"The Urantia Book and Our Place in the Universe" (Click here for slides).

[Maire Brennan – "Perfect Time" (4:40)] (Click here for audio by Stan).

"Hi, everyone. That was Maire Brennan, Enya's sister, with a piece called "Perfect Time." [Fellowship of the Ring – "A Knife in the Dark"]

"What we see above us now is what we would see at this moment in time if the roof were suddenly to disappear, along with all the clouds, pollution, light pollution, anxiety, depression, heavy hearts, worries about the world, and so forth, that keep us looking down rather than up.

"Since there are some here who may not be familiar with The Urantia Book, I want to ask the indulgence of those who are, while I say a little about what the book is, before we focus more on what it tells us about the cosmos we live in.

[Bartok's "Divertimento for Strings"]

"At a very dark time in history, in the last century, after the most horrible of wars up to that time was over but another, even more terrible, was brewing already in minds filled with hate and spiritual insanity, William Butler Yeats wrote:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere The ceremony of innocence is drowned; The best lack all conviction, while the worst

Are full of passionate intensity. Surely some revelation is at hand.

"At that time in Chicago a revelation was beginning to appear, that would later be published in the form of a book, that was destined in time to transform civilization by awakening our planet to its place in the inhabited universe. In the beginning of the revelation was this statement:

[Fellowship of the Ring – "The Prophecy" (2:50), sequeing to "Amon Hen" (1:54)]

Your world, Urantia, is one of many similar inhabited planets which comprise the local universe of Nebadon. This universe, together with similar creations, makes up the superuniverse of Orvonton, from whose capital, Uversa, our commission hails. Orvonton is one of the seven evolutionary superuniverses of time and space which circle the neverbeginning, never-ending creation of divine perfection—the central universe of Havona. At the heart of this eternal and central universe is the stationary Isle of Paradise, the geographic center of infinity and the dwelling place of the eternal God.

[Fellowship of the Ring – "Lothlorien"]

"In other words, these words and those that followed them were being presented by those who lived beyond our world, to inform us, finally, that we are not alone in the universe and never have been – that in fact life was planted here eons ago, as it's planted on all planets destined to undergo the evolutionary unfolding of life. It may be difficult for our skeptical, materialistic age to believe what it is being prepared for – especially those in positions of power they don't deserve – but the truth, as it turns out, is stranger even than science fiction."

"So far, the world in general hasn't really noticed the book and what it means, though more and more people are – one by one, turning around from their busy, often anxious lives and asking themselves, 'Wait – what was that?' looking closer, and wondering, 'Can this be what it says it is?'

"There are many reasons, explained in the book, for our long isolation from

communication with other worlds, what's essentially a quarantine we've been under for 200,000 years, that's not really all our fault. Throughout the hundreds of millenia of evolving civilization here there were many individuals who were aware that we're not alone, but it seems that one of the meanings of the book's appearance is that we're being prepared as a civilization now to awaken to the fact that our long apparent cosmic orphanhood is over, an orphanhood which was always an illusion born of ignorance. The religions of the world have tried throughout time to assert this reality too, in the best ways they knew how to, but another meaning of the book is that the time has come when science, philosophy, and religion need to be seen as different aspects of a single knowing, a single relationship with reality, and with the Source and Destiny of reality, who is closer to each of us than any other person, priest, or teacher ever can be, and always will be.

[Fellowship of the Ring – "The Bridge of Khazad-Dum"]

"Human death, which so many fear, is looked upon by the authors of the book, and will be looked upon by a more enlightened civilization here to come, as a graduation into a universe we step out into as literal sons and daughters of the Source of everything, who is not an impersonal force, though the Source of all energy, but a Someone who knows and can be known, loves and can be loved, and knows what we need, and long for most deeply, because this Someone is the real secret of our identity, who lives, and waits for us, not only at the geographic center of infinity, but also at the deepest center of each of our minds.

"After our short stay in our kindergarten-like world here, as violent as it is – more violent than a kindergarten of children would be – physical death enables us to enter a university of infinite learning and experience, to expand the meaning and value of who we are, into potentials no other beings have been able to see the limits of, though we begin at the very bottom of conscious life, even as one-celled organisms in the womb.

