

HOW THE URANTIA BOOK HELPS US UNDERSTAND THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

TRENDS OF RELIGION

by

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A speech delivered extemporaneously, without manuscript or notes, before the 1972 Urantia Summer Study Session.

Recorded and transcribed by Barbara Newsom and Bettina Gray

According to the most accurate estimates, there are approximately 925 million people on this planet who claim Christianity as their religion, about 14 million of the Jewish faith, some 495 million Moslems, 138 thousand Zoroastrians, approximately 70 million followers of Shinto, 54 million Taoists, some 371 million Confucianists, approximately 176 million Buddhists, 436 million Hindus, and Urantians? ...let me see...two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve, ...(laughter). Actually, in fact, there are only a few thousand committed students of the Urantia Book-- for a grand total of some two and one half billion affiliates of major religions on this planet, and with another one billion who are members of smaller sects, cults, and "isms," as well as followers of the more primitive forms of totemism, animism, and fetishism. The grand total is approximately 3.6 billion people in the world.

It was to such a theologically diverse, religiously disparate world as this that the Urantia Book was given. During the next hour, the Urantia Committee on Education has asked me to speak on the subject: "Trends in Religion." I'm going to deal with three dimensions of the topic. First, a quick -- and I emphasize quick -- look at some of the major occurrences in leading world religions. Second, a glimpse at some of the major cults, sects, and "isms" gaining ascendancy in the United States, particularly among American youth. And third, in the midst of these varying trends in religion, a look at what the Urantia Book commissions us to do and to accomplish as Urantians.

First--beginning with the major world religions--Christianity. There are more followers of Christianity than there are followers of any other single religion on this planet. Dr. George M. Kitagawa of the University of Chicago has predicted that by the year 2000, thirty-one percent of the world's population will be Christian. This religion is making enormous gains, for example, in Africa. In this country, in 1957 a Gallup Poll indicated that only fourteen percent of the population said that religion was losing its influence on their lives; this largely refers, incidentally, to organized and institutional religion. Again, church attendance in 1957 was approximately forty-nine percent; now it's down to forty-two percent...and the national offices of major denominations such as the Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics are reporting losses in membership, a failure even to keep pace with population growth through the progeny of their present membership.

The new role of women in today's world is well evidenced in Christianity. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, just at the beginning of this decade, appointed two female saints to be "doctors of the Church." It's a high position of honor and authority; these were Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Catherine of Sienna. Church historians regard this to be an extraordinarily portentous move. Students of the Urantia Book, however, will recall that Jesus, two thousand years ago, shocked all of Palestine by instituting a woman's evangelistic corps. And women have held outstanding roles of leadership in the modern Urantia movement from the very outset.

Christianity is divided into nearly three hundred different denominations. There are furthermore splits on theological bases; for example, between liberalism and fundamentalism, with liberalism emphasizing a more loose interpretation of scripture and a greater concern with "social gospel"--an emphasis on changing government, politics, and sociology--whereas fundamentalism is more concerned with a literalistic interpretation of scripture and is also more concerned with the salvation of the individual.

Another major trend in Christianity is toward union. The Ecumenical movement, the National and the World Council of Churches, and the COCU, the Council on Church Union, all symbolize this direction.

The three major concerns of contemporary Judaism are (1) the Israeli-Arab conflict, involving the Zionistic doctrines of Theodore Herzl, (2) the plight of Soviet Jews in Russia, and (3) the question of cultural identity--what does it mean to be Jewish in this decade?

Other issues are abortion--Orthodox rabbis generally oppose it, Reform rabbis generally favor it-- and the controversial militant Jewish Defense League. There's also a movement known as "Jews for Jesus." The "Jews for Jesus" movement consists primarily of young people who are calling for a return to the study of the life and teachings of the Master. And additionally, rabbis in some temples are instituting classes in the more mystical, experiential elements of Judaism--the personal experience of God.

A major project of world Islam is the construction of an Islamic cultural center in New York City which is going to cost approximately 15 million dollars. Among the Moslem masses, the Sufi movement has been gaining ascendancy as a spiritual and experiential ministry. The Sufis are mystical ascetics; their literature is poetic and beautiful. But one of the most intriguing things happening in Islam temporarily is a theological debate spurred by a young Syrian Islamic scholar named Sadi Al Azm, who contends that it is not necessary to interpret the Koran literally. He was brought to court for this heretical viewpoint, and was later acquitted, but it symbolizes an issue which, eventually, every world religion seems to have to face--that of the letter versus the spirit. The Urantia Book, of course, assigns pre-eminence to the spirit.

