

SELF-ACTUALIZATION  
A CONCOMITANT TO THE PARENTAL EXPERIENCE

by  
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Most of us are aware in one degree or another of the collective problems confronting society - - - ecology, unemployment, inflation, too much welfare, to name just a few; however, with the effects being evident, it is the cause of such problems that we sometimes disagree on. The origin of collective problems is centered within the individual, for it is individuals who comprise the collective mass; however, it is on this individual level that society can most effectively change its course of destiny. Seemingly the most feasible place to start is within the home or school.

\* The URANTIA Book suggests religion as a means of stabilizing society, for on page 1116 we read, "The purpose of religion is not to satisfy curiosity about God but rather to afford intellectual constancy and philosophic security, to stabilize and enrich human living . . ."

\* Religion is a personal experience and should begin within the home. The URANTIA Book states, "It is religion that inspires man to live courageously and joyfully on the face of the earth; it joins patience with passion, insight to zeal, sympathy with power, and ideals with energy. Man can never wisely divide temporal issues or transcend the selfishness of personal interests unless he meditates in the presence of the sovereignty of God and reckons with the realities of divine meanings and spiritual values." (1093)

\* The fact that people are losing the qualitative experience of life is born out by their headlong plunge with the technocratic order, the gratification of senses through material acquisition. According to URANTIA "a child evaluates experience in accordance with the content of pleasure; maturity is proportional to the substitution of higher meanings for personal pleasure." (1094)

\* Wise people in this generation, however, are not without concern and are searching for intelligent direction. In the URANTIA Book on page 1098 we read, "The world is filled with lost souls, not lost in the theological sense but lost in the directional meaning, wandering about in confusion among the isms and cults of a frustrated philosophic era. For few have learned to install a philosophy of living in the place of religious authority ." Again on the same page we read "The progression of religious growth leads from stagnation through conflict to co-ordination, from insecurity to undoubting faith, from confusion of cosmic consciousness to unification of personality . . ."

It appears that as we unify our personalities we become self-realized, we begin to escape the anxieties and apprehensions that temporarily dislocate both mentally and physically so many of us on earth.

Stabilization then seems to be predicated on personality unification which itself becomes a means to self-actualization, and ultimate thought-adjuster fusion.

Throughout this report I will allude to unifying, integrating, organizing and actualizing forces of personality. These can be subsumed under the general term self-realization. How religion and psychology employ these terms to stabilize and enhance human living, as applicable in the parental experience, is the theme for this dissertation. Personality integration and its subsequent influence on environmental stabilization will be dealt with in abstract fashion by proceeding from an understanding of the need for self-actualization as set forth by the URANTIA Book and other sources, then through a general topology from psychological theory dealing with diverse yet similar approaches to the understanding of developmental processes within the human organism, followed by a brief study of the nature of individual differences, and finally to a look at the integrated personality pattern as set forth by Jesus with his own family.

\* The need for religion as a unifying and stabilizing factor in personality growth cannot be underestimated. On page 1090 we elicit the following. "During the psychologically unsettled times of the twentieth century, amid the economic upheavals, the moral cross currents, and the sociologic rip tides of the cyclonic transitions of a scientific era, thousands upon thousands of men and women have become humanly dislocated; they are anxious, restless, fearful, uncertain, and unsettled; as never before in the world's history they need the consolation and stabilization of sound religion. In the face of unprecedented scientific achievement and mechanical development there is spiritual stagnation and philosophic chaos."

Before I leap into the psychological aspects of individual differences by way of several experiments, and leave for the time being the subject of religion altogether, I will make reference to several other URANTIA quotes to shed more light on the significance of the unification of mental and physical systems and then mention in several pages organismic theories concerning psychological thought that relate to the same.

\* On page 1097 of the URANTIA Book there is stated, "Religious perplexities are inevitable; there can be no growth without psychic conflict and spiritual agitation. The organization of a philosophic standard of living entails considerable commotion in the philosophic realms of the mind. But the great problem of religious living consists in the task of unifying the soul powers of personality by the dominance of LOVE. Health, mental efficiency, and happiness arise from the unification of physical systems, mind systems, and spirit systems ." The need for the latter system is unfortunately often ignored by many modern psychologists and it is perhaps because psychologists perceive religion in the wrong light. According to URANTIA "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. It is the enlistment of the totality of selfhood in the loyal service of loving God and serving man." (1096:7)

\* "Of all the religions on earth, it is the religion of Jesus that is the most dynamic influence ever to activate the human race." (1091)

Since both psychology and religion are concerned with self-actualization, in this dissertation an attempt will be made to discuss both disciplines as means to common end - - the stabilization of the family unit.

