

CHANNELING AND THE URANTIA MOVEMENT

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Psychic or paranormal psychological phenomena variously referred to as extrasensory perception, channeling, spiritualism, mediumship, and activities of the marginal consciousness have been rather common throughout human history. Many years ago I made a study of these paranormal communications and found they varied in quality as widely as the capabilities of the human mind. Some of the psychic communications studied present verifiable factual knowledge for which scientists find no reasonable empirical explanation. The great bulk of this material, however, is demonstrably inaccurate and unreliable.

Since the publication of *The Urantia Book*, there have been many claims by book readers of "special" channeling information or guidance. Some even claim *The Urantia Book* came through a channeling process although the authors of the book deny the spiritual authenticity of channeling-mediumistic psychic phenomena (pp. 865, 1646). Dr. William S. Sadler, leader of the group receiving the Urantia Papers, after listing every conceivable form of psychic phenomena (marginal consciousness), unequivocally declared: "The technique of the reception of *The Urantia Book* in English in no way parallels or impinges upon any of the phenomena of the marginal consciousness."

Basic Error in Evaluation

The basic error in evaluating knowledge—especially psychic communication and revelation—is to look for verification in its source, author, claim, or "authority." There is a natural human desire for superior, unearned knowledge; we yearn for surety, a "hot line" to higher guidance. This is the source of fundamentalistic, literalist, dogmatic thinking. Claim or authority, however, is never a criterion of truth. The only road to truth is through *earned, evolutionary experience*. We should always evaluate information by its *content*, not its claim or supposed source. In our earned experience we have the highest resources to guide and verify our judgment: the Spirit of God (Thought Adjuster), the Spirit of Truth, and the Holy Spirit. Our judgments must also always be tested by personal experience, the experience of others, and time.

When measured by these earned, experiential standards over time, the value of channeled communication does not rate very high. We should not, however, allow fear or prejudice to prevent us from honestly and critically examining the content of information received through channeling. We should be open to carefully evaluating all types of knowledge.

A Specific Case

Recently I examined recordings of "Teachings of Ham" channeled to the Salt Lake Study Group. I found their general quality good. They are of the quality which I would expect from a creative, intelligent student of *The Urantia Book*. While, in my judgment, they are not in the same league with *The Urantia Book*, they are basically constructive and insightful.

There are a number of limitations to the above generalizations. I find no empirical-experiential evidence for the claim that the Lucifer rebellion has been adjudicated and that the system circuits are being opened. I question the truth of the claim of giving people their "spiritual" names. The authors of *The Urantia Book* tell us that we are given a new name only *after* fusion with our Thought Adjuster (p. 538). I further question the wisdom of this practice. Why is Rebecca more spiritual than Jan, Joshua more spiritual than Thern, or Martha more spiritual than Kathy? This is the kind of technique used for controlling people through "special" or secret knowledge. Many cults use such practices.

Ham discourages a member of the study group from taking an eight week summer course because he will miss these channeling sessions. Even the higher ranking authors of *The Urantia Book* do not use this style of manipulative control. Why would the Vicegerent Planetary Prince

single out the Salt Lake Study Group for special attention as they were told? And through this special attention Ham tells them "you are...under...my direction." Group leadership and direction is a common practice, but I see in this kind of atmosphere the danger of acquiescing to uncritical manipulation.

Ham tells the group the spiritual center of the planet is Manitoba, Canada. This differs from the Chicago contact information designating it as at the Grizzly Giant in the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias in Yosemite National Park. When Ham is asked about Norsen, he identifies him as a teacher which is markedly different than the Chicago contact information telling that Norson is the new "take charge" planetary supervisor.

One wonders why people feel a need for channeling guidance which, historically, does not have a very good track record, when they have direct personal contact with much higher sources of truth: their Thought Adjuster, the Spirit of Truth, and the Holy Spirit? It seems to me that the study of *The Urantia Book* would be superior to preoccupation with this quality of channeling information. I further see a danger in the possibility of giving the Channelor undue respect as an authority figure which might by-pass higher spiritual guidance. When this happens, cults are formed with a susceptibility to manipulative control.

The Bottom Line

The content of Ham's teachings is basically constructive and is no doubt helpful to some people. There are also those who have not summoned the courage and confidence to initiate outreach work who will do so when encouraged by channeling messages. At best such channeling activity can be a supplement to *Urantia Book* study, guidance, and individual initiative; at worst it could be a substitute for it. To become a part of such activity is and should be an individual decision. If you think, after due consideration, this kind of channeling information is important to your spiritual growth and service and it is harmonious with your higher inner guidance, you probably will feel comfortable with these activities. But always be in control of your own thinking and action!

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