Turning next to Zoroastrianism, it is currently divided into two sects--two warring, conflicting schools. And what they can't agree on, what has caused this rift, this split, this division, has been the interpretation of their calendar! They cannot agree on how to interpret their calendar. (Sounds like the sort of infighting I've observed in some Christian denominations.) Zoroastrians are passionately concerned with ritual purity and the maintenance of holy fires in their fire temples, the most holy ones having their origins in cremations and in lightning bolts. Zoroastrians of India, the Parsees, tend to be among the best businessmen and are a wealthy class. One of our personal friends--a girl named Helen Lewis, to whom Nancy introduced the Urantia Book recently, but with as yet uncertain results--is the granddaughter of the last world leader of Zoroastrianism. His name was Key Khosrov Shahrokh, who was murdered by the Shah of Iran in 1938. She feels that Zoroastrianism is undergoing both a numerical and a spiritual decline. One reason for this, incidentally, is the fact that the Zoroastrian holy book, the Zend-Avesta, is written in a now dead language, and although the priests of Zoro-

astrianism will memorize up to fifty percent of it, neither they nor their congregations understand what it says, which understandably causes a falling away of membership after a certain period of time.

To deal briefly with some of the Oriental religions, specifically Shinto, Taoism, and Confucianism, there has traditionally been such a close intermingling between religion and the state that the issues of religion and the issues of government are often considered to be one and the same. An analogy might be drawn to some of the Scandinavian countries in which practically everyone, ninety-eight percent of the population, will be members of the Christian state religious denomination, but on any given Sunday morning only two, three, or four percent of the population will be in attendance. There are analogies to Shinto, Taoism, and Confucianism. Shrine Shinto in Japan encompasses some eight hundred different sects and approximately eighty-six thousand different shrines. Shinto believes in the worship of the universal Life Spirit which has found expression, in the past, in Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, and formerly culminating in the worship of the Japanese emperor. On the individual level, Shrine Shinto is personalized in the home as people worship before the Kami-Dana, the God altar, or "God-shelf," as it's called. And there are analogies between Shinto as it's practiced today as a nationalistic, patriotic religion and the Roman religion during the time of Jesus' and Ganid's visit there.

Confucianism, since the revolution of 1911, has fallen upon dark days in China. An official governmental publication by the current Chinese government, titled "A Short History of Chinese Philosophy," attempts to reinterpret all of Confucian thought from a strictly political, materialistic vantage-point, totally discounting and discrediting some of Confucius' more spiritual teachings...for example, that people ought to pray to Shang-ti, the Supreme Being. This is all discounted as poetry now, and Confucius is being interpreted solely as a political, legalistic theorist. Buddhism is also attacked in this formal document of the government as an unworldly, other-worldly, irrelevant religion. It remains yet to be seen whether this venerable philosophy of Confucianism will be able to endure such official opposition and whether the state can, by edict, ban a religion such as this. I personally believe that it will not be able to do so.

A recent event of interest in Buddhism was the unearthing of a five-foot statue of Buddha dated at three hundred B.C., and guess where? By archaeologists in Guatemala!...leading to the speculation of scholars now that Buddhism was introduced to the American continent possibly before the time of Christ. Buddhism is divided into the Mahayana Buddhism, which is the Buddhism of the Greater Vehicle or the Wider Path--the more liberal variety--and the Hinayana which is the more conservative, or the Buddhism of the Lesser Vehicle, as they call it. Mahayana Buddhism has become outrightly evangelistic. For example, last year alone--and think of this kind of outreach--last year alone they established 132 Buddhist mission centers in Burma, in that one country Burma, alone. Buddhist priests continue to accrue political power in such regions as Vietnam and in Ceylon. The Mahayana Buddhist movement has also been sending evangelists, missionaries, to the United States and to Canada for the express purpose of converting us. And Shin Buddhism is sending priests to study at Christian theological seminaries in order to learn the ways and the wiles of Christianity in order to be more efficient evangelists of their faith. However, it works both ways. I became acquainted with one and introduced him to the Urantia Book. But there is a new vitality in Buddhism in the sense that every religion eventually becomes either a club or a cause, and Buddhism is being re-

invigorated by viewing itself as a cause, having a mission to fulfill and becoming evangelistic in the fulfillment of it.

Hinduism has had bloody times during the last several years--attacks on Buddhist shrines and literal warfare with Moslems. The two major issues being discussed and debated by most Hindus, the Hindus on the streets of India, are these, according to Hindu scholars: (1) whether alcohol should be banned by Hinduism as it is by Islam, and (2) whether actors and actresses should be permitted to kiss on movie screens. Hindu scholars still say that the one and only concrete doctrine to which all Hindus would agree is reverencing the sacredness of the cow. There are still, in spite of Gandhi's efforts, 2,000 different castes in modern Hinduism. Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak of the 15th century--who is mentioned in the Urantia Book and who said "seek not for the True One afar off, he is in every heart"--Sikhism, a monotheistic, syncretistic world religion which embodies both Hinduism and Islam, has been having a problem; their holy book, the Granth, is also written in a language which most people don't understand any more, so they're suffering that selfsame theological malady of not knowing exactly what it is they're supposed to believe. But Sikhs, their soldiers known as "Lions of the Punjab," have become essentially adherents of a militaristic faith.

