

The Circles

"Life is but a day's work—
do it well."*

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FAITH

Faith: How It Grows (A Personal Experience)

By Tommie Clendening
Plano, Texas

In retrospect I can see the sequence of the growth of faith in my life, which I'd like to share, in the hope that possibly those who are in a similar situation can make use of my experience. Perhaps I can also give others a chance to remember their own experience.

Once in junior high Sunday school I remember being given prayer-request cards to fill out. I put on mine that I desired "eternal peace and joy." As we shared them with the class, I remember most were very materially oriented. When the teacher got to mine, he seemed somewhat surprised and asked,

"Why 'eternal?'" Well, I've always been very thorough, always covering all the bases so to speak; and I couldn't stand the thought, if I ever should attain true peace and joy, of having it jerked away somehow—so it had to be eternal.

I never could buy the concept of Hell within the church. Having spent a lot of my childhood out in nature, I just could not believe that a God which gave us such a wonderful, beautiful, intricate world to live in could be also punishing. Personally created hell, yes; God created, no.

I left the church after high school becoming a declared agnostic—not an atheist, mind you. I was personally giving God time to prove himself. Along in this period I also spurned my parents. They couldn't possibly understand me, nor did I want to try and understand them. Even during all this confusion, though, I can remember saying to several people (and not just once) there's got to be more to life—there just has to be more. But I had yet to find it. I tried all kinds of external means: drugs, music, thrills, etc.

Then suddenly, I was struck down

See "Faith" on p. 8.

Faith In My Heavenly Father

By Mike Gott, age 16
Paris, Texas

I feel very open to talk about my Heavenly Father. It makes me feel good to know that someday I will be with him. I love him and I love to talk to other people about him. I feel he has made a place for me in the mansion

worlds and that all I have to do is know that he is my Father and love Him and I will be accepted into Paradise. I used to be scared that I would not go to Heaven because I might sin and he would not take me.

All of this has changed since I found *The URANTIA Book*. I know that I will be accepted now, no matter what I do, so long as I love God and know he is my Father.

I no longer have to worry about getting to Paradise. I know that when the time comes, I will get to go. I don't have to worry about this when doing my piddly things at school. I know that the Father will accept me for what I am. I have faith in him. If someone comes to me asking for help, I will try to tell them what they want to know. I will tell them what I know, and if they want more, I will show them *The URANTIA Book*.

Faith Is All That Is

- Faith is the essence of our spirituality.*
- It is illogical and unreasonable, but without it, life is illogical and unreasonable.*
- Faith requires courage to exercise.*
- It is the underlying foundation upon which hinges our eternal survival.*
- Faith is an antidote to fear, worry, hopelessness.*
- By faith we recognize who we are and what we can become.*
- Faith is the Universal Force which when we exercise it, we truly become more aware of and in tune with eternal realities.*
- It literally bridges the gap between unreality and reality, finite and the infinite, and time and eternity.*
- It is personal and impersonal and literally the very essence of who we are.*
- Faith transcends time to eternity and by it we shall know the ultimate.*
- Faith requires nothing other than itself.*
- Faith is all that is.*

By Scott Sylte
York, Pennsylvania


Faith is a gift of God. It is not a material that can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched; but is as real as anything that can be perceived.

I have shared the light once this week, and it made me feel good to let someone else in the school know about the book. I think that it was planned for me to show her the book. I wanted to take some appleseeds to school, but was afraid to. I didn't think anybody there was ready for the book yet. I must have been wrong. I will take more appleseeds to school so that those who are ready to receive the book will have a chance. ●



Faith In God

By Kaye Cooper
Arlington, Texas



Faith is a belief so strong that it begins to motivate our actions. Belief is not faith until we begin to act upon that belief. Faith in God requires having the courage to try living in a world beyond the material. Our senses cannot offer us evidence of spiritual realities. Our logic cannot prove to us the existence of God, the triumph of truth, beauty and goodness, the magical world of growth. The way we learn of the spiritual world is through daring to experience it. Faith inspires us to act on our beliefs and experience their reality. That is the reason why faith is the key to the kingdom.

Imagine living inside a magnificent castle with no windows, only one large door. Inside the castle you may hear of the world outside, a world full of sunshine, flowers and soft breezes. You may believe that such a world exists beyond the door. Your belief may be intellectually stimulating, even comforting to you. But you are still living inside the castle with no windows, closed in behind the door. Believing in the world outside remains only a belief—not an experience—and it is relatively useless to you until you have the courage to open that door and step into the world. Running through the breeze, smelling the flowers, drinking in the sunshine—these experiences make the outside world a reality.

Faith is believing enough to open the door. It is the courage to act. It is the key to the spiritual world.

Ah, but faith in God seems not so simple as opening a door. We may

believe that our Father is the most loving and wise parent we can conceive, that he will watch over us and guide us, that he is always there when we call. We may believe his promises and that he will do all that is needed if we only do what we think to be his will. But faith requires that we act on those beliefs—that we experience the Father. At this point we come face to face with a major human fear: what if we open the door to God and find nothing there?

Sometimes people have the experience of turning to God and thinking that he's not there. This may be a consequence of failure to understand the relationship with our Father. This relationship requires learning and practice just as other skills do, such as learning to walk. Every normal adult can walk. But as children we have to learn to walk—through trial and error. Once we have learned to walk, it is important to continue walking regularly. And if we walk vigorously each day, then when we need stamina, we have it. In order to commune with the Father and to perceive his guidance, we need to learn how and then keep in practice. He is never "not there", but we are sometimes very poor practitioners of sensing his presence and perceiving his guidance.

