

"PERSONAL GROWTH: THE SEVEN PSYCHIC CIRCLES"

by

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Introduction

Our total-personality growth -- our progressive attainment of the seven psychic circles -- is and must be immensely influenced by the types of mind and spirit ministry which other speakers are discussing today. From the seventh to the third circle our mindal growth involves ever-intensified functioning of the adjutant mind-spirits, the spirits of intuition, understanding, courage, knowledge, counsel, worship, and wisdom. The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Truth foster our spiritual growth as we ascend the seven psychic circles. Further, we are told that<sup>1</sup>

Circle by circle your intellectual decisions, moral choosings, and spiritual development add to the ability of the Adjuster to function in your mind; circle by circle you thereby ascend from the lower stages of Adjuster association and mind attunement, so that the Adjuster is increasingly enabled to register his picturizations of destiny with augmenting vividness and conviction upon the evolving consciousness of this God-seeking mind-soul.

Nevertheless, we are informed that most of us will hear the Adjuster's voice "seldom during a lifetime," and that "Human beings below the third and second circles of attainment rarely hear the Adjuster's direct voice except in moments of supreme desire, in a supreme situation, and consequent upon a supreme decision."<sup>2</sup>

Seraphic ministry to us is directly related to circle attainment. When we reach the third circle we receive personal guardians, resulting in "an unmistakable improvement in all phases of cosmic achievement and spiritual development."<sup>3</sup>

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But all of this growth is for the benefit of others as well, not merely for our own personal satisfaction:<sup>4</sup>

The universe is a whole; no thing or being exists or lives in isolation. Self-realization is potentially evil if it is anti-social. It is literally true: "No man lives by himself." Cosmic socialization constitutes the highest form of personality unification. Said Jesus: "He who would be greatest among you, let him become server of all."

If we truly desire to serve, our growth through the psychic circles will be of enhanced benefit to others: "The successful traversal of these levels demands the harmonious functioning of the entire personality"<sup>5</sup>; and, as a result, "circle attainment always augments the potential of human success and mortal achievement."<sup>6</sup>

#### I. NATURE OF THE SEVEN PSYCHIC CIRCLES

The exact nature of the seven psychic circles is highly personal. For each individual, the levels vary; they appear to be determined by each human being's capacity for growth.<sup>7</sup> In any case these attainment levels relate to balanced growth of the whole person -- growth in material, intellectual, and spiritual terms. Or, phrased in another way, the seven psychic circles have to do with personality status, mind attainment, soul growth, and Adjuster attunement.<sup>8</sup> In yet another passage we are told that the seven psychic circles are levels of associated intellectual, social, spiritual, and cosmic-insight values.<sup>9</sup>

All aspects of personal growth should occur simultaneously, in proper proportion:<sup>10</sup>

When the development of the intellectual nature proceeds faster than that of the spiritual, such a situation renders communication with the Thought Adjuster both difficult and dangerous. Likewise, over-spiritual development tends to produce a

fanatical and perverted interpretation of the spirit leadings of the divine indweller. Lack of spiritual capacity makes it very difficult to transmit to such a material intellect the spiritual truths resident in the higher superconsciousness. It is to the mind of perfect poise, housed in a body of clean habits, stabilized neural energies, and balanced chemical function -- when the physical, mental, and spiritual powers are in triune harmony of development -- that a maximum of light and truth can be imparted with a minimum of temporal danger or risk to the real welfare of such a being. By such a balanced growth does man ascend the circles of planetary progression one by one, from the seventh to the last.

A human being enters the seventh circle as a child (at about the age of five), when he or she learns the difference between right and wrong. At this point the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Truth function, and the Thought Adjuster arrives to indwell the mind.<sup>11</sup>

The events which characterize entry into the sixth, fifth, and fourth circles are not described in The URANTIA Book. As previously mentioned, personal seraphic guardians are assigned upon a human being's entry into the third circle:<sup>12</sup> "when a mortal mind breaks through the inertia of animal legacy and attains the third circle of human intellectuality and acquired spirituality." Another result of attaining the third circle is that the mortal acquires advanced standing, becoming qualified for repersonalization on the mansion worlds on the third day after natural death, rather than remaining in the category of those who will be repersonalized in a dispensational or special resurrection.<sup>13</sup>

