

Summer Study Session Plenary Speech  
Oklahoma City, July 4, 1994  
Janet Farrington

## AS A CHILD OF GOD IN THE FAMILY OF MAN

---

**"To the extent that we do the will of God in whatever universe station we may have our existence, in that measure the almighty potential of the Supreme becomes one step more actual." (Page 1278)**

---

As I was pondering the potential and actual aspects of the evolution of the Supreme one day, and folding yet another basket of laundry for my active family of five, I suddenly had an Aha! experience regarding the nature of the Supreme. I was holding a sock that my baby Hannah loves to pull off her tiny feet and chew, and I was thinking about how her socks would gain substance over the years as her feet grew. Larger and larger would they become until suddenly they would rival my own and then, when my baby reaches womanhood, her socks and not-so-tiny shirts would no longer fill my basket. I realized that each little Hannah-sock reflects the potential that my daughter will someday grow large enough to actually do her own laundry.

I picked up my son's little league tee-shirt and imagined how small it would look next to the high school jersey he might some day toss into the basket. I thought of all the tee-shirts I would surely fold as he journeys on towards manhood; that with each folding, yet another aspect of his potential would be unfolding, and would someday be actualized; that, he too, will someday actually do his own laundry.

As I picked up each little dress and pair of worn jeans, I tried to burn into memory the experience of holding an actual moment of my life with each child, as symbolized by these soon-to-be-outgrown clothes. And then as I held this moment, I scanned across the potential that awaits us and imagined a much older woman looking back and remembering, that her half-empty basket used to hold so much that has now been actualized and is held within the sweet embrace of the Supreme. In that moment I set a new personal standard for cosmic laundry folding. My Aha! experience was the result of discovering that as a parent I hold both potential and actual in my hands, just as does the Universal Mother, the Supreme Being.

On page 1284 the Mighty Messenger tells us that "The great struggle of this universe age is between the potential and actual - the seeking for actualization by all that is as yet unexpressed."

There is no arena of living that reflects this great struggle better than family life. When I think of the challenge human parents face when they struggle to help actualize the potential of their children, I become awestruck by the incredible responsibility with which the Father entrusts us. With the birth of a child two great "potentials" spring into existence. One is the simultaneous birth of a family, either new or newly configured. Another is the evolution of a cosmic citizen, which depends greatly on the potential realized within the family.

**"Into the keeping of mortal man has been given not only adjuster presence of the Paradise Father but also control over the destiny of an infinitesimal fraction of the future of the Supreme. For as man attains human destiny, so does the Supreme achieve destiny of deity levels." (Page 1285)**

The Paradise Father realizes that in order for his mortal children to achieve their spiritual destiny and contribute to the future of the Supreme, they need to feel his presence. And, therefore, the Father resides within each of us, as a friend, a guide and a loving parent. The adjuster provides a constant and loving presence of the paradise Father and reflects the universe model for family life - loving parents raising cosmic citizens through their wise and constant presence.

Human parents have complete responsibility for this role in the lives of their young children prior to the coming of the adjuster. I believe this is why the first, formative years are so important. It falls upon the shoulders of human parents to give not just a part, but the whole of their presence. And it is not time alone that we speak of. Presence of the Father via the adjuster is that still small voice within, always available, always ready. The presence of the human parents is often a much louder voice that says to the child every day of his or her challenging life, "you are loved, you are worthy of love, and I am with you." If all children in our society could depend upon this level of parental presence from both their parents, whether they lived with them or not, the need for mercy on our streets would greatly diminish.

Without this presence, without a constant, loving parental presence, children of God will not evolve their full potential. And for this reason, family life provides the most important foundation upon which human destiny is attained and deity realization of the Supreme is achieved.

Human destiny originates and is actualized within the framework of family throughout our Universe career. Like an ever expanding circle, the family reaches beyond the original few to encompass an ever increasing number of people with whom we work and live. And as our consciousness expands, so does our realization of family. We move from an original definition of our human family towards a global and finally

cosmic definition. There is never a time in the whole of our universe career that we do not define our existence on some level in terms of family.

The human family is the first training ground for cosmic citizenship. It is within this first family that we begin to understand the gift of free will. From the earliest states of human consciousness, the evolving child struggles to exercise free will. Every milestone in the child's development is related to how the child expresses free will. Initially, the child is exposed to the limits within which free will can be exercised. Eventually, step-by-step, the child, if given the chance, will learn to exercise free will in a way that leads to progress.

The human family is a microcosm of the Supreme. The evolution of the family is dependent on the realization of potential by each of its members. Step-by-step, the family evolves as the individuals evolve. Every interaction between individuals in the family serves to either contribute to the growth of the whole family or to inhibit that growth. And when the growth of the family is inhibited, the growth of the individuals within that family also suffers. "As moves the part, so moves the whole."