Communing with our Father is very subtle—not usually so obvious as opening a door and stepping into the sunshine, especially at first. Faith is required to keep us trying until we do begin to feel the Father's presence

and until we see his influence in our lives.

Another aspect of faith in God is our confidence in the absolute excellence of his will. God's will is, quite simply, the very best of all the possibilities. In any given situation God's will is, by definition, the very best choice available. Any alternative we come up with is no better than second best.

As universe children we have to learn, through living, how perfect God's will is. And we can't learn that until we start consciously trying to live God's will for our lives. Somehow we fear to let go of our own control over life—much as the toddler clutches and tugs at some harmful item his mother tries to take from him.

When we have the courage to overcome our fears and to set aside our own desires, we begin to discover the wholeness, the symmetry, the balance and the reality of living according to the highest values. We become enthusiastic seekers of God's will in

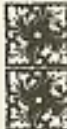
See "God" on p. 8.




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FAITH



By Jim Daniels
Fort Worth, Texas



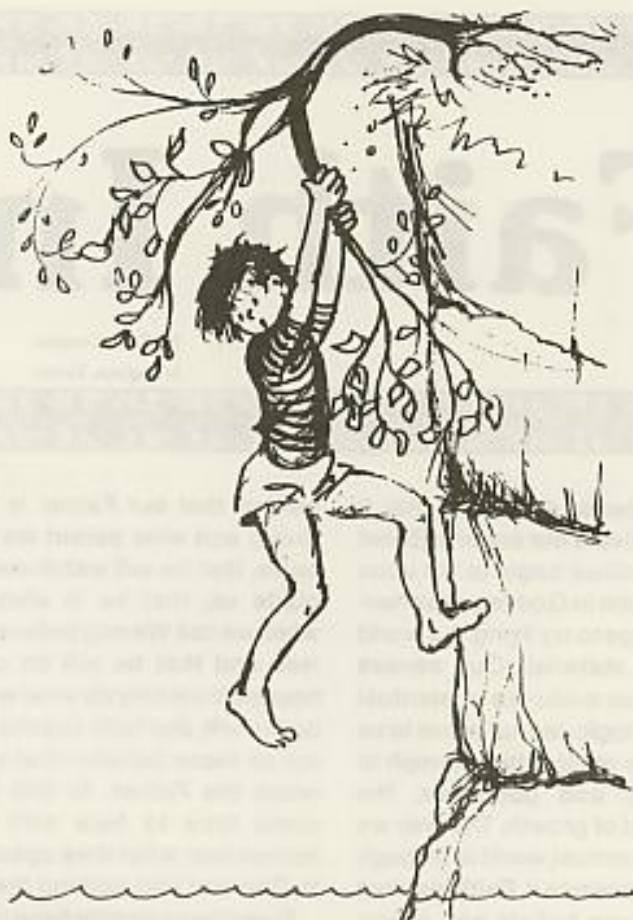
I started at the bottom, for that's where the most mud collects in the water bucket of life.

In my travels to nightclubs, restaurants, bars and yes, honky tonks, I find many people who believe and admit to knowing the truth, but refuse faith (the only thing that will positively back you up in the ascent) for it interferes with their mode and habits of living.

It reminds me of a man who believed in God, and one day he took a walk in the woods. He stepped over the edge of a bluff as he was pushing his way through the brush. As he started to fall, he grabbed a vine near the edge. It was a long way down, and he started yelling his lungs out for help. After a while his arm was getting tired, and he was hoarse from hollering.


Suddenly a loud voice boomed out and said, "Yes, my son, I will help you; but first, you must let go of the vine." This man, who believed in the truth, thought for a moment and then yelled again, "Hey, is there anyone else up there?"

This man had no faith in God. Think how many people pushing their way through life have so little faith that when they get into trouble, they expect to be saved without faith. I hope that someone (just one, maybe two) will get the message from the pamphlets that I leave behind. ●



Opportunities for exercising a small and budding faith come sometimes when you least expect it...unexpectedly and suddenly and when there is nothing else to lay a firm hold on.

From "Learning to have Faith is like learning to Swim" by Christel Garrick (see page 9)



Spanish Translation In the Making!


Preparations for a Spanish translation of *The URANTIA Book* are progressing rapidly. The selection committee has chosen a translation firm and *URANTIA Foundation* has approved their selection. The Finance Committee of *URANTIA Brotherhood* is presently working on a plan to raise funds. Approximately \$350,000 will be required to translate and print a Spanish version of the book. Once the money is raised and work begins, translation is expected to require only 15 months.

DONATIONS ARE NEEDED

Anyone who would like to have a part in making *The URANTIA Book* available to our Spanish-speaking brothers, please send your contributions to:

URANTIA Brotherhood—Spanish Translation
533 Diversey Parkway
Chicago, Illinois 60614

We hope that everyone will want to have a part—large or small—in this new step in making the *Fifth Epochal Revelation* available to our world.





Outreach

We are eager to continue to report on reader's experiences with sharing the concepts from *The URANTIA Book* with others or introducing the book itself to new readers. Please send us your experiences.

the editors

Public Ministry 101

By Terry Kruger
Boulder, Colorado

"There is but one law to obey—that is the command to go forth proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom." p. 2049

Hopefully there comes a time in each *URANTIA Book* reader-believer's earth life when the above quote takes on new relevance and meaning. This past May twenty-first and twenty-second, the spirit of that instruction became a reality for some Denver area *URANTIA Book* readers, when they took that command in earnest and opened a booth designed to introduce the public to the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

The twelfth Annual Capital Hill Fair in Denver provides booth space along a beautiful tree-lined promenade, before a backdrop of the snow-capped Rockies. In two days' time, well over one hundred thousand people visit the four hundred booths of artists, craftsmen and women, social, political, and environmental groups. The fair captures the essence of mankind's gregarious nature, promising satisfaction for the fall gambit of appetites, whether for barbecued turkey legs or his higher longings for truth, beauty, and goodness.