[1]"Here are some visions of this present and future university of ours, from the Hubble telescope, a wonderful gift to us from science.

[Tangerine Dream – "Desire" (5:20)]

"This is a cluster of supernovae pushing away pink gas clouds in the Tarantula Nebula, part of the Large Magellanic Cloud, which is not really part of our galaxy, but part of our sector of inhabited space.

[2]"These are gas clouds in the Trifid Nebula, in Sagittarius, which we'll see is the direction of the source.

[3]"Gas clouds in the Keyhole Nebula, 8000 ly distant in the constellation Carina (in the southern hemisphere sky).

[4]"Clouds in The Eagle Nebula, in the constellation Serpens, above Sagittarius and Scorpius.

[5]"Clouds in the Swan Nebula, in Sagittarius.

[6]"The Ant Nebula, in the southern constellation Norma.

[7]"This is a detail of the Large Magellanic Cloud – part of our segment of inhabited

space, Orvonton, but not part of the Milky Way galaxy that forms its core.

[8]"A supernova remnant in the Small Magellanic Cloud, another part of Orvonton that's not part of the Milky Way.

[9]"The Little Ghost Nebula, 2,000 plus light-years away, a nova in Ophiuchus, above Scorpius. The blue color is from ionized oxygen, the green from ionized hydrogen, and the red from ionized nitrogen.

[10]"Here's a closer view of it.

[11]"The Helix Nebula in Aquarius, a supernova remnant between 500 and 700 light years distant – a fairly close neighbor of our solar system, maybe within Nebadon. For those who don't know, I'll explain in a bit what Nebadon is. And to show what the Hubble can do, here's a closeup:

[12]"Each of these knots of gas is twice the size of our solar system.

[13]"This is a star in Monoceros, which 2 years ago suddenly became 600,000 times brighter than our sun, then faded, leaving huge dust clouds. It's a little east of Orion, at the edge of the Milky Way, about 20,000 light years distant.

[14]"The Ring Galaxy, 300 million light-years away in the southern constellation Dorado.

[15]"This is called Hoag's Object – a double ring galaxy roughly the size of the Milky Way, 600 million light years away in the constellation Serpens.

"There are correlations, similarities, and differences with our science in the million words of The Urantia Book. About the age of our planet, for instance, about 4a billion years, science and The Urantia Book agree. The age of the universe, however, is far older in The Urantia Book than the 14 billion years science currently estimates, which is only three times older than our little planet, after all. The book gives the age of even our local nebula – our closest, relatively small family of suns and their planets – as in the hundreds of billions of years. Going farther inward to the very center of space in the book we find a place older than time itself, and perhaps younger as well, in that it doesn't exist in time. It's a place that will be our personal home billions of years in the future, after we've traversed all the grades of learning, experience, and growth that will develop in us the senses and awareness to be able to experience it.

"This place at the center of everything is the largest single object in the universe, many light years, or even hundreds of light years, across, with a mass whose gravity is more than capable of holding all the matter and energy that has yet appeared or will ever appear throughout all space. It's neither dead nor alive. It is to matter and energy what God is to personality. It's called the Isle of Paradise, located about here in the sky, though invisible behind the starclouds of the Milky Way and other obstructions. This central Isle hovers, in a way, between time and space – absolutely still, the only perfectly motionless thing in the universe. It's essentially flat, seed-shaped, or maybe it would be more accurate to say that seeds are Paradise-shaped, enfolding as it does all the potentials of infinity. This absolute center of infinity is surprisingly close to us in terms of universe distances – within a million light years. The part of the universe that has been inhabited so far closely circles this center of everything and is fairly small in relation to the huge extent of uninhabited physical systems coming into being farther out from the center.

#### [end of track one]

"Virtually all of the inhabited part of the universe is hidden from us behind the starclouds of the Milky Way, or contained within them.

[16]"This is a composite photograph of The Milky Way as seen from our world, taken in exceptionally clear skies at high elevation. Our galaxy is like a curtain that hides from us six other inhabited galaxies like itself, all in the same orbit circling the central universe, called Havona – probably the root of our word "heaven," making it a word root going back maybe half a million years.