There's one other thing I want to mention, however, in connection with Hinduism, and I judge it to be of extreme importance. In the year 1828, a Brahman named Ram Mohan Rai began a school of liberal Hinduism, seeking rapprochement with the West; it is called the "Brahmo Samaj" movement. Both the father and the grandfather of the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore were members of it. It is slowly gathering membership, and the two basic doctrines, the two fundamental beliefs of the Brahmo Samaj religion are (guess what?), the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man! *In the Urantia Book on page 2086, these are described, and I quote, as "the greatest truths mortal man can ever hear." It is my conviction that if the Brahmo Samaj movement is able to gain ascendancy over the countless sects of Hinduism, a mighty spiritual renaissance is destined to sweep the Hindu world. And when we of the Family of God Foundation are able to travel to India, the first people with whom we want to meet are the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj movement.

The non-Urantian, considering some of the theological disparity and differences of views between the varying world religions, might say: "Well, there are so many different opinions and interpretations of religion, how can I know what's really right? Isn't truth one or is it so divided that nobody can really know? Are they all holding different opinions and viewpoints?" Consider, for example, the perpetual grammatical debate over the word "trousers." Is the word "trousers" singular or plural? A philosophically minded person might respond that trousers are singular at the top and plural at the bottom. In my conviction, it is the same with spiritual truth. As we view truth among the varying, sometimes conflicting theological viewpoints and perspectives of this planet, it sometimes appears not to be one, not to be unified. And yet on the highest level, at the very highest level, truth is one in God, and as the Urantia book so many times points out, we spend too much of our time emphasizing small issues, debating over tiny matters, arguing over what happens when a missionary who's going to heaven is eaten by a cannibal who isn't, or something. We've been so concerned with this kind of theological fine point that we have oftentimes missed the central, broad, sweeping themes on which we could agree. And as the book says, goals, rather than creeds should unify and can unify religionists.

Next, I want to turn briefly to a look at several of the major sects, cults, and isms gaining ascendancy on the American scene. This is important because, increasingly, we're going to be encountering these. I'm going to talk about them very shortly and cover as many as I feel I have time to.

I begin with Bahá'í which is headquartered in Wilmette, not far from here. The Baha'í religion was founded by Baha'u'llah, preceded by the Bab, who was a John the Baptist figure; the word "Bab" in Persian means "gate." Baha'u'llah was a nineteenth century Persian prophet. This religion bans cremation, alcohol, and monasticism. They believe in international unity, that this is "one world," and they have been acquiring a good many followers among young people.

The I Ching is being consulted increasingly by youth. It's a Chinese book of divination which is consulted by the casting of sticks or coins. The word "I" in Chinese means "change." The word "ching" means "threads of fabric." Both Carl Jung and other psychological scholars have dealt with it. Confucius is said to have valued the I Ching; it is based on the Chinese philosophy that everything, all reality, is interrelated.

The Gurdjieff-Ouspensky movement: Gurdjieff was a philosopher of emotion; Ouspensky was a philosopher of mathematics. Ouspensky was the interpreter, actually, of Gurdjieff. The Gurdjieff-Ouspensky movement seeks self-realization of its devotees by such techniques as dancing. Gurdjieff wrote under the heading All and Everything such books as Meetings With Remarkable Men and Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson. Some people find his personal reminiscences fascinating, but his philosophic writing unintelligible.

Witchcraft, according to Sybil Leek, the famed British witch, has approximately 400 different covens in the United States alone, each coven consisting of twelve witches and warlocks; it's been growing rapidly. Time magazine recently did a cover story on the subject.

The Hari Krishna movement was founded by Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta in the 1960's. The Hari Krishna movement consists of young people in saffron robes dancing in the streets, passing out incense...chanting endlessly, giving away free literature, sometimes selling literature, and the men of the Hari Krishna movement shave their heads entirely except for one pigtail in back--"so Krishna can pull them up to higher consciousness." It has a few hundred adherents in the United States.

Zen Buddhism has been popularized by Watts and by Suzuki. It is the quest for a blinding flash of enlightenment known as "satori"; it seeks not logical self-realization but experiential realization. Several thousand people in the United States have become intrigued with it.

The Divine Principle movement was founded by Mr. Sun Myung Moon. It is also known as the Unified Family. He is a Korean philosopher attempting to synthesize eastern and western philosophy under seven Divine Principles, including the "principle of polarity" and the "principle of reciprocal action." His followers live communally and are forthrightly evangelistic in their outreach. Mr. Moon has a sometimes astonishingly literalistic viewpoint of the New and Old Testaments in the Bible.

The Meher Baba sect is another form of Hindu Bhakti Yoga; this Yoga of devotion was founded by Maher Baba, who in the year 1925 took a vow of silence. He died in 1969, and taught the "oneness of all."