It has been repeated to the brink of redundancy (yet many in our society have failed to pay adequate attention): every child needs two stabilizing factors within the home,



a stable mother and a stable father; for around these key figures all early impressions of life are formed.

It is far better to have a home with just one parent living in it who is stable (consistent) than to have a home where one or both parents are unstable. Parental instability and inconsistency is the prime causative factor leading to most of the deviant problems in child development.

As a school psychologist I have often been approached by principals, teachers, reading and speech therapists, etc., as the panacea for child behavior resolvment, but psychologists can do little to effect personality adjustment without the concerted effort of the parents.

Seldom is the parent cognizant of the child's behavioral maladjustment until it is first perceived by many of the school personnel. Parents are, moreover, prone to repression, projection, displacement, neglect, and all other forms of rationalization to attribute the blame for their child's problems to others. Indeed few parents are willing to allocate the necessary time to the essential resolutions necessary for stabilizing the family unit.

Of all the issues confronting humanity today there is one single issue of paramount importance that is largely neglected in our educational system, and partly as a result of this neglect three out of four of the marriages in L.A. county terminate in divorce proceedings. Of supreme importance in the twentieth century is an education relating to the parental role in marriage as well as the individual role of both partners in this vital institution.

Before marital partners become parental partners, the home must become a stable entity. Too often marital partners look forward to the children to provide the unifying force in marriage, but this philosophy in many cases just does not work.

The ramifications of social interaction and repercussions of child rearing on the part of severely misguided and unadjusted parents are such that they reach to all levels of associations, affecting not only the interpersonal relationships of their own children, but their children's children as well.

In my recent encounters with parents in the school setting it has become evident that society has to straighten out potential parents before they become actual parents, not after the behavioral anomalies are noticed in their children. Society must concern itself with fulfilling certain essential human needs prior to the experience of parenthood.

There are basic needs in all human beings which if not met will cause the perceiving organism to respond in bizarre and diverse ways to accomplish its end in satisfying these needs. The neurotic and psychotic individual, for example, are both striving to fulfill needs, but in appreciably irrational ways.

Many psychologists have set forth theories on how to unify the personality and how to develop the healthy personality - - but often the approaches are varied and oppositional in nature.

In order to understand more thoroughly the diversity of human nature and the necessity for need fulfillment, I will herein present excerpts from several of these psychological theories dealing with the positive nature of man.

Perhaps the most spiritually and mystically oriented psychologist of all the twentieth century theorists was Carl Jung, his theories being highly regarded even to this day.

In contrast to Freud who stressed the infantile origins of personality, Jung emphasized the racial origins of personality.

In response to the questions of: what is the goal of development? and towards what end are man and mankind striving? Jung supplies the term self-actualization. Self-actualization means the fullest, most complete differentiation and harmonious blending of all aspects of man's total personality. All of evolution, as it manifests itself in psychic development, from the first primitive organisms down to the appearance of man, is a parade of progress. Progress did not stop with the creation of man; just as man represents an advance over all other species of animals, so does civilized man represent an improvement over primitive man. Even civilized man still has far to go before he will reach the end of his evolutionary journey. It is the future of man that Jung finds so interesting and challenging.

#### Causation Versus Teleology

The idea of a goal that guides and directs man's destiny is essentially a teleological or finalistic explanation. The teleological viewpoint explains the present in terms of the future. According to this viewpoint, man's personality is comprehended in terms of where it is going, not where it has been. On the other hand, the present may be explained in terms of the past. This is the viewpoint of causality which holds that present events are the consequences or effects of antecedent conditions or causes. One looks into man's past in order to account for his present behavior.

Jung maintains that both standpoints are necessary in psychology if a complete understanding of personality is sought. The present is not only determined by the past (causality) but it is also determined by the future (teleology).

Jung points out that a purely causal attitude is likely to produce resignation and despair in man since from the standpoint of causality he is a prisoner of his past. He cannot undo what has already been done. The finalistic attitude, on the other hand, gives man a feeling of hope and something to live for. Jung's psychology is essentially an optimistic one.