"These 7 galaxies including the Milky Way, together with the central creation, constitute the extent to which life has invaded the vast expanse of space so far. We have been born in a very early age of the universe, the age of evolution, when things come into being and grow to perfection gradually, through time. This gradual evolving enables us all to have the maximum conscious experience of our own creation, and creation itself, and to be able even to choose the course of our evolution to the maximum extent possible, to be partners with our creator in our own creation, and it also possibly educates us most completely to be creators ourselves one day in the eternal future, out beyond the Milky Way, our mother galaxy.

"Other differences with present-day science are that the universe in The Urantia Book is composed of mind and spirit at least as much as matter, and in addition to being far older than science estimates it's far larger than science estimates.

[17]"This is a photograph of a supernova about 10 billion light years away, close to the edge of what our scientists call the universe.

"These are objects at some of the farthest distances science has yet recorded, the farthest being at about 14 billion light years, though our methods of measuring distances are not as reliable as we think for many reasons which the book explains – mostly motions in space, or of space. 14 billion light years is a long way, but nothing compared to the radius of probably trillions of light years of the whole of space described in the revelation. And space is only the central portion of infinity. We'll see a graphical depiction of this in a moment.

"The Urantia Book gives the dimension of the universe as a whole as infinite, but the dimension of space itself as circumscribed, with a definite shape, or shapes, since there's more than one kind of space. The kind of space that's inhabited, or will be in time, or in transcended time, is almost circular but actually elliptical, and fairly flat seen from the side, as we'll see soon in an animation Dane created for us.

"Space in The Urantia Book is also, as science has discovered, expanding, but not from a "big bang" explosion. In The Urantia Book, space is described as respiring, expanding and contracting in 2 billion year cycles, just now about halfway through its expansion phase, which will last another 500 million years before turning into a contraction phase. There's nothing destructive about this contraction, though – it's a shrinking, not a total collapse – and then a billion years later it will begin to expand again, as it has done over and over since the beginning of time, in an unimaginably distant past.

"There's a lot the book does not reveal, in some cases because even its authors don't know the answers, but it does give us the size of our own segment of inhabited space, called Orvonton, the central portion of which we call The Milky Way, and the size of the rest of the inhabited creations that circle the center of space, and the size of those realms just outside it. Let's look at these realms and see where they lie in our sky.

"First we get our bearings by finding the center of infinity, which just happens right now to lie conveniently behind the center of our own galaxy, just about here, in the constellation Sagittarius.

[18]"Here are some recent images of the galactic center taken in wavelengths that can penetrate the starclouds that surround it to see what science thinks is a black hole there.

[19]"Whether there is a black hole at the center of the galaxy, the book doesn't reveal,

[20]"but it does speak of intense energies and gravity control mechanisms there.

[21]"Here's a labelled image of the central object, which science calls Sagittarius A. Actually, when we look at the Milky Way, it could be because of certain motions in space the book describes that we're really looking at it upside down as well as at an obvious angle. There is a top and bottom to space, as well as four directions, in relation to the absolute stillness of Paradise. Our galaxy is currently in the southeast quadrant, as the Milky Way slowly orbits the center of all things. If we look at this view of the galactic center in what may be its proper orientation, then, it would look like this.

### [22]

"And then if we swing around 180 degrees from the center of everything,

"we find ourselves looking straight out from the center toward what The Urantia Book calls the outer space levels, the unimaginably vast realms of still organizing energies that are uninhabited except by deity and special beings whose purpose and design is to facilitate such organization of energies and matter.

[23]"This is what a large telescope sees when it focuses outward on an area of sky about the size of a poppy seed.

[24]"Each of these objects is probably about the size of the Milky Way.

"Thanks to Dane's animation,

[25]"we can now go all the way out to the end of space, into the realm of the infinity beyond space, and then come back to our own neighborhood with a larger perspective on things.

### [end of track 2]

[Fellowship of the Ring – "Story of the Brave"]

"There's no way that subinfinite minds can have any idea of what it's like in the infinity beyond the edge of space, probably trillions of light years outward from where we are, so here we've chosen to depict it as just a blankness. But there is something that we know is at its center,

"maybe a sphere or oval shape like this, composed of what the book calls mid-space, which is in some way an extention of the central Isle of Paradise.