The Nichiren Shoshu is another of the numerically major movements in the United States, yet many people have not heard of it. It was founded by Nichiren Daishonin. It is a sect of Buddhism which condemns all other sects as heretical. The Nichiren Shoshu religion consists of the purchase of a "Gohonzon," which is a scroll of paper, and the adherents of the movement chant a hymn to the mystic law of life: "Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo." They believe that the Gohonzon will give a person anything he wants. In fact, in Berkeley, the Gohonzon is sold with a money-back guarantee of increased health and prosperity. And I'm sure it's only a matter of time before some Los Angeles metaphysical bookstore does that with the Urantia Book.....Melchizedek, be merciful!

The Black Muslim movement has its roots in Marcus Garvey's "Back-to-Africa movement" and in the Moorish Temple sect earlier in this country's history. The present head is Elijah Muhammed. The adherents of this religion pray to Mecca five times daily, abstain from pork and tobacco, chant to themselves "Allaha Akbar," or "Allah is the greatest," and they maintain a strict personal morality.

Transcendental Meditation was founded by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. It costs \$35 to take the course. Each initiate is given a "mantra"...a single word on which he meditates for twenty minutes every day. The Maharishi is opposed to drugs, psychoanalysis, monasticism, and teaches world-wide brotherhood and love.

The Process Church of the Final Knowledge was founded by a man named Robert De Grimston in London, England. They believe that all reality is a "process" embodying both good and evil, love and hatred--therefore that a person ought to worship both God and Satan, Christ and Lucifer. The followers of this theology walk through the streets oftentimes dressed in space-suits, and with German shepherd dogs.

The A.R.E. is the Association for Research and Enlightenment headquartered in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and is based on stenographic records of the trance-utterances of Edgar Cayce, who died in 1945. Cayce believed that spiritual problems were often caused by imbalances in any of seven glands. There are thousands who travel to Virginia Beach to study his teachings and those records.

Scientology was founded in the 1950s by L. Ron Hubbard, a science fiction writer. The Scientology movement is based on the theory that a painful experience becomes an "engram" of which a person is "cleared" by being "audited," and that if a person persists in his growth he eventually achieves the "O.T.Seven" and "O.T.Eight" levels at which, by sheer concentration alone, he is able to take on or give off up to thirty pounds of his own bodily weight. This has yet to be proved in a laboratory, however.

The Spiritualist movement has been popular for years. In fact, Dr. William S. Sadler, an early guiding light of the Urantia movement, was involved in some of the exposés of spiritualism. There are approximately 400 different churches of spiritualism in this country; it's growing fairly rapidly and most of you have an idea of what happens at a seance.

I will describe only one more of these "isms." This one is the Subud movement. Subud was founded by an Indonesian named Bapak. The adherents of the Subud movement practice the "Latihan," which is Indonesian for "Exercises," and it consists of standing in groups segregated by sexes in dark rooms and consciously attempting to take the power of God into the soul. Bapak, the founder, was born in 1901 and he has several thousand followers among young people in the United States.

In the midst of these varying philosophies, the next question which arises is: What is to be our mission, our attitude, as students of the Urantia Book? What is top priority for us? I have several quotes which apply to this question. *On page 1013 we read: "Modern man is confronted with the task of making more re-adjustments of human values in one generation than have been made in two thousand years. True religion must ever be, and at one and the same time, the eternal foundation and the guiding star of all enduring civilizations." Many of these sects and cults are symptomatic of man's attempt to make that readjustment. *On page 1051 we read: "Had the followers of Jesus taken more seriously his injunction to 'go into all the world and preach the gospel,' and had they been more gracious in that preaching, less stringent in collateral social requirements of their own devising, then many lands would gladly have received the simple gospel of the carpenter's son, Arabia among them."

And then listen to this one...*on page 1041: "The hour is striking for presenting to Buddhism, to Christianity, to Hinduism, even to the peoples of all faiths, not the gospel about Jesus, but the living, spiritual reality of the gospel of Jesus." What a mission!

One outstanding statement of the priorities before us has been made by Christy. In 1964, at the first Triennial Delegate Assembly of the Urantia Brotherhood, the president of the Urantia Brotherhood, E. L. Christiansen, said the following in her presidential address, and I quote this to our west coast groups every several months because it is such a clear statement of purposes:

"It is our burden to bring life on this planet up to new level, which we can and will do when we sincerely become imbued with the idea that we are ambassadors of a heavenly kingdom just as surely as were the twelve apostles who followed Jesus. Those twelve men were so inspired by Jesus' life and teachings that they went forth and turned the whole world upside down. I pray we will do likewise.

"During my short tenure as President of the Urantia Brotherhood I have expounded on two theses: first, that we become living prophets of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and second, that we remember to subordinate the Urantia Book to the service of God.

"Perhaps we should take a moment now to listen once again to Jesus' admonition to his apostles during one of his profound discussions on religion: 'I admonish you to give up the practice of quoting the prophets of old, and instead aspire to become living prophets and spiritual heroes of the coming kingdom.' What is a prophet? Webster says a prophet is: The proclaimer

of a revelation, one who speaks for another, especially for God, an inspired revealer, interpreter, or spokesman, and one whose office it is to deliver a message.