The idea for such an adventure came from a Denver study group. But upon investigation they found that they had to be a non-profit organization to qualify for informational booth space and requested sponsorship by Rocky Mountain *URANTIA* Society of Denver. There were many concerns regarding sponsorship by the society, ranging from use and display of the concentric circles to outright attacks by fundamentalists. Sponsorship was allowed, provided the name of the society was not visible and the concentric circles were not used. Instead, three triangular sign towers were constructed, with professionally silkscreened quotes appearing on each side such as, "All men and women are brothers and sisters," "Your life is a gift from God, what you make of it is a gift to God," and "Evolution is the technique of Creation." One side of each tower pictured the world along with Vern Grimsley's "One World" quote. The beautiful signs and slogans caught the attention of passers-by, who then paused to examine several Concordes and *URANTIA Books* displayed open to interesting pages, such as paper 101.

That is, of course, when the fun began. Slowly but surely, wary *Uranti*ans made their way over to our table, browsed at their leisure, and some, made curious by the distinct absence of any attempts to "convert" them, asked those very questions which have the potential to change destiny. "This looks interesting; what's it about?" "I've heard of this book somewhere before, but I've never seen one." "What do you mean, 'Evolution is the technique of creation'?"

The morning had barely passed before a young minister engaged us in lively debate; but after a time, he found us agreeing with nearly all he

said and decided all he really wanted to do was share the love of Jesus with us! We soon began to lose count of the number of pleasant encounters with interested men and women. Pamphlets, obtained from 533 Diversey and The Christian Fellowship of Students of *The URANTIA Book* were given out to those who requested more information. But our joy at finding genuine interest by many people was punctuated by occasional visits from those who came from a very different place, a place of fear and ignorance. Any discussion with this sort generally deteriorated to the assertion that if it wasn't in the Bible, it had to be the work of the devil.

Before we set up on that Saturday morning, many of those who manned the booth had attended several meetings to practice answering questions we might encounter, both from the interested passerby as well as the hostile one. Yet the situations which actually occurred produced a



O, Lord, help me to understand that you aren't going to let anything come my way that you and I together can't handle.



spontaneity which is promised to those who will trust in the Spirit of Truth to point the way at each crossroads and not worry for words to answer with. That's not to say everyone who encountered our booth walked away with a big smile on his face, but those who perceived us as a threat to biblical truth no doubt would slowly become aware of having received a spiritual kick in the backside. Truly the act was ours and the consequences God's.

That evening as we gathered in the nearby home of the Brummetts (our

See "Ministry" on p. 16.



Potpourri

Spiritual Guidance*

By Kaye Cooper
Arlington, Texas

This article is based on material in The URANTIA Book, on a survey of individual religionists, including both readers of The URANTIA Book and non-readers conducted in 1980, and on conversations with other individuals since that time. All page and paragraph citations are references to The URANTIA Book. Thank you to all those who so generously shared their experiences.

If we are to do the Father's will, then presumably there is some way for us to ascertain what that will is. We can apply logic; we can look to the example of good lives; we can consult the opinions of other people personally or through their writings; we can consult epochal revelations. All of these methods are helpful. However, we have available to us personal sources of our Father's guidance. *The URANTIA Book* tells us that personal revelation is continuous. (1107:2) Jesus, speaking of the Spirit of Truth, promised that, "Every earth child who follows the leading of this spirit shall eventually know the will of God..." The way by which we will know his will is *faith*. Jesus told his apostles and twelve of the evangelists, "Your religion shall change from the mere intellectual belief in traditional authority to the actual experience of that living faith which is able to grasp the reality of God and all that relates to the divine spirit of the Father...the religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation..." (1731:2)

SOURCES

We have three primary sources of spiritual guidance: (1)the Thought Adjuster, (2)the Spirit of Truth, and (3)the Universe Mother spirit. (381:3, 1681:2)

The Thought Adjuster comes to us with a specific plan for intellectual

"While we must exercise caution and wisdom to avoid the dangers of elevating our own ideas to the level of commands from on high, we should also be sure not to miss the real experience of a living religion."

and spiritual development. (1204:5) He is primarily concerned with preparing us for the future life beyond this one. (1192:1, 1204:2) Most of his work is done on the superconscious level. (1204:3) We are unable to receive direct communication (with rare exceptions) until we have attained the second or first psychic circle. (1210:10)

The Spirit of Truth is more concerned with now. He is the teacher of truth and the comforter. (1948:3) He is our personal tutor on the message of Jesus. (2060:6) The influence of the Spirit of Truth is perceptible. On the day of Pentecost the apostles and other believers were filled with a "new and profound sense of spiritual joy, security, and confidence...immediately followed by a strong urge to go out and publicly proclaim the gospel..." (2059:1)

The Mother Spirit appears to be much more illusive. We know she makes it possible for the Thought Adjuster and Spirit of Truth to function and that she works with them. (379:4) She also gives us the services of at least three orders of her children: the adjutant mind spirits, the guardian seraphim and the master seraphim of planetary supervision. Through the ministry of the Mother Spirit and her children, we receive the urge to worship (1245:4), the urge to pray (1245:4), the development of evolutionary religion (1003:5, 1110:13), the circumstancing of our lives toward growth (1245:3) and the fostering of the

growth and development of our civilization. (1255:6) The book is talking primarily about the Mother spirit and her children when it makes the statement, "...work out the details of your earthly sojourn in connection with the intelligences of the Infinite Spirit..." (66:1)

Perhaps at this point it would be helpful to describe a variety of types of guidance. We know that a great deal of the leading we receive, especially from the Thought Adjuster, is not on a conscious level. (1207:2) The following types of guidance are ones of which we may to some degree be conscious.