"This mid-space wholly surrounds space itself, which is divided into two or three main parts the book calls reservoirs – a horizontal, pervaded space reservoir which we find ourselves in, along with all other life and intelligence in the universe, and the empty, uninhabited, energy-and-matter-less, unpervaded space reservoirs that extend above and below the plane of pervaded space. Space respiration involves the alternate expansion and contraction of the horizontal and vertical components of space,

"and possibly a cleansing, refreshing, and recharging of space as it passes from the pervaded reservoirs to the unpervaded reservoirs, and vice versa, in the vicinity of the central Paradise Isle, far too small to be seen on this scale but holding everything in its absolute gravity.

"The size of this pervaded space reservoir where we live, at its outer limit here, is probably in the trillions or even hundred of trillions of light years, if it follows certain ratios given us about areas closer in to us. The authors of the book don't tell us precisely because they don't know themselves. Only very specialized beings journey out anywhere near as far as this, and apparently reveal little of what they know, as if it's not really any of our business – yet.

"This outermost extension of pervaded space is called the Fourth Outer Space Level, a huge ellipse forming a V-shaped plane that thickens as it extends outward, and in addition to its expanding and contracting with the rest of space it also revolves in a counterclockwise direction, fairly slowly in comparison with the cycles of space respiration.

"If we zoom in over the top of the upper unpervaded reservoir and look down through it on the Fourth Space Level, we see an enormous ellipse, a plane of slowly revolving space probably filled with emerging matter and energy in the form of nebulae and galaxies taking shape out of the energy potentials that pervade it. Even the celestial astronomers can't see out this far, though, so we really don't know what's there.

"They do know, though, that such energy transactions are happening in the space level that lies within the center of the Fourth Level, the Third Outer Space Level, which is another vast elliptical V-shaped plane slowly revolving, this time in a clockwise direction, separated from the Fourth level by a cushioning, relatively motionless, quiescent zone that seems to be an extension of the mid-space zones that surround all space. This mid-space apparently penetrates the plane of space with concentric rings of quiescent zones between the space levels, to lubricate their opposing motions, which themselves tend to equilibrate the energies and gravities of the masses that fill them.

"Again, if the proportions between smaller zones closer to us are repeated out here, this Third Space Level probably extends from tens of billions of light years at its edge nearest to us, to hundreds of billions of light years at its farthest extent. If the cosmic distance measurements of our present day science are accurate – a substantial if – our current terrestrial instruments are able to see to the near parts of this space level.

"Continuing our journey inward, we come to the Second Outer Space Level, which revolves counterclockwise, and extends from about 75 million light years at its near edge to perhaps a couple billion or so at its outer edge, separated from the Third Level, again, by a concentric quiescent zone.

"Within this is the First Outer Space Level, that stretches from about half a million light years outward from where we are to about 25 million light years, where its clockwise motion is cushioned from the opposing motion of the Second Level by a concentric quiescent zone about 50 million light years wide.

#### [Tangerine Dream – "Russian Soul"]

"And finally we come to where we live, very close in cosmic terms to the Source and Center of everything. This is called the superuniverse space level, an ellipse half a million light years wide radially, composed of seven galactic segments that circle the central universe, Havona, which has simply always been. Havona is the place our education through the cosmos guides us to, through many intervening stages, after we leave this world. Only after we become its citizens, and billions of years from now actually stand in the personal presence of God on Paradise, do we turn outward in the universe, returning first to the evolutionary realms, and then to the incredible adventures awaiting us on the still-forming stages of life in the Outer Space Levels.

[26]"Incidentally, those who have Windows-based computers have an animation of space respiration hidden within one of Windows' screen savers called "3D Flower Box."

"If you select the Flower Box and click on Settings, you'll be offered 4 different choices of shape. Choose the cylinder, and you'll be presented with an animation that looks like this at a certain stage as it goes through its morphings:

#### [27]"3-D Flower Box.

[28]"So we've arrived now at our own neighborhood, where we're one of a few million planets, eventually to be ten million, that with their suns and other matter comprise what's called our local universe – not to be confused with the infinite universe. Our relatively small local universe is really a nebula, built mainly on the physical stage of a single family of stars held together gravitationally, that move along together through space, something like this.