The first circle "represents the highest possible realization of mind-Adjuster relationship in the human experience prior to the liberation of the evolving mortal soul from the

habiliments of the material body. Concerning mind, emotions, and cosmic insight, this achievement of the first psychic circle is the nearest possible approach of material mind and spirit Adjuster in human experience."<sup>14</sup>

Let me pause here and confess that if it is perfectly clear to you just exactly what the seven psychic circles represent, then you have the advantage over me. Perhaps we could look at the seven psychic circles as embodying a human being's total potential for personal growth. Then, if we wanted to advance a rash speculation, we might say that each circle corresponds to one-seventh of each person's total potential. According to this model we would enter the third circle when we had already actualized four-sevenths of our human potential.

However, I very much doubt that the seven psychic circles divide total human potential into slices which are precisely equal in a mathematical sense. The model should not be pushed too far, but perhaps you too will find it useful.

More importantly, The URANTIA Book suggests that we might understand the seven psychic circles as "cosmic levels -- actual meaning grasps and value realizations of progressive approach to the morontia consciousness of initial relationship of the evolutionary soul with the emerging Supreme Being."<sup>15</sup> Thus, attainment of the psychic circles requires substantial effort on our part:<sup>16</sup>

The motivation of faith makes experiential the full realization of man's sonship with God, but action, completion of decisions, is essential to the evolutionary attainment of consciousness of progressive kinship with the cosmic actuality of the Supreme Being. Faith transmutes potentials to actuals in the spiritual world, but potentials become actuals in the finite realms of the Supreme only by and through the realization of choice-experience.

Or, to put this in simpler terms, we grow in the seven psychic circles by drawing close to God's plan for the evolution of our planet and the universe of universes; by making clear decisions which show our acceptance of our duty to serve; and by putting these decisions into action, for the benefit of all. In the long run these life patterns lead to augmenting vision -- man's "increased understanding of the world in which he lives; his enlarging capacity for the comprehension of the material facts of time, the meaningful ideas of thought, and the valuable ideals of spiritual insight."<sup>17</sup> These same life patterns also eventually produce increasing control -- "the gradual accumulation of the knowledge of the laws of the material world, the purposes of spiritual existence, and the possibilities of the philosophic co-ordination of these two realities."<sup>18</sup>

To conclude our discussion of the nature of the seven psychic circles, it is important for us to understand that we have plenty of time to achieve them: either in this life or in the next:<sup>19</sup>

Though the cosmic circles of personality growth must eventually be attained, if, through no fault of your own, the accidents of time and the handicaps of material existence prevent your mastering these levels on your native planet, if your intentions and desires are of survival value, there are issued the decrees of probation extension. You will be afforded additional time in which to prove yourself.

## II. THE FLOWERING OF THE HUMAN JESUS

Although we cannot precisely trace a standard progression through the seven psychic circles, The URANTIA Book's account of the flowering of the human Jesus gives us much food for thought:<sup>20</sup>

Jesus did not live his life on earth in order to set an example for all other human beings to copy. He lived this life in the flesh by the same mercy ministry that you all may live your lives on earth; and as he lived his mortal life in his day and as he was, so did he thereby set the example for all of us thus to live our lives in our day and as we are. You may not aspire to live his life, but you can resolve to live your lives even as, and by the same means that, he lived his.

For example, we are told that at the age of twelve Jesus already had "a fascinating voice."<sup>21</sup> At the age of sixteen Jesus<sup>22</sup>

was a virile and comely youth. He became increasingly sober and serious, but he was kind and sympathetic. His eye was kind but searching; his smile was always engaging and reassuring. His voice was musical but authoritative; his greeting cordial but unaffected. . . . .

This physically strong and robust youth also acquired the full growth of his human intellect, not the full experience of human thinking but the fullness of capacity for such intellectual development. He possessed a healthy and well-proportioned body, a keen and analytical mind, a kind and sympathetic disposition, a fluctuating but aggressive temperament, all of which were becoming organized into a strong, striking, and attractive personality.