CIRCUMSTANCIAL GUIDANCE

Reading *The URANTIA Book* was probably the first time most of us had given serious thought to angels and certainly the first time we had read a description in detail of their teaching efforts on our behalf. Yet many of us had already felt their influence in our lives without having a unifying concept by which we could understand and discuss what was happening. Life is full of seeming coincidences which teach us lessons—lessons small and large, many times the same lessons over and over again. Many lives have taken significant turns because of physical or social circumstances which redirect the person's thinking. These experiences are very probably a result of seraphic work.

Once they have read about the work of seraphim in *The URANTIA*

Book, many people take great delight in actively watching for the circumstances of life which might lead to growth. Events which might have been considered disasters, or at least misfortunes, become opportunities to grow. Many seek celestial assistance and open themselves to a better knowledge of the Father's will by such active observation. Having prayed about a particular difficulty, one individual may find a relevant comment in a book he happens to read. A friend may call and, without knowing the problem, say the very thing which unlocks the puzzle. A newspaper headline, a piece of artwork, a song on the radio—the variety of sources is enormous so long as a person is open to the possibility. Being alert to the possible influence of the seraphim in our lives has brought much growth, joy and satisfaction to many lives.

VOICES AND VISIONS

A much more controversial method by which some people feel that they receive guidance is that of hearing voices and seeing visions. First let us deal with voices which are perceived by the physical ear and visions which are seen with the physical eye. Evidently from the *URANTIA* Book reports of Gabriel appearing to Mary and of Midwayers letting Peter out of prison, these types of events are possible. They appear, however, to be very rare.

Experiences of voices heard by the mind's ear and visions seen by the mind's eye are not so rare. Internal visualizations have been relatively common. Visualizations are frequently symbolic of concepts and events. Sometimes these have been in answer to prayer, sometimes apparently unsolicited. Such visions have occurred in the midst of crises, during rest, at prayer or worship, etc. Sometimes, as one might expect, these visual experiences are combined with the voice (or sound) experience.

Many people have brief voice experiences throughout their lives which help them through difficult

See "Guidance" on p. 10.

about angels

BY GENE JOYCE
RICHARDSON, TEXAS

The angels "love human beings, and only good can result from your efforts to understand and love them."*

ABOUT ANGELS

Shortly before his arrest and crucifixion Jesus warned his apostles and disciples against tempting the angels of their watchcare to place them in difficult situations as a wise and loving discipline for the well-being of their immature souls.

SPECULATION

The fact that my livelihood as an artist depends upon quality eyesight contributed to my decision to enter into an experimental program at the Dean McGee Eye Institute in Oklahoma City. The institute is one of the few hospitals granted participation by the AMA to research Radial Keratotomy. Briefly, this surgery attempts to correct near-sightedness with eight incisions in each eye, by use of a diamond knife.

Since I was a research "guinea pig," the surgery was free. My agreement in exchange included periodical and extensive check-ups for their research data. It was just one such periodical check-up which created the opportunity for an unusual exchange between myself and one of the doctors.

I had arranged, with the help of an understanding assistant, to drive up to Oklahoma City from Dallas for a Saturday appointment, since my employer at the time disapproved of my taking time off. After an hour of preliminary checking, the doctor joined us. He was irate. I had interfered with his Saturday...They NEVER make Saturday appointments and would not do so again... The assistant was wrong to presume this weekend appointment in the first place...And furthermore, I was ungrateful for all the work they had

done and not keeping commitments, etc...! Whoa!

His self-righteous declarations were far from my perception of the truth. I regard the restoration of my eyesight from 20/400 to 20/20 as no less than a personal miracle. I could not sit there without calling his hand on the accusations.

After some heated rounds, we made our peace with each other, and the tests resumed. The doctor was pleased. Of all the operations they had performed, I had the best results of anybody. How could you improve on perfect! I was their star patient! Puffing out his chest, he turned to his assistant and happily said, "I must have been having a good day!"

I interjected, "I didn't expect less, because I asked my angels to help you."

"Your what?"

"My angels."

"Do you really believe in that?"

"I got the results I asked for, didn't I? Yes, I'm sure you were assisted."

He had to think for a while and turned his attention back to the exam.

"Angels, huh?"

"Yes." More examinations.

"How many?"

"Two."

More exams. Winding up, he said, "You know, we operate every Friday morning at 7:30 AM. If you happen to think about it, you might ask your angels to help again."

I perceived he was sincere in his request and responded, "I'd be glad to, and it would help if you asked your angels to help you, too."

"You'd be surprised what I ask for."

What a contrast to our earlier encounter! The three of us left that Saturday morning believing we had shared an unusual experience.

Feeling a warmth of being in touch with these men whose vocations are to help others' physical bodies, I couldn't help wondering if perhaps this encounter wasn't choreographed by spirit friends. I like to think so. ●

By Betty Dirham
Dallas, Texas



Things to Share



1984 GENERAL
CONFERENCE

URANTIA Brotherhood

When: August 12-17, 1984

Where: American Baptist
Assembly, Green Lake,
Wisconsin

Theme: Reaching Out: Studying,
Living, and Sharing the
Teachings

Contact:
URANTIA Brotherhood
533 Diversey Parkway
Chicago, IL 60614

GOD cont. from p. 3

each circumstance of life, because we love the quality of life which flows from living according to God's will.