"What a message we have to deliver! We have in our hands a veritable El Dorado of riches. Only a handful of men and women on Urantia are so fortunate, so privileged, as we are.

"I am not too much interested in the number of Urantia Books you dispense, but I am tremendously interested in the souls you will lead into the kingdom by your own proclamation of the dynamic truths about God and his universe which Jesus has revealed to you; in how you are feeding the hungry souls that you meet 'as you pass by.'

"To emphasize my point I want to paraphrase a statement made by our first President in his report to the Brotherhood at the end of his three-year tenure: We must be careful not to confuse primary and secondary loyalties. Our primary spiritual loyalty is to the Universal Father, and to him alone. When we encounter some spiritually hungry brother our first objective is to bring him closer to his heavenly Father. This we may attempt to do with or without the book. All things are secondary and subordinate to the acquisition of this one prize: the realization of sonship with God. The book itself is not an end; it is a most important means to an end. If the Urantia Book becomes mandatory in our ministry, then we have truly subordinated to it our first and primary objective and purpose, as Urantians, which is: the service of God."

Note that the entire point of this presidential address by Christy before the first Triennial Delegate Assembly was that each Urantian should strive to become a living prophet and that the leading of people to God is by far the top priority task. As individual people we must, as she put it, aspire to live as ambassadors of the Father's kingdom. That is the primal priority of this revelation. And that is extremely important as a statement to guide the future history of this Urantia movement.

In a world of clashing sects and cults with so many different theological viewpoints, what is the religion of the Urantia Book? Consider the whole thing, all 2097 pages (and in the case of my copy, plus additionally 87 paper clips and 13-odd assorted bookmarks). When I first began reading this book some 16 years ago, this was the question ringing in my mind: What is the religion of the Urantia Book? How could it be summarized? In my repeated readings I was seeking to answer this question. First, of course, and foremost, the religion of the Urantia Book is the religion of Jesus. But if, in addition to that, the basic themes which run through the first three sections of the book be correlated with Jesus' teachings, it is possible, I believe, to sketch, to outline, the basic religion of the Urantia Book under seven great spiritual truths.

These either express or imply the most fundamental religious teachings of this book, and most other primary religions or spiritual ideas may then be deduced from these categories.

I'm going to give you this outline I've compiled; I've been asked to. And I'm also going to include biblical scripture quotations. This again is upon the request of people who say that often times they will find themselves talking with someone who is not familiar with the Urantia Book, and wanting to be able to support the religion of the Urantia Book from quotations of scripture references in the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament.

1. The first of these major spiritual truths, these great religious themes in the Urantia Book, is the sovereign Fatherhood of God. In the New Testament of the Bible, Matthew 23, Jesus says it this way: "For One is your Father, which is in heaven." And the first of his two great commandments in Mark, Chapter 12, is: "You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." *In the Urantia Book, paragraph 1, page 21, sentence 1, the book starts with this sentence: "The Universal Father (note the first three words..."The Universal Father"...) is the God of all creation, the First Source and Center of all things and beings." "The Universal Father" is the first concept and again the very last concept in the book: on page 2097 the book ends with the statement that "When all is said and done, the Father idea is still the highest human concept of God."
2. Second, the spiritual brotherhood of man--cosmic consciousness of membership in the universal Family of God. Jesus again in Matthew 23:8 says: "You are all brethren." The second of his two great commandments in Mark, chapter 12, was: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." *The Urantia Book, page 1091, says that primitive man danced out his religion, modern man has learned to think out his religion, but religionists of the future must "live out their religion, dedicate themselves to the wholehearted service of the brotherhood of man."
3. The third of these great spiritual truths: The kingdom of God is within you. Jesus says that in the New Testament in Luke 17:21. The Greek word can also be translated, incidentally, "the kingdom of God is among you"...but the majority of scholars still hold with "the kingdom of God is within you." *And in the Urantia Book on page 1176 a Solitary Messenger writes that "Although the Universal Father is personally resident on Paradise, at the very center of the universes, he is also actually present on the worlds of space in the minds of his countless children of time, for he indwells them as the Mystery Monitors." This is the Thought Adjuster concept...the kingdom of God within man.
4. The fourth of these great spiritual truths is that the daily decision to do the will of God is the greatest possible good for every individual. Jesus makes allusion to this in Matthew 6 in his Lord's Prayer, teaching people to pray, "Your will be done." And again and again this is found in other sections of the Urantia Book. For example, on page 22 a Divine Counselor writes, *"The affectionate dedication of the human will to the doing of the Father's will is man's choicest gift to God."
5. The fifth of these great spiritual truths: the potential of eternal life, survival, everlasting progression day by day and age beyond age. Jesus, in John, chapter 4, talking with that woman at the well, whom the Urantia Book identifies as Nalda, says that spiritual truth can become a spring of living water

welling up into eternal life. Again he says that "in my Father's house are many mansions." *And on page 1240 of the Urantia Book we read that: "True it is, you mortals are of earthly, animal origin; your frame is indeed dust. But if you actually will, if you really desire, surely the heritage of the ages is yours, and you shall someday serve throughout the universes in your true characters--children of the Supreme God of experience and divine sons of the Paradise Father of all personalities."