We are informed that at the age of eighteen "Jesus possessed the ability effectively to mobilize all his powers of mind, soul, and body on the task immediately in hand. He could concentrate his deep-thinking mind on the one problem which he wished to solve, and this, in connection with his untiring patience, enabled him serenely to endure the trials of a difficult mortal existence -- to live as if he were "seeing Him who is invisible."<sup>23</sup>

Toward the end of the paper on "The Adolescent Years," The URANTIA Book states that at the age of twenty<sup>24</sup>

Jesus is rapidly becoming a man, not just a young man but an adult. He has learned well to bear responsibility. He knows how to carry on in the face of disappointment. He bears up bravely when his plans are thwarted and his purposes temporarily defeated. He has learned how to be fair and just even in the face of injustice. He is learning how to adjust his ideals of spiritual living to the practical demands of earthly existence. He is learning how to plan for the achievement of a higher and distant goal of idealism while he toils earnestly for the attainment of a nearer and immediate goal of necessity. He is steadily acquiring the art of adjusting his aspirations to the commonplace demands of the human occasion. He has very nearly mastered the technique of utilizing the energy of the spiritual drive to turn the mechanism of material achievement. He is slowly learning how to live the heavenly life while he continues on with the earthly existence. More and more he depends upon the ultimate guidance of his heavenly Father while he assumes the fatherly role of guiding and directing the children of his earth family. He is becoming experienced in the skillful wresting of victory from the very jaws of defeat; he is learning how to transform the difficulties of time into the triumphs of eternity.

Throughout his life, Jesus was always "submissively subject to the will of the Father in heaven."<sup>25</sup> At twenty-five "Jesus was one of the most robust and refined specimens of manhood to appear on earth since the days of Adam. His physical development was superb. His mind was active, keen, and penetrating -- compared with the average mentality of his contemporaries, it had developed gigantic proportions -- and his spirit was indeed humanly divine."<sup>26</sup> Right up to his baptism Jesus continued "to take a keen personal interest in the spiritual welfare of every one of his brothers and sisters."<sup>27</sup>

In his twenty-seventh year "Jesus made great advances in the ascendant mastery of his human mind and attained new and high levels of conscious contact with his indwelling Thought Adjuster."<sup>28</sup> On Mount Hermon, during six weeks in August and September of his thirty-first year, Jesus<sup>29</sup>

finished the mortal task of achieving the circles of mind-understanding and personality-control. Throughout this period of communion with his heavenly Father the indwelling Adjuster also completed the assigned services. The mortal goal of this earth creature was there attained. Only the final phase of mind and Adjuster attunement remained to be consummated.

Further, we are told that as Jesus was completing his transit of the seven psychic circles, a great change had been coming over him:<sup>30</sup>

Few of the people who had enjoyed his visits and ministrations as he had gone up and down in the land ever subsequently recognized in the public teacher the same person they had known and loved as a private individual in former years. And there was a reason for this failure of his early beneficiaries to recognize him in his later role of public and authoritative teacher. For long years this transformation of mind and spirit had been in progress, and it was finished during the eventful sojourn on Mount Hermon.

Forgive me for having excerpted so liberally in relation to Jesus' pre-baptismal life, and for having offered so little analysis! To my way of thinking, these passages speak for themselves and are a much better way of understanding Jesus' growth than any general summary I could possibly prepare.<sup>31</sup>

III. THE ELEMENTS OF PERSONAL GROWTH

One of the definitions we mentioned earlier associates circle attainment with levels of associated intellectual, social, spiritual, and cosmic-insight values.<sup>32</sup> Can we therefore derive a prescription which will be valid for us all?

Fortunately, we cannot. We are all unique, and the elements of personal growth will be significantly different for each of us. Overall, it amounts to a unification of contrasts:<sup>33</sup>

Worship -- contemplation of the spiritual -- must alternate with service, contact with material reality. Work should alternate with play; religion should be balanced by humor. Profound philosophy should be relieved by rhythmic poetry. The strain of living -- the time tension of personality -- should be relaxed by the restfulness of worship. The feelings of insecurity arising from the fear of personality isolation in the universe should be antidoted by the faith contemplation of the Father and by the attempted realization of the Supreme.