Heredity is assigned an important role in Jungian psychology which is consistent with those theories held by modern biology. However, Jung deviates sharply from the position of modern biology when he asserts that there is, in addition to an inheritance of biological instincts, an inheritance of ancestral "experiences". These experiences, or to speak with greater accuracy, the potentiality of having the same order of experiences as one's ancestors, are inherited in the form of archetypes. An archetype is a racial memory that has become a part of man's heredity by being frequently and universally repeated over many generations.



Another of Jung's observations of the mutability of man closely parallels that of the URANTIA teachings, and aptly points out the changing and potentially progressive character of man. When an individual reaches the late thirties or early forties a radical transvaluation occurs. Youthful interests and pursuits lose their value and are replaced by new interests which are more cultural and less biological. The middle-aged person becomes more introverted and less impulsive. Wisdom and sagacity take the place of physical and mental rigor. His values are sublimated in social, religious, civic, and philosophical symbols. He is transformed into a spiritual man.

This transition is the most decisive event in a person's life. It is also one of the most hazardous because if anything goes amiss during the transference of energy the personality may become permanently crippled. This happens, for example, when the cultural and spiritual values of middle age do not utilize all of the energy formerly invested in instinctual aims. In that case, the excess energy is free to upset the equilibrium of the psyche.

Development may follow either a progressive, forward movement or a regressive, backward movement. In normal progression, opposing forces are united in a coordinated and harmonious flow of psychical processes.

That personality has a tendency to develop in the direction of a stable unity is a central feature of Jung's psychology. Development is an unfolding of the original undifferentiated wholeness with which man is born. The ultimate goal of this unfolding is the realization of selfhood.

In order to realize this aim it is necessary for the various systems of personality to become completely differentiated and fully developed. For if any part of the personality is neglected, the neglected and less well-developed systems will act as centers of resistance which will try to capture energy from more fully developed systems. If too many resistances develop the person will become neurotic.

In order to have a healthy, integrated personality, every system must be permitted to reach the fullest degree of differentiation and development. The process by which this is achieved is called the individuation process.

A predominance of organisms acting pacifistically during the Second World War on the defensive side would have triggered national suicide and consequent domination of an uncompromising and tyrannical government. On the other hand, a predominance of human organisms in any nation expressing themselves militaristically during the Third World War crisis could eventuate the destruction of all mankind.

Indeed it becomes a goal of mankind to discern why creatures respond in the manner they do at the time that they do and adapt accordingly.

According to most psychologists and educators of today, the child learns from his early experiences within the home, way before he develops a language system. By the time a child is five or six, he has established a life style and has formulated a pattern of relatively consistent behavior. These are crucial years to the ultimate formulation of a stable planetary citizen. The percepts, experiences, and interactions

received by the child and provided by the parents are apt to determine whether he will be out-going or withdrawn, enthusiastic or pessimistic, apprehensive, impulsive, antagonistic, or compromising, to name just a few of the developmental traits which are to become such a necessary determinant toward that child's future development.

It is the parents who establish the mold for the child's development, his cultural heritage being of supreme importance, while his attitudes are derived in part from parental influences and social exposures.

These environmental influences are termed exogenous factors or precipitating factors and come from outside the organism, in contrast to the previously mentioned endogenous or predisposing factors that are inherent in the organism.

\* The URANTIA Book alludes to these individual differences in the statement on page 1095 that "religious experience is markedly influenced by physical health, inherited temperament, and social environment." Actually all experience is conditioned by these factors.

Experiments on environmental influences on human behavior are legion, and time will not permit elaboration. One can merely take cognizance of our own socio-economic structure to observe the environmental phenomena. Poverty causes diseases for lack of proper medical attention and food, autocratic home rule causes neurotic children, submissive home rule creates sociopathic children, a rejecting home may cause a child to turn psychopathic or psychotic, and an indulgent home can create neurosis or sociopathology in children. Deprive a person of love, affection, attention, recognition, esteem, food, sleep, money, and you will indeed perceive a marked change in his behavioral pattern. The effects of deprivation cannot be underestimated when attempting to determine causes of deviant behavior in the human entity. The cultural influences in one area of this planet may cause the average citizen to feel guilty by not taking the head of a neighboring tribesman who has killed a member of his own tribe, and contrariwise others are conditioned through their culture to put up absolutely no resistance to any form of aggression.