And that brings us to another difficult spot: As we seek God's will for our lives, we find that it is many times a long and confusing process. We don't have a set of rules to follow, although the principles set forth in *The URANTIA Book* are helpful. Life is infinitely complicated and no set of rules could cover every situation. We don't have an authority to consult. Discussions with parents, ministers, friends, spouses and such are helpful, yet ultimately each of us must make his own decisions. Although we can sit down in prayer and ask to be shown God's will, we rarely recognize an immediate and clear-cut answer. How do we find out what is God's will?

We can pray repeatedly for an accurate perception of his will. We can patiently await an understanding. We can allow plenty of time. We can be alert to help in our decision-making from any source. We can apply our human logic and common sense to predicting his will. We can keep in mind our concept of God-like actions (especially the example of Jesus' life). We can consistently refuse to return in fear or impatience to our own selfish desires. We can courageously persist in our trust that the Father will help us to see his will. The most important of these are our continued desire to do God's will and our persistent belief that he will help us to find it—in other words, our faith!

The subtlety of God's communication with us necessitates this exercise of faith. It's pretty difficult to act when we are saying to ourselves,

"Well, I *think* this is God's will, but I could surely be wrong!" But that is what we must do. We must take the chance of being wrong. We must act on what we *think* is God's will.

The first few times that we timidly venture into the faith act of doing God's will may feel a little like riding a bicycle for the very first time: uncertain and frightening. As in riding a bicycle, a few falls are to be expected and are of no great consequence. We must simply acknowledge that we have chosen what appears to be a lesser alternative and then act on our belief that God *will* help us find his will. Faith requires the courage to keep trying even in the face of apparent failure.

As we continue to seek God's will in our lives and to act upon our best understanding of his will, our faith grows. Our first small expenditure of courage grows into stronger and stronger assurance with each act of faith. Before long we are running in the sunshine and breezes of the spiritual world. Faith is not just belief; it is an active physical, mindal and spiritual adventure. And the goal of this adventure is a kingdom of inner joy and peace, surety in the face of uncertainty, a core of strength which flows out to our fellows and inspires their lives as well. ●



FAITH cont. from p. 1.

in the midst of this anti-establishment rebellion by a very serious illness. And as I awoke from a three week coma in a hospital bed, who was at my side but my parents. It was a long recovery, and it took me years to realize and come to terms with my guilt and accept the comfort of the family again.

Six months after this I visited a friend of mine in Colorado whom I'd always felt really had it together. He gave me *The URANTIA Book*, stating that he'd shown it to me two years before, and I'd just said it was too big. Of course it was. At that point I had not been to death and back. I had not reached the point where I was willing to *work* to find God. But this time I spent the two weeks of my visit thoroughly reading the sections on the Thought Adjuster with many soul-satisfying "aha's!"

When I returned home, my faith growth finally had begun on a conscious level. I joined a *URANTIA Book* study group and became active in a Unity Church. I began to meditate and straighten my physical life out. And I waited for miracles. Now God would speak to me! I expected a booming voice or flashing vision, but

Things to Share

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL
FORUM

When: October 19-21, 1984

Where: Center for Christian
Renewal, Oklahoma City,
Oklahoma

Theme: Fruits of the Spirit

Contact: First URANTIA
Society of Oklahoma
14 S.W. 97th
Oklahoma City, OK 73179

nothing happened.

After about seven years, I had grown and the mysticism stage had passed. Through it all I had retained my logical way of seeing things. The universe was orderly and would withstand my logical scrutiny. This I believed through experience, but yet I waited for God's voice to speak to me—to no avail. Suddenly, my logical mind finally won out. How silly of me! Here I'd been expecting God to change for me, rather than me for him. After all, God is changeless. He has always been communicating with me—obviously I just hadn't been listening. Shortly after this startling realization during a group meditation one evening, I began to notice (this is



From "Learning to have Faith is like learning to Swim" a small booklet of drawings on Faith available for \$1.00 (to defray costs) from:

Christel Garrick
23739 Sandalwood
Canoga Park, CA 91307

hard to explain) two sets of thoughts within my mind: my usual dialogue and another subtler set of thoughts which seemed not to originate totally with me. They were serene, original and enlightening. This discovery made me realize that I probably receive guidance in many ways.

Now that I recognize this form of guidance, I use it regularly. But, still being my skeptical self I subject this guidance to my brand of rationality, as *The URANTIA Book* recommends. It must ring true (Spirit of Truth); it must "feel right"; it must seem logically feasible after close scrutiny and contemplation. After all, this could still just be my imagination and wishfulness. Then I dare to act upon it—for without action faith is useless. Even Jesus seems to have had still to

rely on this type of spiritual introspection and decision-making as late in his mortal life as the last year of his ministry. Just observe the turmoil he appeared to undergo before deciding to change his tactics toward the religious leaders in his last time to speak in the synagogue at Capernaum.

God has shared such a magnificent, intricate creation! Through my growth and life I've begun to realize his wonderful, miraculous, subtle plan for my personal growth. Particularly was this brought home to me at the births of my children. What a marvelous way in which God shares his act of creation with us. And then he dares to turn it over to us, so we can experience for ourselves the responsibility and preciousness of that

creation. As I watch my children grow and as my husband and I grow with them and learn together, I realize the total awesomeness and perfection of his plan.