6. The sixth of these principles is loyalty to supreme values--truth, beauty, goodness, and love. Jesus alluded to this in the Sermon on the Mount when, in Matthew 5, he said: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness," (after goodness). And in the *Urantia Book on page 1094 we read that "Loyal persons are growing persons..." and on page 1095 that religion "is a personal experience which grows proportionally to the growing quest for final values." Again, on 1100 religion itself is defined: "True religion is a wholehearted devotion to some reality which the religionist deems to be of supreme value to himself and for all mankind."
7. And the seventh: Be you perfect as your father in heaven is perfect. This is the challenge of challenges. Jesus gives it in Matthew 5, and in the *Urantia Book on page 22 we read that this injunction "...is the first duty and should the highest ambition, of all the struggling creature creation..."

In light of all this, what, then, is our mission? What are we to accomplish? What does Jesus say about that? When Jesus and the twelve apostles were encamped at Magadan, they trained seventy evangelists to preach throughout Galilee, Judea, and Samaria, and *on page 1806 those seventy evangelists were described as "enthusiasts for the gospel of the kingdom." That's the Urantia Book's definition for evangelism--"Enthusiasm for the gospel of the kingdom." That word "enthusiasm" is from the Greek "en" and "Theos," meaning "God within," and "evangelism" is from the Greek "evangelion," meaning "to bear glad tidings."

*On page 1593 Jesus says, "Simply go forth proclaiming: This is the kingdom of heaven--God is your Father and you are his sons, and this good news, if you wholeheartedly believe it, is your eternal salvation." Again, he said go forth proclaiming, an emphasis, as Christy was saying, on becoming living prophets of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

*Jesus said on page 1805, "Proclaim a spiritual brotherhood of the sons of God..." On page 1931 he says, "...you are also to be valiant in defense of righteousness, mighty in the promulgation of truth, and aggressive in the preaching of this gospel of the kingdom, even to the ends of the earth." On page 2049 Jesus says, "If you would obey me, go then into the lands of the gentiles and proclaim this gospel.... There is but one law to obey--(interesting, the way he put that) that is the command to go forth proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom." On page 2052 Jesus says, "That which the world needs most to know is: Men are the sons of God, and through faith they can actually realize, and daily experience, this ennobling truth." On page 1432 we read that Jesus and Ganid marveled at that great lighthouse of Pharos at Alexandria, and that Jesus challenged this lad to become a living lighthouse of spiritual truth in his own native India when he returned. On page 1930 we read

that Jesus and the twelve apostles were encamped near Gethsemane, and that Jesus said, "The persistent preaching of this gospel of the kingdom will some day bring to all nations a new and unbelievable liberation, intellectual freedom, and religious liberty."

*And finally, on page 2043, he says: "As the Father sent me into the world, so send I you." A tremendous, enthralling, stirring mission he set before us--to be torch bearers of truth to this twilit world! We must, in the promulgation of spiritual truth, involve ourselves both in the living and in the daring to communicate these vital ideas. If we fail in both the living and the communicating, the chances are we will make little impact on anyone. As that one elderly woman complained of the new young preacher in her town, "Six days of the week he's invisible and the seventh he's incomprehensible." As Urantians we are called to have a religion which is both visible and comprehensible. It is not enough that it only be visible, because again and again, even talking to groups of disciples during his resurrection appearances, Jesus gave the commission to be proclaimers of truth and to do it simply. Jesus himself taught with refreshing simplicity.. Jesus could have said "the anachronicity of venerable theological constructs is wholly incompatible with the ongoing viability of contemporary existential mandates." But instead he said, "Don't put new wine in old wine skins, they'll burst." He taught truth boldly, simply, and vividly. And there was response to that.

The ancient mathematician, Euclid, described an axiom as a self-evident truth, which, simply upon hearing, most people will recognize to be true. An example of one of Euclid's axioms is that when equal quantities are added to equal quantities, the results will be equal. Most people, simply upon hearing that, without doing mathematics or taking that into a laboratory, will grant, will acknowledge, that it's true. But are there not also spiritual axioms, statements so vitally vibrant and alive with spiritual truth that people on some level of their consciousness recognize them? *The Urantia Book gives one example: doing to another as you would have another do to you. It says even the persons who practice it the least will admit that in theory it's a good idea. "The Fatherhood of God," "the brotherhood of man," or "the kingdom of God is within"--these somehow likewise stir an enlivened interest in the souls of men.