"A galaxy, like the Milky Way, is a much vaster family of countless nebulae and other matter held together gravitationally, that also move together through space. Here are some photographs of galaxies.

#### [29–35]

[36]"This is a photograph of 2 galaxies colliding, this one seen edge-on, this one seen looking down on its spiral plane.

[37]"The Milky Way is our galaxy, hundreds of thousands of light years in diameter, probably looking something like this from a distance of a couple hundred thousand light years.

[38]"The local nebula our local universe is built on, probably not quite as orderly as this one,

"is one of many that make up the Milky Way, and is maybe only about a thousand light years in diameter. Our nebula consists of a grouping of stars thrown off from a mothernucleus that has since burned down to become an enormous red supergiant star, which I suspect is the star Antares, though that's not revealed in the book.

### [39]

## [Tangerine Dream – "Ulan Ude"]

"The gravitational center of our local universe, and its administrative headquarters, is very close to this red supergiant star, whichever one it is – and it's certainly one of those clearly visible to us. Supergiants are hard to hide, though Antares is in a way partially hidden. What makes me suspect that Antares is this nebular core is that it's not star-shaped, but definitely flattened, elliptical, like one would expect the burned-down core of a nebula to be. It's also the closest red supergiant to us, about 500 light years. And there's also something else very interesting about Antares, considering that we know the local universe headquarters is in close proximity to the red supergiant at our nebula's center. Antares has a small, close, blue-white companion, that appears green in smaller telescopes because of the red glare of Antares, and this companion is a very intense radio source, to the extent that it's called a radio star.

## [40]"Here's a photograph of Antares,

"in which you can see something of its oval shape. This is its companion. The other objects in the field are not close to it.

## [41]"Here's another photograph.

[42]"This photograph is sharper than the others, with a better resolution of the debris field that surrounds Antares, a debris field being something that would be expected around our nebula's center, after its shrinking following several episodes of sun-expulsion the book describes. Here is its blue-white companion at better resolution. The other stars are much closer to us, not in the vicinity of Antares.

"Science thinks such red stars are dying, which may be true for some, but The Urantia Book speaks of currents of energy that flow in rejuvenating circuits between many stars – maybe all stars orbited by inhabited planets – that keep their suns burning indefinitely.

[43]"Here are some artists' depictions of what it might look like on a planet orbiting Antares and its blue-white companion.

#### [44]

"A moon of the planet, and the blue-white radio star, which may be Salvington, our local universe capitol.

# [end of track 3]

## [Fellowship of the Ring – "The Great River"]

"It's also interesting that Antares is the brightest star in the constellation Scorpius, which forms a capital J in the sky, right next to the location of Paradise and God's personal presence. Fortuitous coincidences are not without meaning in The Urantia Book, and the central headquarters of our local universe, if it is beside Antares, is also the home of the sovereign of our local creation, whose name, as known to our civilization from when he appeared here as one of us 2,000 years ago, begins with J. The last third of The Urantia Book is the life and teachings of Jesus, told by those who were eyewitnesses, in order to correct what has been to a large extent a 2,000 year misunderstanding. The book depicts us as a very troubled but very honored world, the most honored in ten million, and says that no matter how horrendous our mistakes through the ages, civilization here will prevail, thanks to the teachings of our Creator Son, and all those spiritual teachers of many different religions whom he teaches, often unconsciously, about what it means for a human being to be true to his or her deepest heritage – to be Godlike.

## [Tangerine Dream – "Jenessei River"]

"There's so much more about cosmology in the book that there's no way to cover in the little time we have now, but I do want to include a little of what it says about our solar system, in which we may not be alone. There's an inhabited world in close proximity to us, whatever that means in cosmological terms – a world of human beings about as different from us as human beings can be, but still recognizably human, who are experts in the manipulation of energies because they had to be to survive on their airless world. What part they will play in the awakening of our civilization to its place in the universe is difficult to predict, but that they will have some part seems reasonable, being close neighbors. There are also more planets in our solar system than we're aware of as yet, a solar system that did not form as our science is correct in theorizing most planets do, by accretion from a circling disk of dust and gas. If ours had had such an origin, the planets would orbit in the same plane as the sun's rotation, in the plane of its equator, but they don't. Everything would also have the same direction of rotation, but it doesn't. In fact, as our sun was ejected from the mother nucleus of our nebula, our planet and most of the others were ejected from our sun – an unusual but not unheard of event in the universe.