\* Jesus quite aptly pointed out individual differences to the evangelists at the Bethsaida camp. While concluding his address, he said: "You should remember that in body and mind - emotionally - men react individually. The only uniform thing about men is the indwelling spirit." (1672:7)

\* Jesus, who has revealed such a rational pattern of parental perfection in determining and meeting the needs of his family, sets forth seven facts on which a true family is founded (1604:2):

- "... 1. The fact of existence. The relationships of nature and the phenomena of mortal likeness 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 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. When young they are prepared for the greater responsibilities of later life.
- "4. Discipline and restraint. Far seeing 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. Always is his ear open to their petitions; he is ever ready to share their hardships and assist them over their difficulties. The father is supremely interested in the progressive welfare of his progeny.
- "6. Love and mercy. A compassionate father is freely forgiving; fathers do not hold vengeful memories against their children. 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. Death terminates an individual life but not necessarily the family."

#### Experience Necessary for Understanding

\* "As a child Jesus accumulated a vast body of knowledge; as a youth he sorted, classified, and correlated this information; and as he grew older, he began to organize these mental possessions preparatory to utilization in his subsequent teaching." (1405:7)

\* "He lived a real life, a full life, and a truly normal, natural and average life in the flesh. He knows from personal experience the equivalent of the actuality of the entire sum and substance of the living of the life of human beings on the material worlds of time and space." (1425:3)

\* "...experienced those wide ranges of human emotion which reached from superb joy to profound sorrow. He was a child of joy and a being of rare good humor; likewise was he a 'man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' In a spiritual sense, he did live through the mortal life from the bottom to the top, from the beginning to the end. From a material point of view, he might appear to have escaped living through both social extremes of human existence, but intellectually he became wholly familiar with the entire and complete experience of humankind. (1425:4)

By the time Jesus was nineteen, he "had fully won his mother to the acceptance of his methods of child training - - the positive injunction to do good in place of the older Jewish method of forbidding to do evil. In his home and throughout his public-teaching career Jesus invariably employed the positive form of exhortation. Always and everywhere did he say, 'You shall do this--you ought to do that.' Never did he employ the negative mode of teaching derived from the ancient taboos. He refrained from placing emphasis on evil by forbidding it while he exalted the good by commanding

\* its performance. Prayer time in this household was the occasion for discussing anything and everything relating to the welfare of the family." (1401:3)

While Jesus was most methodical and systematic in everything he did, there was also in all his administrative rulings a refreshing elasticity of interpretation and an individuality of adaptation that greatly impressed all the children with the spirit of justice which activated their father-brother. He never arbitrarily disciplined his brothers and sisters, and such uniform fairness and personal consideration greatly endeared Jesus to all his family.

Jesus began wise discipline upon his brothers and sisters at such an early age that little or no punishment was ever required to secure their prompt and wholehearted obedience. The only exception was Jude, upon whom on sundry occasions Jesus found it necessary to impose penalties for his infractions of the rules of the home. On three occasions when it was deemed wise to punish Jude for self-confessed and deliberate violations of the rules of conduct, his punishment was fixed by the unanimous decree of the older children and was assented by Jude himself before it was inflicted.

#### Diversity of Human Nature in Jesus' Own Family

Jesus' own family afforded ample opportunity to perceive the diversity of human nature.

James and Simon grew up trying to follow Jesus' plan of placating their bellicose and sometimes irate playmates by persuasion and nonresistance, and they were fairly successful; but Joseph and Jude, while assenting to such teachings at home, made haste to defend themselves when assailed by their comrades. In particular was Jude guilty of violating the spirit of these teachings. But nonresistance was not a rule of the family. No penalty was attached to the violation of personal teachings.

In general, all of the children, particularly the girls, would consult Jesus about their childhood troubles and confide in him just as they would have in an affectionate father.

#### Character Traits and Attributes of Jesus

Jesus was indeed a majestic personality who aspired to bring out the best in man's character.

