular occasion, but will continue to have a profound influence on all of our family lives long after this conference has ended.

The URANTIA Book itself contains three papers which deal specifically with marriage and associated family life. All three of these papers, #82 The Evolution of Marriage, #83 The Marriage Institution, and #84 Marriage and Family Life, each written by the Chief of Seraphim on URANTIA, combine to present the origins, history, and potential destiny of man's most noble and important sociological institution, and civilization's only hope for survival. Within the contents of these three papers we find 24 minor subheadings which cover nearly all of the pertinent facts dealing with the institution of marriage; that long history of male and female association out of which has developed the home and family life of the peoples of our planet.

However, since the father-child concept so dominates the overall religious teachings of the URANTIA Revelation, it comes as no surprise to us when we find that many other authors besides the Chief of Seraphim make comments on marriage from many different and unique perspectives. From the recently revealed story of the first Human Family, that of Andon and Fonta and their 19 children, 50 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren, to the paragraphs telling of the home life of a nation on a neighboring planet, the URANTIA Book abounds with insights and revelations about the marital state from a numerous host of the Revelatory Commission from Uversa and Nebadon.

When the Master was speaking with the twelve and answering questions during Pass-over week just after they had begun the public work, a memorable discussion ensued concerning the fundamental characteristics of family life and their application to the relationships existing between God and man. Let us join with the Midwayers in recalling the Master's words on that evening with the Apostles (page 1604):

* "Jesus stated that a true family is founded on the following seven facts":

* 1. "The fact of existence. The relationships of nature and the phenomena of mortal existence are bound up in the family: children inherit certain parental traits. The children take origin in the parents; personality existence depends on the act of the parent. The relationship of father and child is inherent in all nature, and pervades in all living existences."

* 2. "Security and pleasure. True fathers take great pleasure in providing for the needs of their children."

* 3. "Education and training. Wise fathers carefully plan for the education and adequate training of their sons and daughters."

* 4. "Discipline and restraint. Farseeing fathers also make provision for the necessary discipline, guidance, correction, and sometimes restraint of their young and immature offspring."

* 5. "Companionship and loyalty. The affectionate father holds intimate and loving intercourse with his children. The father is supremely interested in the welfare of his progeny."

* 6. "Love and mercy. A compassionate father is freely forgiving; fathers are not like judges, enemies, or creditors. Real families are built upon tolerance, patience, and forgiveness."

* 7. "Provision for the future. Temporal fathers like to leave an inheritance for their sons. The family continues from one generation to another."

Earlier, in the third part of the URANTIA Book, the History of URANTIA, a Melchizedek sometime stationed on URANTIA tells us something about the role of marriage in civilization when he writes on page 765:

* "Almost everything of lasting value in civilization has its roots in the family. The family was the first successful peace group, the man and the woman learning to adjust their antagonisms while at the same time teaching the pursuits of peace to their children."

* "The function of marriage in evolution is the insurance of race survival, not merely the realization of personal happiness; self-maintenance and self-perpetuation are the real objects of the home. Self-gratification is incidental and not essential except as an incentive insuring sex association. Nature demands survival, but the arts of civilization continue to increase the pleasures of marriage and the satisfaction of family life."

When we read the paper by an Archangel of Nebadon on the Development of Modern Civilization, we are told that the civilization now evolving on URANTIA was developed out of and is predicated on sixteen different factors. Listed as number eight in this series of sixteen is the paragraph on the character of torchbearers from one generation to another. We read on page 909, "Social inheritance enables man to stand on the shoulders of all who have preceded him, and who have contributed aught to the sum of culture and knowledge. In this work of passing on the cultural torch to the next generation, the home will ever be the basic institution. The play and social life comes next, with the school last but equally indispensable in a complex and highly organized society."

* "Insects are born fully educated and equipped for life--indeed, a very narrow and purely instinctive existence. The human baby is born without an education; therefore man possesses the power, by controlling the educational training of the younger generation, greatly to modify the evolutionary course of civilization. . . . But the improvement in education has not kept pace with the expanding social structure; neither has the modern appreciation of ethics developed in correspondence with growth along more purely intellectual and scientific lines. And modern civilization is at a standstill in spiritual development and the safeguarding of the home institution."