The last few years my faith has begun to grow in a different way. Faith in God is easy and natural now. But, over and over I find in the Jesus papers where Michael admonishes us to have faith in each other as in a family situation. My logical mind takes over again and I realize it's never my job to judge or criticize others. That's God's job. But I kept running into my own disappointment. I could see so clearly the way others should be living their lives and handling life's situations. I could see their beautiful potential and the gap between it and the reality of their lives. Truly loving them, I longed to somehow make them live up to their potential. I knew exactly what I would do in their particular situation. But, again it's not my place to judge others. Jesus let Judas and the religious leaders continue in their fear-ridden paths. He still lovingly reached out to them, even though it would mean his death, thus showing us it's not life here on this planet which is important, but our love and service to each other. Life goes on, but our chance for love, service and growth in these particular circumstances may never happen again. So I'm working to be more understanding and therefore truly loving of my brothers. After all, Jesus had to trust his lowly, mortal apostles to carry his message to the world, even when, understanding them as he did, he knew they barely had begun to grasp his concepts and grow.

So, I'm now consciously still working on understanding myself and God's will for my life and trying to change me to be more tolerant, patient and truly understanding of others, all the while sharing the love I feel for my brothers and sisters as I understand them better. And my faith grows on. Thanks to you for allowing me to share this part of myself, for without all of you, my growth and chance to serve would not be possible. ●



situations with succinct advice or words of support and encouragement. Perhaps this voice is simply higher levels of our unconscious or our humanly acquired conscience. It may be the Spirit of Truth (1286:7) or possibly on rare occasions even our Thought Adjuster. (1192:4)

Quite a few individuals have described hearing with their mind's ear words, sentences, paragraphs, even entire compositions which form in their minds in ways which feel different from their ordinary thought processes. In most cases reported, the material received in this way was gentle, inspiring and uplifting, often including humor appropriate to the receiving person. In some instances where advice was sought from the voices, answers seemed to have been carefully given so as to avoid imposing on the will of the receiving person—in fact, they are sometimes said to be downright frustratingly unhelpful. A number of persons experiencing this type of voices indicate that the voices claim to be angels, many of whom give their names.

The claim to be conversing with angels is probably the most controversial aspect of these experiences, especially since *The URANTIA Book* says that seraphim making actual contact with mankind is "very unusual." (1246:4) Perhaps these voices are the "sudden emergence into consciousness of ideas which have been grouping themselves together in the submerged mental levels..." (1207:3) Perhaps they are exactly what they purport to be. Any individual having such an experience will find assistance in the book (especially 1244-6 and 1254-8) but no concrete answers.

The results of voice and visual experiences frequently have been enhanced, fruitful and happy lives.

FEELING OR KNOWING

This next category of guidance is a difficult one to even put a name to. We tend to say, "I feel that I should" do this or that. Almost everyone responding to our survey referred to intuitions or feelings. Yet these feelings have little to do with emotions

and still less to do with our physical senses. Perhaps they are the influence of the soul in its functioning to feel values. (1219:5) In some cases they may be simple conscience or the product of our "submerged mental levels." (1207:7,3) Perhaps they are what is termed "spiritual insight," the "inner and spiritual communion" which results "from the impress made upon the mind of man by the combined operations of the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth..." (1105:0) Perhaps they are not really feelings but the parent of thoughts—a thought emerging so slowly that we perceive it before its clear emergence into consciousness. Probably each of these (and other things too) is experienced as a "feeling" or "knowing" at one time or another.

Whatever the origin, people experience feelings about the truth of a situation or the rightness of their own actions. In fact these feelings are probably the ultimate arbiter of their guidance. Frequently their first reaction to a new idea is, "How does it feel?" And after having prayed, counseled with friends, consulted *The URANTIA Book* (or their memory of it), using their humanly acquired facts and logic, applying their common sense, and whatever else they may do, the final thought is often, "Now, how do I feel about it?" Those who receive guidance in some other fashion, such as circumstances, voices or visions, tend to accept or reject that guidance on the basis of these feelings.

Many individuals find that they are not at peace with themselves when their thoughts, words, or actions are not in keeping with this inner feeling. Sometimes they spend days feeling uncomfortable about their lives until they recognize that they must do some praying and serious thinking about some aspect of their lives. Once their thoughts, words and actions are harmonious with this knowing inside them, they are at peace once again. Sometimes the conflict is caused by their bowing to the influence or persuasion of someone else and they behave in a way not consistent with their inner selves.

Sometimes they may have made selfish decisions which this true self recognizes and rejects. Whatever the cause, peace is restored when they respond to the truth within themselves.

PARTNERSHIP

Some people report an experience which they consider to be guidance but which varies quite a bit from the other forms described. It occurs when the individuals are actively engaged in serving their fellows (consciously or unconsciously). In such a circumstance the individual involved silently expresses his desire for God's help in the situation. Then frequently he seems to say just the right thing to the person with whom he is talking, with the result that the person's spiritual needs are met. The individuals are unconscious of specific leading. They report simply feeling in partnership with spirit, or feeling that God's love is flowing through them.

These occurrences seem to take place when the individuals are relating to others in a non-directing, loving way. There is no attempt to tell the person what he *ought* to do. The individuals are not concerned with their own cleverness or goodness but are concentrating on a simple, loving communion with the other person. It is possible that this is what Jesus described as making "your appeals directly to the divine spirit that dwells within the minds of men." (1765:4)

Such experiences may be the influence of the Spirit of Truth since we are told that he "directs the loving contact of one human being with another." (1951:0) These partnership occurrences are certainly high points of fulfillment and satisfaction in the life of the server.

VALIDITY

A major concern which some people have about spiritual guidance is, "How does one judge its validity?" Our minds are quite capable of fooling us, and we are warned that genuine guidance may be distorted and even result in fanaticism. (1208:4-5, 1209:4)

Validation of experience may be attempted by going to accepted

religious authority for approval. But Jesus gave us his method, a better method of religious validation.