We are challenged to share all this. If two men are walking down the street, and each one has a dollar bill, and each one gives the other his dollar bill, they both walk away with only one dollar bill. But if two men are walking along down the street and each one gives the other a spiritual truth, each one walks away with two spiritual truths. Spiritual things have this power to multiply by sharing. As Jesus says in one of his discourses, if you would lead others into the kingdom, you must first yourselves walk in the clear light of living truth. To employ a peculiar epidemiological analogy, the surest way to give someone else the measles, mumps, the flu, or the five-day common cold is to have it yourself. It's the same with spiritual truth. Like that one fellow who had a cold: he took so many penicillin shots that every time he sneezed, he cured somebody. We must, ourselves, be abrim with this joy of knowing God, living as sons or daughters of God; what better news is there? Incredible! Think of this! Just ponder the fact, realize, that we are infinitely loved, surrounded and enveloped by the oceanic being of God's presence, God's nearness, that God has a wonderful will for our lives, that there is a plan and a purpose for this planet and for us as well. Knowing this, we can

live liberated from fear and enjoying a sense of power and purpose unknown, unsuspected, undreamed of, by most of the people on this planet.

Many people simply don't know why they are alive. Many a young person in his 20s begins wanting to save the world and ends being glad if he can save part of his salary. Yet knowing that we're sons and daughters of God, knowing that there's this whole universe-adventure lying before us...this perspective is utterly life-transformative. And we, as changed individuals, are going to be able to make changes in this world. This is a kind of evangelism which is not the pompous piety that alienates people. Have you ever been talking to the sort of person who explains at great length how he would go to the very ends of the earth for his religion, until you begin secretly wishing that perhaps he would? And possibly stay there? But being abrim with the joy of knowing God is the supreme form of evangelism which Jesus and those twelve apostles were practicing. And there is literal transformation awaiting this world if we will dare to live by that.

Here is a provocative point...one which I've pondered at great length...that in my repeated readings of the Urantia Book I have yet to find one single place where the Urantia Book commissions us to go forth and proclaim the Urantia Book. This is surprising. It was astonishing to me when I first noticed this. And I remember rereading the book one entire time just to make sure I hadn't made some mistake. Now, this doesn't mean we're to be inactive on this front by any means and certainly the Foundation and the Brotherhood are extraordinarily diligent in the wise proliferation of these truths and in the wise management of this revelation. Yet it is interesting that not once does it give us the actual mission or mandate in the pages of this book to go forth and proclaim the book. But again and again--literally hundreds of times, either expressly or by implication--it does commission us to proclaim basic spiritual truths: to be teachers or proliferators of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In fifteen out of Jesus' nineteen resurrection appearances he gave that commission--to go forth into all the world and proclaim the living truth. And he gave that not only to groups of apostles, but to disciples as well. In fifteen out of those nineteen resurrection appearances, he says--go forth and proclaim this living truth.

Many a man lives his lifetime, dies, and then the lawyers, the courts, and his family set about the settling of his will. This is considered to be a humanly sacred responsibility--the settling, the carrying out of a person's last will. And yet in Jesus' very last resurrection appearance, his last request was that this gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man be proclaimed "to the uttermost parts of the world." Two thousand years later, according to the Urantia Book, Christianity--which they describe as only a religion about Jesus--has not even effectually been proclaimed to the uttermost parts of the world, and the real religion of Jesus has not been heard in many Christian lands! Think of this exhilarating commission which two thousand years later is yet unfulfilled: to go forth to the "uttermost parts" of this world and to bring about a spiritual renaissance. That commission is still in effect today and they reiterate it and reiterate it again and again in the pages of the book.

What does this "spiritual renaissance" mean, and how can it take place? Consider, as a comparison, the "industrial revolution." In the now industrialized portions of the world, before the year 1730 four out of every five people were making their

livings in agriculture. But only two hundred years later, in the relatively short span of only two hundred years, four out of every five persons in those areas were making their livings in industry. In a period of only two hundred years, vast portions of the planetary population have come to accept the ideas of science and of industry. If that can be so, then why, looking ahead to another two hundred years, could not mankind begin to see the vision of all this world as one vast family of God? Why could not that begin to be held as the purpose for human existence on this planet? I believe it can be. I believe it must be. I believe we are commissioned by the Urantia Book to bring this about. The hour is striking, they say, for the presentation of the simple teachings of Jesus to other cultures and other lands. And there are many here in the Urantia Brotherhood who as individuals are taking part in this. Furthermore, we have established the Family of God Foundation--myself, my wife Nancy, David and Bettina Gray, Harry McMullan, Jo Ann Eichmann, Richard Keeler, Mary Strahan, and Julia Fenderson...our first National Extension Executive. We have undertaken the mission of proclaiming the basic spiritual teachings of Jesus to the whole world in our generation, which now--by technological means such as laser and communications satellite--is a living possibility. It absolutely must be done.