I feel the need to labor a bit in the definition of the human family. What first comes to mind when family is discussed is mom, dad and the kids. This is a narrow and limiting perception. Mom, Dad and the kids is only one configuration of the family, albeit the majority one. The family can also be mom and the kids, dad and the kids, two moms or two dads and the kids, a group of friends with some kids, grandma and the kids, a kid with a kid.

The family needs to be defined in a way that brings honor to all possible arrangements of human beings who live in close relationship to one another; who share with each other their constant and loving presence; who strive to understand their responsibility to all God's children.

The child resides within the Supreme, within the brotherhood of man, and within a human family simultaneously. But it is within the human family that a child first learns what it means to be dependent on and responsible for others - brotherhood. It is within the human family that a child first experiences the love of a parent - Fatherhood. The responsibility for teaching brotherhood and fatherhood is a challenging task for parents who may be overworked, undertrained and struggling. Perhaps the job of teaching our young brothers and sisters how to develop their minds, hearts and souls is such an important task that it falls upon all shoulders in the cosmic family. Perhaps this work is of the Supreme.

potential reach of family beyond mother, father and kids, to encompass elders, mentors and friends. We need to share our presence with each other as members of a loving extended family.

The Almighty Supreme is "the form of the yet unformed, the pattern of the yet uncreated." The Supreme is your universe home, and when you find him, it will be like returning home. He is your experiential parent, and even as in the experience of human beings, so has he grown in the experience of divine parenthood. (Page 1288)

When we contemplate our relationship to children as members of the brotherhood of man, we contemplate divine parenthood. When we help children actualize that which is potential, we experience divine parenthood. And just as the Supreme grows as a result of divine parenthood, so do we. It is no small requirement that we must have accomplished the equivalent of raising ~~three~~ children before we are allowed to progress in our universe career.

I stress the word "equivalent". It is not required that we give birth to and parent ~~three~~ children in our homes. It is required that we gain an equivalent experience. As advocates, as mentors, as friends, we gain experience. As we become partners with parents we provide ourselves the opportunity for divine parenthood.

The child represents a nearly limitless potential for Supremacy. The child who grows in the loving embrace of an extended human family experiences the brotherhood of man during his critical formative years. Service becomes a natural extension of his love for others. The child who is parented as a child of God by loving sisters and brothers grows secure in her faith in the Fatherhood of God. Outreach becomes a natural extension of God's love for her.

**Man can discover the Father in his heart, but he will have to search for the Supreme in the hearts of all other men; and when all creatures perfectly reveal the love of the Supreme, then will he become a universe actuality to all creatures.** (Page 1290)

Many people in the Urantia movement have asked for an increased focus on family. This has been interpreted by some as a call for Sunday school and support materials for the spiritual education of children. The focus on this one important and yet limited perspective is sure to create division within our community.

It is not a specific theology for children that we need, but a broad philosophy of family. It is not a program to separate and educate children that will support the family, but a process to incorporate and illuminate all family members. We need to recognize the desperate need for extended family in our community and society as a whole. We need to understand the potential reach of family beyond mother, father and kids, to encompass elders, mentors and friends. We need to share our presence with each other as members of a loving extended family.

We need elders to sit with reverent children at their knees and share stories filled with wisdom and love. We need mentors to walk side-by-side with adolescents as they prepare for entry into the world of adults by defining values and discovering goals. We need friends to stand with parents in times of need, to offer support and sustenance as we all strive to raise children with kindness and love. We need to feel each others' presence; to touch each others' inner spirits.

**The Supreme is the beauty of physical harmony, the truth of intellectual meaning and the goodness of spiritual value. He is the sweetness of true success and the joy of everlasting achievement. (Page 1278)**

A philosophy of family would recognize the separate, simultaneous and Supreme realities of family life. We each belong to an original family, a primary family, an extended family, a global family and a divine family. Each new expression of family builds upon all former expressions and encompasses all that a child of God has discovered about loving relationships.

A philosophy of family would recognize that the human family is a microcosm of the Supreme, and provides a forum for the expression of the spiritual realities that actualize the Supreme. It is in relationship with others that we discover spiritual truth; it is the discovery and expression of spiritual truth that evolves the Supreme.

A philosophy of family would recognize that human relationships offer both a divine and daunting challenge. Within the family, in every relationship, we struggle to love each other as we know our Paradise Father loves us. We struggle for the patience to allow individual free will unique expression, when what we really crave is obedience. We struggle to ask questions when our instinct and training is to issue commands. We struggle to embrace those with whom we disagree and stand in the face of adversity when the way of the world is to throw stones.