The book describes Jesus' approach to religion as if it were analogous to the technique of experiment used in modern science. Jesus followed the method of *experience*. (2076:5) We may perceive an insight or intuition or in some other way believe that we have received guidance. But we'll not know whether what we perceive is truth unless we act upon it—unless we try it in our lives and look at the results. Those results tell us if we have something worthwhile or not. This is one way in which we can use the method of experience. It is also the method of *faith* in that we act upon our belief that we are guided.

Our faith is small at first, but it draws strength from the experience which we have as a result of *acting* upon our guidance. Each time we act and observe the results, our faith grows until it approaches that mature faith which is defined as religious assurance.

Jesus urges his followers to become their own prophets (1731:5)—to depend not on someone else's words but upon their own religious experience. He said: "The religion of the spirit leaves you forever free to follow the truth wherever the leadings of the spirit may take you. And who can judge—perhaps this spirit may have something to impart to this generation which other generations have refused to hear?" (1731:3) He wasn't talking just to the apostles and evangelists, but to each person who hears his words and follows them in any generation.

Ultimately then, the validity of our guidance depends upon our trying it in our lives. There are many ways in which *The URANTIA Book* can assist in this process. It can provide some criteria by which to judge the consequences of acting on our guidance.

As one example, the book provides a test of the validity of mystical experiences. (1000-1001) The test can be applied to any experience in one's life. Experience is worthwhile if it improves life on seven levels:

1. Does it improve one's physical

health?

2. Does it improve one's mental functioning?

3. Does it socialize one's religious life?

4. Does it spiritualize one's everyday life?

5. Does it enhance one's appreciation for truth, beauty and goodness?

6. Does it conserve one's current level of values?

7. Does it increase one's God consciousness?

This test provides an imminently practical means of judging any guidance experience which we feel we have had.

The primary concern is that we not exalt our own ideas to the level of the words of God. (1094:3, 1208:4) We are cautioned many times in *The URANTIA Book* of the dangers of assuming that our intuitions, urges or feelings originate with the Thought Adjuster. (1199:4, 1207:2-4, 1208:4-5, 1213:1 and 4) We can avoid that problem by taking all of our guidance—in whatever form it might appear—and labeling it "source unknown" and "quality unknown." If it passes our tests of logical evaluation and intuitive truth response, then we can test it in our lives to determine its quality. If the quality is good, the source hardly matters.

But what about the situation in which our guidance does not seem to satisfy the tests we apply? We will have those situations, especially at first when we are just starting out. At times our subconscious fears may appear to be guidance. Personally, I toss out any intuitions that have the fear emotion associated with them. Time after time these have proved to be inaccurate. Evidently they arise out of my subconscious fears.

Certainly we may misinterpret our guidance. It is important to remember that we will always be subject to errors of reception or interpretation, just as a baby at first struggles to understand its parent. Like the baby, we will improve in our ability to discern and interpret the wisdom given us. Yet even as we mature, the possibility of error is always with us. While Jesus admonished the apos-

tlés and evangelists not to discount truth "because the channel of its bestowal is apparently human" (1733:0), he also made it clear to Nathaniel that divine truth from human sources is always subject to error. (1768:4)

My own approach varies from situation to situation, but at one time or another I use some or all of the following: When I recognize something which I think may be guidance, I first "feel" for an inner sense about its truth. Then I check it out against such logical criteria as its own internal logic and its consistency with God's nature and qualities, my highest values, and my knowledge of universe law. I pray for wisdom and clarity of perception, sometimes over a length of time. If I continue to feel right about it, I take a faith leap and act upon that guidance. Then I observe the results on myself, on the people around me, and on the situation. I apply what I call Jesus' test: "Does it bring God to man? Does it bring man to God?" (1388:5) I always try to keep in mind that any guidance is filtered through my mind and is therefore subject to imperfections. In the long run I look at those seven levels of my life to see if things are progressing satisfactorily. And finally, there are times when I have to take on faith that I have chosen God's will because I have done so to the best of my ability. If I have done that, what more can I do unless I receive further illumination?

TECHNIQUES

Now I would like to share with you the techniques which I have gleaned from *The URANTIA Book* and from the responses we received from our survey.

With regard to the external circumstances of guidance reception, the book states and our survey certainly supports that there are no limitations. (2064:2) Guidance may be received any place, at any time.

The techniques which facilitate guidance can be stated with this brief formula.

(1) Pray and worship (both talk to God and listen).

(2) Actively grapple with life (make decisions and serve your fellows).

(3) Want (need, yearn) to do the

Father's will more than anything else in the world.

Prayer and worship are essential elements in spiritual guidance. Prayer enlarges our spiritual receptivity (2065:8) and worship is the best time for the Thought Adjuster to communicate with our souls. (1641:1)

There are seven attitudes which we should carry to prayer. (1) Prayer should be done as unselfishly as we are able. (999:9) (2) We should maintain a joyful feeling of Thanksgiving. (1640:4) We can even be thankful for the hard places in life if we recognize that they are opportunities to grow and learn. (3) We must pray in faith (1620:7), believing that our prayers will be answered. That does not mean believing in the childish manner that we will receive exactly what we ask for, but knowing that the father will supply what we need for the situation. (4) Prayer goes nowhere if we are not sincere in it. God answers the soul's attitude (1002:4), so if the words don't match the attitude, the words simply aren't heard. (5) We are advised to pray intelligently, according to our light. (1620:9) We shouldn't ask for that which we know the Father won't give, such as preferential treatment or requests which violate God's laws as we understand them. (1638:3) (6) We should be trustful. (1620:10) Once we recognize that the Father's will would be the best possible outcome of our prayer, we can actively and sincerely seek that. We can say, in effect, "This is what I have figured out for this situation. It's the best I can come up with, but what I'd really like is for your will to emerge." Then we let the situation go, release our willful hold on it and become receptive to God's will. (7) The last step is to go a bit further and open ourselves to change. That's what prayer is really about anyway—to change ourselves. (1639:3) We can magnify the effects if we take the attitude, "Here am I; use me; reconstruct me."