On the intellectual side, we are told that "While it is true that many men and women must assiduously apply themselves to some definite pursuit as a livelihood vocation, it is nevertheless wholly desirable that human beings should cultivate a wide range of cultural familiarity with life as it is lived on earth. Truly educated persons are not satisfied with remaining in ignorance of the lives and doings of their fellows."<sup>34</sup>

From a social point of view, we know that The URANTIA Book lays great stress on the values of marriage and parenthood, and that we are all required to acquire parental experience at some point -- either here or on Jerusem.<sup>35</sup> Thus,

although we would not expect marriage and parenthood to exhaust the social aspects of our growth through the psychic circles, these two fundamental relationships must surely play an important part.

In relation to cosmic insight, we know that truth, beauty, and goodness are closely linked. The URANTIA Book tells us that<sup>36</sup>

The attainment of cosmologic levels of thought includes:

1. Curiosity. Hunger for harmony and thirst for beauty. Persistent attempts to discover new levels of harmonious cosmic relationships.

2. Aesthetic appreciation. Love of the beautiful and ever-advancing appreciation of the artistic touch of all creative manifestations on all levels of reality.

3. Ethic sensitivity. Through the realization of truth the appreciation of beauty leads to the sense of the eternal fitness of those things which impinge upon the recognition of divine goodness in Deity relations with all beings; and thus even cosmology leads to the pursuit of divine reality values -- to God-consciousness.

Increasing attunement to the Adjuster is a very important aspect of our transit through the seven psychic circles. We are told that we can augment Adjuster harmony by:<sup>37</sup>

1. Choosing to respond to divine leading; sincerely basing the human life on the highest consciousness of truth, beauty, and goodness, and then co-ordinating these qualities of divinity through wisdom, worship, faith, and love.

2. Loving God and desiring to be like him -- genuine recognition of the divine fatherhood and loving worship of the heavenly Parent.

3. Loving man and sincerely desiring to serve him -- wholehearted recognition of

the brotherhood of man coupled with an intelligent and wise affection for each of your fellow mortals.

4. Joyful acceptance of cosmic citizenship -- honest recognition of your progressive obligations to the Supreme Being, awareness of interdependence of evolutionary man and evolving Deity. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty.

On the spiritual side, we can "develop religious predispositions toward favorable reaction to spiritual stimuli, a sort of conditioned spiritual reflex";<sup>38</sup>

Habits which favor religious growth embrace cultivated sensitivity to divine values, recognition of religious living in others, reflective meditation on cosmic meanings, worshipful problem solving, sharing one's spiritual life with one's fellows, avoidance of selfishness, refusal to presume on divine mercy, living as in the presence of God. The factors of religious growth may be intentional, but the growth itself is unvaryingly unconscious.

Rodan of Alexandria warmly praised Jesus' practice of worshipful meditation, saying that in such communion with the Father "is to be found the technique, not only of gathering strength and wisdom for the ordinary conflicts of living, but also of appropriating the energy for the solution of the higher problems of a moral and spiritual nature."<sup>39</sup> Further, Rodan stated that<sup>40</sup>

This worshipful practice of your Master brings that relaxation which renews the mind; that illumination which inspires the soul; that courage which enables one bravely to face one's problems; that self-understanding which obliterates debilitating fear; and that consciousness of union with divinity which equips man with the assurance that enables him to dare to be Godlike. The relaxation of worship, or

spiritual communion as practiced by the Master, relieves tension, removes conflicts, and mightily augments the total resources of the personality.

But before we end our discussion of the elements of personal growth, we must certainly refer to prayer, which we are informed is the most effective technique for augmenting our spiritual resources:<sup>41</sup>

Genuine prayer adds to spiritual growth, modifies attitudes, and yields that satisfaction which comes from communion with divinity. It is a spontaneous outburst of God-consciousness.

God answers man's prayer by giving him an increased revelation of truth, an enhanced appreciation of beauty, and an augmented concept of goodness. Prayer is a subjective gesture, but it contacts with mighty objective realities on the spiritual levels of human experience; it is a meaningful reach by the human for superhuman values. It is the most potent spiritual-growth stimulus.