[45]"And as it so happens, the first photograph science has captured of a planet beyond our solar system, shown here, is a photograph of a similar ejection. Another coincidence, or a clue for science to follow?

"The Urantia Book is mind-expanding in ways unimaginable to those unfamiliar with it, because it is what it says it is – which makes it, in itself, one of the most amazing things that has ever happened here, and a harbinger of things even more incredible. It states that we are right now "quivering on the brink of one of" our "most amazing and enthralling epochs" – a strong statement about a world with a very eventful history. What part we play in the preparation for these events is our decision, but when each of us tries out for such parts, the authors make clear that we need to focus on seeking and finding how to serve, in both the smallest and greatest ways we can. Ambition for recognition, for fame or fortune or power, can only hinder this quest, but ambition to be true to the eternal spirit within us is its essence.

[Tangerine Dream – "The Blue Bridge"]

"And finally I'd like to reflect a little with you about the present state of this world we live on, small and dark, and getting darker. Since the fifties, when the book was first published, the light reaching the surface of our world has diminished by 10%, and not because the sun itself has dimmed. This by itself can have a drastic effect on people's bodies and minds, but combined with wars and rumors of wars, disease, famine, the extinction of species, the pollution of the atmosphere, as well as the waters, the earth, and our bodies – and especially fear, that pollutes people's minds – our already dark world seems destined to darken even more. There are beautiful things happening too, full of hope, but the news of them is smothered by messages that may even be deliberately designed to promote anxiety, so people will buy more things to try to relieve it. The need for the comfort and encouragement of a wise community, whose forward-looking vision dissolves fear and focuses more and more steadily on a vision of a brighter world to come, becomes clearer and more compelling with every betrayal of the light in the world at large.

"I think what the world needs more than anything at this moment in time from those who know of The Urantia Book, and all other people of faith, is the proof in their lives that, while complacency is not an option, there really is nothing to fear. What The Urantia Book can contribute to this reassurance uniquely is a reason for this freedom from fear that's infinite in its scope and possibilities.

"There's a wind of spirit rising relentlessly in the world, that will cleanse all minds of doubt, timidity, and hesitation.

"As Nelson Mandela, speaking to his people, told us all:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

- "As it frightens many of those we would bring within it, because it is a door that, once we step through it, changes us so much that we can't step back out of it, simply because we no longer want to. Stepping into this light requires not half-hearted intention, but resolution as absolute and eternal as the life such dedication makes possible. Is God some kind of grifter, though, that he would offer us something we could ever possibly regret accepting? The truth is that if we're not overflowing with gratitude at any given moment, then at that moment we don't know who we really are.

"Eternal choices are awesome, necessarily, but there are no others that can fully satisfy our souls, the beings we're becoming, who will take hands in the life to come with an endless family of students in the University of Creation, students whose father and constant companion and teacher, even on this lowly preschool world, IS Creation itself, and more.

"In the thirties, when The Urantia Book was approaching its final form, Yeats, whom I began with, wrote a few deep little lines, in the midst of a longer poem entitled "Vacillation," that describe what it's like to be suddenly aware of and filled with the Spirit of Truth, though he didn't call it that:

[Fellowship of the Ring – "The Prophecy"]

My fiftieth year had come and gone, I sat, a solitary man, In a crowded London shop, An open book and empty cup On the marble table-top.

While on the shop and street I gazed My body of a sudden blazed; And twenty minutes more or less It seemed, so great my happiness, That I was blessèd and could bless.

[Fellowship of the Ring – "The Council of Elrond"]

"Such happiness – being filled with the spirit of a man, and much more than a man, whose love has overshadowed the world for 20 centuries and will into the endless future – not twenty minutes worth of such joy but a life without end of it, growing greater and greater until we stand in the presence of its Source, is the destiny of all who are certain about God. We have the power to open to this happiness at any time, even if that's easy to forget amid our civilization's distractions. What greater purpose could any community have than to remind each other of this, of what each of us has to give our darkening world in its time of need?

"Peace."