Taking heed of the Archangel's advice, we then, as actual or potential URANTIA parents, have a great responsibility indeed in the training and education of our children in the next generation. The Chief of Seraphim advises us in the paper on Marriage and Family Life that, and I quote from page 939; "Sex association is natural, but marriage is social and has always been regulated by the mores. The mores (religious, moral, and ethical), together with property, pride, and chivalry, stabilize the institutions of marriage and family. Whenever the mores fluctuate, there is a fluctuation in the stability of the home-marriage institution."

It is no secret to any of us here that the mores of our present western civilization are undergoing rapid change as is evidenced by the high rate of divorce, the increase in birth control information and use, the recent changes in the legal status of abortion, and the increased mobility of families within the United States. Our Chief of Seraphim goes on to state that "new mores are emerging designed to stabilize the marriage-home institution which are:"

1. "The new role of religion--the teaching that parental experience is essential, the idea of procreating cosmic citizens, the enlarging understanding of the privilege of procreation--giving sons to the Father."

2. "The new role of science--procreation is becoming more and more voluntary, subject to man's control. In ancient times lack of understanding insured the appearance of children in the absence of all desire therefore."

3. "The new function of pleasure lures--this introduces a new factor into racial survival; ancient man exposed undesired children to die; moderns refuse to bear them."

4. "The enhancement of parental instinct. Each generation now tends to eliminate from the reproductive stream of the race those individuals in whom parental instinct is insufficiently strong to insure the procreation of children, the prospective parents of the next generation."

Of all the lessons we find in the URANTIA Book on marriage and its importance to those who are trying to live the teachings of Jesus' gospel of the kingdom in their daily lives, perhaps Rodan of Alexandria, our favorite philosopher, makes one of the most important observations on marriage what we find from the strictly human viewpoint. His advice and comments on pages 1775 and 1776 are well worthy of our close attention:

"Symbolic communication between human beings predetermines the bringing into existence of social groups. The most effective of all the social groups is the family, more particularly, the two parents. Personal affection is the spiritual bond which holds together these material associations. Such an effective relationship is also possible between two persons of the same sex, as is so abundantly illustrated in the devotions of genuine friendships."

"Without the genuine love of a home, no child can achieve the development of a normal character. Of all social relations calculated to develop character, the most effective and ideal is the affectionate and understanding friendship of man and woman in the mutual embrace of intelligent wedlock. Marriage, with its manifold relations, is best designed to draw forth those precious impulses and those higher motives which are indispensable to the development of a strong character. I do not hesitate thus to glorify family life, for your Master has wisely chosen the father-child relationship as the very cornerstone of this new gospel of the kingdom." (1776: 1)

- * "And such a matchless community of relationships, man and woman in the fond embrace of the highest ideals of time, is so valuable and satisfying an experience that it is worth any price, any sacrifice, requisite for its possession. . . . And thus, if you can build up such trustworthy and effective small units of human association, when these are assembled in the aggregate, the world will behold a great and glorified social structure, the civilization of mortal maturity." (1777: 2)

As we look forward to continual growth within our own marriages and families as well as the future development of URANTIA Brotherhood, the counsel of a Brilliant Evening Star of Nebadon challenges our hope and faith, when he writes on page 966:

- * "Regardless of the drawbacks and handicaps, every new revelation of truth has given rise to a new cult, and even the restatement of the religion of Jesus must develop a new and appropriate symbolism. Modern man must find some adequate symbolism for his new and expanding ideas, ideals, and loyalties. This enhanced symbolism must arise out of religious living, spiritual experience. And this higher symbolism of a higher civilization must be predicated on the Fatherhood of God and be pregnant with the mighty ideal of the brotherhood of man."
- * "The old cults were too egocentric; the new must be the outgrowth of applied love. The new cult must, like the old, foster sentiment, satisfy emotion, and promote loyalty; but it must do more: It must facilitate spiritual progress, enhance cosmic meanings, augment moral values, encourage social development, and stimulate a high type of personal religious living. The new cult must provide supreme goals for living which are both temporal and eternal--social and spiritual."
- * "No cult can endure and contribute to the progress of social civilization and individual spiritual attainment unless it is based on the biologic, sociologic, and religious significance of the home. A surviving cult must symbolize that which is permanent in the presence of change; it must glorify that which unifies the stream of ever changing social metamorphosis. It must recognize true meanings, exalt beautiful relations, and glorify the good values of real nobility."