We've learned much from other cultures of the world. From the ancient Assyrians mankind learned the building of libraries and postal systems; from the Babylonians, astronomy and the molding of clay bricks. From the Egyptians we learned surveying; from the Persians, international coinage; and from the ancient Phoenicians, a written alphabet. From the Greeks mankind learned music, drama, architecture, philosophy; and from the early Romans we learned the making of bridges, roads, and laws.

But from Jesus of Nazareth mankind has not yet learned the ways of righteousness and peace, the brotherhood of man beneath the Fatherhood of God, and until we do, the rest that we have learned will matter...very little.

We are called and challenged to proclaim not the brotherhood of man alone; that could become an impotent social humanism. We are commissioned to proclaim not the Fatherhood of God alone; that could become a detached spiritual mysticism. We are challenged to proclaim the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, the vision of all this planet as one vast Family of God. Our mission is not to take the people out of their problems, it is to take the problems out of the people...to teach men mastery of their interior torments, of their angers, their hatreds, their frustrations; to teach them the love of God and man--Jesus' two great commandments; to teach the exhilaration there is in this process of finding and knowing God.

On the 14th of July in the year 1789, mad mobs surged through the narrow streets of Paris like river-rapids of humanity. They stormed the mighty Bastille, and thus was the French Revolution begun. "The Reign of Terror," history terms it. During one period of five days alone, rioters in the streets murdered over one thousand of the priests and nobility of France. People were guillotined without fair trial, oftentimes simply on the accusations of neighbors, and the Parisian gutters ran red with blood. But during that same period of time, during the late 1780s and early 1790s, while France lay sanguine and sundered by violent revolution instigated by men intolerably impatient for changes of a social, political, and

economic nature--what of England? England, too, was suffering the very same sorts of political, social, governmental, and economic problems. But England chose to deal with her difficulties, not by violence and rioting in the streets, but by evolutionary techniques. And why was that? Why the difference? Because while France was having a revolution...England was having a revival! For fifty years prior to that French Revolution, John Wesley and George Whitefield had gone preaching up and down the length and breadth of England, preaching in open fields, by the mines, by the bridges where people crossed, standing on chairs, standing on tables, and once with John Wesley standing on his own father's tombstone when he was denied access to the pulpit of his boyhood church. They preached the teachings of Jesus, as they understood them, with power and perseverance--preaching two, three, four, and five times a day.

That spiritual revival dealt smuggling and slavery staggering blows. It began hospitals, orphanages, and beneficent societies; but in the final analysis, John Wesley's mission was not the changing of politics and economics; it was the changing of people. And that remains the pre-eminent priority for this planet in our generation.

England was spared the horrors and violence of bloody revolution because of a spiritual renaissance which was dawning among the peoples of England during those years, due to that persistent preaching of Wesley and Whitefield. This sort of spiritual renaissance which was dawning among the peoples of England during those years, due to that persistent preaching of Wesley and Whitefield. This sort of spiritual renaissance is crucially, critically, urgently required today. Which will it be--a dawning spiritual renaissance, or the continued carnage of unremitting violence? This was the alternative two thousand years ago on the streets of Palestine; it was the alternative on the streets of Paris in 1789, and it is yet the alternative before us in these nuclear 1970s. Which will it be?

It was no accident at all that the Urantia Book was given in this critical, pivotal point of planetary history, because we urgently need new spiritual perspectives in our day and in our generation. Remember, as I've quoted before, Jesus said on page 2052: *"That which the world needs most to know is: Men are the sons of God, and through faith they can actually realize, and daily experience, this ennobling truth." This spiritual renaissance, in my conviction, will one day make more differences in this world and the way this world is, than any battle which has ever been waged, than any war which has ever been fought! This spiritual renaissance will make more differences in this world than any governmental, political, economic, or social upheaval in all of human history, and you and I as Urantians are called and challenged to be leaders in that spiritual renaissance. It is an inescapable conclusion from the reading of the book that we are called and challenged to this task.

I bought a newspaper today, a copy of the Chicago Tribune. That which makes headlines is on the front page. But that which makes history is often on the back page or not even in the newspaper at all. This meeting here at 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois, will likely not even make the back page. And yet it is my conviction that we are called and challenged to be torchbearers of truth to a twilight world. We are part of the most exciting, the most portentous, the most important spiritual movement taking place on this planet, because it will have ultimate ramifications politically, socially, governmentally--in every conceivable

aspect and aspiration of human life. This is the challenge which lies before us. It will be difficult. The Master promised that. He said there will be persecution. We must be prepared for that. But I, for one, would rather die for a cause which will one day triumph, than to triumph with a cause which will one day die. And our cause is destined to triumph!

Said the Master, "Go you into all the world and proclaim this living truth." The fields stand white for harvesting; the grain hangs heavy on the bending stalk; the harvest stands in plenitude, but those who labor in it still are few. And said the Master, "As the Father sent me into the world, so send I you."