But perhaps you think the seven psychic circles insufficiently challenging, or perhaps you are not altogether entranced with the thought of dying. There is an alternative: fusion with the Thought Adjuster at the close of your life in the flesh!<sup>42</sup>

The achievement of the seven cosmic circles does not equal Adjuster fusion. There are many mortals living on Urantia who have attained their circles; but fusion depends on yet other greater and more sublime spiritual achievements, upon the attainment of a final and complete attunement of the mortal will with the will of God as it is resident in the Thought Adjuster.

When a human being has completed the circles of cosmic achievement, and further, when the final choosing of the mortal will permits the Adjuster to complete the association of human identity with the morontial soul during evolutionary and physical life,

then do such consummated liaisons of soul and Adjuster go on independently to the mansion worlds, and there is issued the mandate from Uversa which provides for the immediate fusion of the Adjuster and the mortal soul. This fusion during physical life instantly consumes the physical body; the human beings who might witness such a spectacle would only observe the translating mortal disappear "in chariots of fire."

And when you get ready, please let me know: I would definitely like to take a picture of that!

[October 28, 1978]

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Notes

- 1 Page 1209, last paragraph.\*
- 2 Page 1213, second paragraph from the bottom.\*
- 3 Page 1210, second paragraph from the bottom.\* See also page 1242, paragraphs 3 and 4.
- 4 Page 647, paragraph 6.\*
- 5 Page 1209, paragraph 4.\*
- 6 Page 1211, paragraph 5.\*
- 7 Page 1210, paragraph 2.
- 8 Page 1209, paragraph 4.
- 9 Page 569, paragraph 5.
- 10 Page 1209, paragraph 5.\* (Emphasis added.)
- 11 Page 1210, third paragraph from the bottom.
- 12 Page 1242, paragraph 4.\*
- 13 Page 1231, last paragraph; page 569, fourth paragraph.
- 14 Page 1210, paragraph at bottom.\*
- 15 Page 1211, paragraph 2.\*
- 16 Page 1211, paragraph 3.\*
- 17 Page 1306, second paragraph.\*
- 18 Page 1306, third paragraph.\*
- 19 Page 1233, paragraph 3.\*
- 20 Pages 1425-1426.\*
- 21 Page 1382, first paragraph in Section 5.\*
- 22 Pages 1395-1396.\*
- 23 Pages 1400-1401.\*
- 24 Page 1405, paragraph 5.\*
- 25 Page 1409, paragraph 3.\*
- 26 Page 1415, paragraph 2.\*
- 27 Page 1419, paragraph 1.\*
- 28 Page 1421, paragraph 5.\*
- 29 Page 1493, paragraph 4.\*
- 30 Page 1495, last paragraph.\*

Notes (continued)

- 31 For further reading on this topic, see "The Human Jesus" (pages 1424-1426) and "Personal Work in Corinth" (pages 1474-1476). Jesus' public ministry of course occurred after his completion of the seven psychic circles, but the spirit of his actions in part testifies to the results of that attainment. Many passages are instructive, but I would particularly recommend "As Jesus Passed By" (pages 1874-1875).
- 32 Page 569, paragraph 5.
- 33 Page 1616, paragraph 5. \*
- 34 Page 1674, paragraph 2. \*
- 35 Page 516, paragraph 3.
- 36 Page 646, toward the bottom. \*
- 37 Page 1206, toward the bottom. \*
- 38 Page 1095, paragraph 4. \*
- 39 Page 1774, paragraph 3. \*
- 40 Page 1774, paragraph 5. \*
- 41 Page 1002, paragraphs 3 and 4. \*
- 42 Page 1212, paragraphs 3 and 4. \*

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2ND CENTRAL ATLANTIC CONFERENCE OF URANTIA BOOK READERS;

PRESENTATION 3;

"PERSONAL GROWTH: THE SEVEN PSYCHIC CIRCLES"

Questions for the Workshop Discussion

1. Is altruistic service inextricably linked to personal growth? Discuss the relationship.
2. Discuss the social aspects of personal growth.
3. Discuss the mindal aspects of personal growth, including cosmic insight.
4. Discuss the spiritual aspects of personal growth.
5. Discuss the interrelationships among the social, mindal, and spiritual aspects of social growth. Why is unbalanced growth undesirable and possibly dangerous?

personal