\* "The most astonishing and the most revolutionary feature of Michael's mission on earth was his attitude toward women. In a day and generation when a man was not supposed to salute even his own wife in a public place, Jesus dared to take women along as teachers of the gospel in connection with his third tour of Galilee. And he had the consummate courage to do this in the face of the rabbinic teaching which declared that it was 'better that the words of the law should be burned than delivered to women.'" (1671:4)



In one generation Jesus lifted women out of the disrespectful oblivion and the slavish drudgery of the ages. And it is the one shameful thing about the religion that presumed to take Jesus' name that it lacked the moral courage to follow this noble example in its subsequent attitude toward women.

As Jesus mingled with people, they found him entirely free from the superstitions of that day. He was free from religious prejudices; he was never intolerant. He had nothing in his heart resembling social antagonism. While he complied with the good in the religion of his fathers, he did not hesitate to disregard man-made traditions of superstition and bondage. He dared to teach that catastrophes of nature, accidents of time, and other calamitous happenings are not visitations of divine judgment or mysterious dispensations of Providence. He denounced slavish devotion to meaningless ceremonials and exposed the falacy of materialistic worship. He boldly proclaimed man's spiritual freedom and dared to teach that mortals of the flesh are indeed and in truth sons of the living God.

Jesus transcended all the teachings of his forebears when he boldly substituted clean hearts for clean hands as the mark of true religion. He put reality in the place of tradition and swept aside all pretensions of vanity and hypocrisy. And yet this fearless man of God did not give vent to destructive criticism or manifest an utter disregard of the religious, social, economic, and political usages of his day. He was not a militant revolutionist; he was a progressive evolutionist. He engaged in the destruction of that which was only when he simultaneously offered his fellows the superior thing which ought to be.

\* "Jesus received the obedience of his followers without exacting it. Only three men who received his personal call refused to accept the invitation to discipleship. He exercised a peculiar drawing power over men, but he was not dictatorial. He commanded confidence, and no man ever resented his giving a command. He assumed absolute authority over his disciples, but no one ever objected..." (1672:2)

\* "Men were astonished at the originality and authoritativeness of his teaching. They marveled at his patience in dealing with backward and troublesome inquirers. He inspired hope and confidence in the hearts of all who came under his ministry." (1672:3)

\* "On both friends and foes he exercised a strong and peculiarly fascinating influence. Multitudes would follow him for weeks, just to hear his gracious words and behold his simple life. Devoted men and women loved Jesus with a well-nigh superhuman affection. And the better they knew him the more they loved him." (1672:4)

\* "Jesus did not teach nor countenance improvidence, idleness, indifference to providing the physical necessities for one's family, or dependence upon alms. But he did teach that the material and temporal must be subordinated to the welfare of the soul and the progress of the spiritual nature in the kingdom of heaven." (1822:3)

Here indeed was a self-actualized man whose religion was the very essence of doing good unto others. Here was a man who through his own experience knew the individual differences inherent in mankind and developed an approach of spontaneity and uniqueness so original as to cause all truth-discerning humanity familiar with his teachings to subsequently attempt a patterning of their life styles after his.

Self actualization is based on fluency of experience and must not be limited to the static expression of a self-restricting conceptual field in order to escape the insecurity of new and diverse adventures. Progression demands that we experience the unknown. The wise man knows when to change direction, when to broach the cask to draw forth new experience for personality growth. Unfortunately, like an automation proceeding in blind direction without intent and purpose many among us push toward the same unfulfilling ends. The human experience has to be shaped and directed at early levels of expression in order for purposeful direction to be maintained over long time spans.

It is a wise and discerning parent who knows how to administer firm discipline while maintaining an environmental atmosphere conducive to free exploration of the world about which his child lives and has his experiences. The URANTIA Book presents this exemplary parental pattern in the life and teachings of Jesus.

I would like to conclude with two paragraphs from the URANTIA Book.

"Marriage always has been and still is man's supreme dream of temporal ideality. Though this beautiful dream is seldom realized in its entirety, it endures as a glorious ideal, ever luring progressing mankind to greater strivings for human happiness. But young men and women should be taught something of the realities of marriage before they are plunged into the exacting demands of the interassociations of family life; youthful idealization should be tempered with some degree of pre-marital disillusionment." (930:2)

"The youthful idealization of marriage should not, however, be discouraged; such dreams are the visualization of the future goal of family life. This attitude is both stimulating and helpful providing it does not produce an insensitivity to the realization of the practical and commonplace requirements of marriage and subsequent family life." (930:3)

(Abridged copy)