We carve out of potential the actuality of the Supreme when we push ourselves beyond our personal limits and find forgiveness and love for others. We evolve as the Supreme evolves, struggling for deity expression in the experiential reality of finite existence.

Forgiveness is the currency of evolution. Without forgiveness, our relationships with each other would deteriorate; without forgiveness, we could not move forward. Our struggle for progress is dependent on feeling the need for change. That need is often born of conflict and of pain. Without forgiveness, the emerging child of God would be continuously burdened by the mistakes of the evolving child of man. We must forgive ourselves by exercising faith and forgive each other by expressing love. We must gather unto ourselves great stores of forgiveness and spend liberally.

We must forgive the mistakes of our parents, just as we hope to be forgiven by our children. This does not mean forget. This does not mean ignore. We cannot hope to progress without understanding those forces that have brought us to the crossroads of our lives as parents. In those moments when we feel the urge to repeat the mistakes we suffered in our childhood, we need to forgive - our parents, ourselves, our children. And in that moment of forgiveness the Supreme evolves, the family evolves, and the brotherhood of man progresses one step beyond what it was a moment before. In that moment of forgiveness the Fatherhood of God is reflected in the life of a child of man.

We must forgive the mistakes of our brothers and sisters, just as we hope to be forgiven by them. This does not mean we should ignore evil. This does not mean we should overlook injustice. We cannot hope to progress without a wise examination of the decisions and actions that shape our world. And we cannot hope to progress without a gentle response. The urge to criticize others is often stronger than the desire to forgive and encourage resolution. And yet a continuing conflict does very little to evolve the Supreme. The lack of forgiveness and resolution retards evolution just as much as evil and injustice.

**The fruits of the spirit are the substance of the Supreme as he is realizable in human experience. (Page 1290)**

The Supreme does not evolve as a result of the success, power, prestige or position acquired by an individual. The Supreme evolves as a result of the loving relationships actualized between individuals. And these relationships are dependent on forgiveness, tact, tolerance, encouragement and kindness. There is no limit to the "do unto others" truth; if it precedes all behavior, it can bear all response. This is especially true in the family. There is no better way to teach children respect, than to treat them with respect. There is no better way to reveal the existence of God than to reflect God's love.

**Michael, a creator, revealed the divine love of the Creator Father for his terrestrial children. And, having discovered and received this divine affection, men can aspire to reveal this love to their brethren in the flesh. Such creature affection is a true reflection of the Supreme. (Page 1279)**

If forgiveness is the currency of evolution, than the family is the bank of the Supreme. The interest that is accumulated as a result of forgiveness in the family grows exponentially throughout eternity. A child who is forgiven his faults in his original family, learns to forgive his own children in his primary family. A Brother who is forgiven his mistakes in the extended family, learns to forgive all his brothers and sisters in the global family. These human investments have spiritual value. These are the dividends that evolve the Supreme.

6139 Lime Quarry Road  
Enterprise, OR 97128  
(503) 426-781  
at August 1981

**When you find the Father, you will find the cause of your spiritual ascent in the universes; when you find the Supreme, you will discover the great result of your career of paradise progression. (page 1291)**

The Father is the cause, the Supreme is the result. I believe the family is the way: The way to integrate spiritual values with social progress; the way to initiate Fatherhood and invest in brotherhood; the way to realize the cosmic value of finite experience - as a child of God in the family of man. The family can provide a safe haven, a loving embrace, a place to turn when living gets hard.

The family of Urantia book readers is a reality, not a dream. A reality unexpressed, perhaps unformed, but real, nonetheless. Within this family of readers we can form extended families, we can include mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers, elders, mentors and friends. Right along side the study group, we can nurture the family group - a committed and diverse family of readers who support each other in times of need and share with each other the bountiful harvest of the fruits of the spirit. This does not require a new theology, but a true philosophy that broadly defines family and boldly embraces it.

Then we will be more than ready to cross international borders and expand interfaith boundaries. Then we will offer something of Supreme value to our spiritually hungry brothers and sisters of all faiths throughout the world - a spiritual philosophy that promotes family living as a tool for cosmic growth; a philosophy of living that truly helps the child of God grow within the family of man.

Today, as we partake of Harry's hospitality and celebrate July 4th, independence day, let's recognize each other as members of an extended family and celebrate, as well, our interdependence. Let's cherish each and every child of God who gathers with us here today, young and old, known and unknown. After all, this is the stuff of which the Supreme is made. This, my brothers and sisters, is family.

( New Address )

61138 Lime Quarry Road

Enterprise, OR 97828

(503) 426-4781

as of August 1<sup>st</sup>