The *URANTIA* Book gives us some indications of what to pray for. The number one prayer in importance is the prayer for the knowledge of the Father's will. (1640:3) Number two is the prayer for guidance over the

pathway of earthly life. (1640:3) A corollary to this second one is not to ask God to solve problems, but to ask for wisdom and spiritual strength while we get busy working on them. (999:8) We are advised to pray for others: for the welfare of our families and friends, for the extension of the kingdom of heaven, and most difficult, to pray for those who ill use us. (1639:6, 1640:2)

As to the methods we use in prayer, Jesus advised that one's real petitions be made in secret (1640:1) but also warned against becoming too isolated. He made it a practice to take three apostles to be near him while he prayed (2055:2) and at times sent the apostles away to pray in pairs. (1544:1)

Rodan stated that relaxation enhances our spiritual receptivity. (1777:2) One of our respondents expanded on this concept. He said: "It appears certain to me that guidance cannot be effective when the seeker is under intense pressure and cannot pay attention to the receipt of subtle and often instantaneous images in the preverbal layers of mind."

Dialogue is recommended in the book as the best prayer technique for us to follow. (997:5) Several of our respondents mentioned a dialogue. One commented: "Sometimes I just 'talk it over' with Jesus or my Thought Adjuster. Sometimes I write it down in dialogue form..." Another person described his technique this way: "Sometimes while sitting on a bus or driving in my car I talk (in my head) to God as if he were sitting in the car with me. I discuss my concerns, ideas, etc. If I ask a question, I try to listen for an answer however it might come. After a moment or more of listening, I return to sharing my experience of the moment with God."

The technique which enables prayer to enlarge our channels of spiritual receptivity is *persistency*. Repeating a prayer—even a spiritually unsound prayer—if it is prayed earnestly and longingly and is a sincere expression uttered in faith, will expand the soul's capacity for spiritual receptivity. (1621:1) When I first read that idea several years ago, it

didn't make much sense to me. Surely God didn't need me to repeat things. It took a while for it to dawn on me that God *didn't* need them repeated—I did. Furthermore, repeating them in a meaningless fashion wouldn't have the desired effect. It is the soul's attitude which one is practicing. *Of course* I benefit from praying earnestly and longingly in faith and sincerity.

To me one of the most fascinating bits of information in the Book has always been that the Thought Adjuster is able to teach the human mind when it "flows freely in the liberated but controlled channels of creative imagination." (1199:2) I conjecture that several different activities would come under this heading: delightful sessions of speculation and brainstorming in worshipful problem-solving.

One of the aspects of prayer which is easy to overlook is the listening part. It's hard to communicate with someone who is always chattering. I suspect our spiritual guides feel that way about us. Jesus taught his followers to "remain for a time in silent receptivity to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul. The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in an attitude of true worship." (1641:4) One of our respondents gave a very simple formula for prayer: "Be still, listen, ask, listen."

There are two places in the book which I wish to recommend to you for prayerful study, for they have so much to teach about prayer. The laws of prevailing petitions on page 1002 gives a step-by-step method of achieving an effective spiritual life. On page 2089 can be found the beautiful and powerful description of what prayer was to Jesus. As I studied it again and again over time, this paragraph made me recognize that I had placed entirely too many limitations on what prayer is. The door was opened to a whole new realm of ways to relate to deity through prayer.

The second category of helpful techniques is "Action: decision-making and service." Two of our respondents expressed an urge to

action so beautifully. One described it this way: "Our Adjuster, together with any other spiritual influences on us, must have something to work with—we must be spiritually active, sincerely making decisions, being of service—doing what we believe is right in every situation that arises...I believe that the 'spiritual guidance' that is the most productive comes when I am actively trying to do what I believe is something of worth, when I give my adjuster something to adjust." Another commented: "Cause your mind to want to be receptive to spiritual guidance—all of the time... pray for guidance, try to determine what you should do, assume that you have been given such guidance (whether you are certain of this or not) then embark. Step forward and act. Don't be so self-critical if you don't like the results. Try to learn from the experience."

One of our respondents noticed in her life that no further guidance on a topic seemed forthcoming until some action had been taken on the guidance already given.

The action on which Jesus placed so much stress was service. One respondent expressed the connection between service and communion this way: "I utterly desire continuous communion, but I think that I grow toward that by losing myself in service, finding the traces of God in the real around me, and letting the sense of the Father's presence grow as I continue to seek and find and choose and do his will."

Our spiritual association with others provides mutual stimulation to growth. (1094:2) One person commented: "The biggest contributors for me in growing to the point of perceiving guidance have been the many wonderful friends I've known who read the book and are living proof that it works."

We are told we don't spiritually discipline our minds enough. (1213:1) One aspect of discipline is that of allowing enough time to make decisions. It requires both patience and stamina to continue to grapple with a problem for any great length of time. Nevertheless, time is frequently necessary to allow us to receive what

ever guidance might be forthcoming. One person commented, "...if instead of rushing in impulsively into a situation, deciding on the spur of the moment, I wait awhile; then, most of the time, after asking for guidance, I will be given a new insight into the situation, a higher view of it, a greater perspective..."

An important pattern is brought out in the book: it is necessary to make many small decisions in order to firmly establish a habit. One builds up to the really critical decisions with this method. (1708:1,2) One respondent applies the principle in this way: "I find that with practice guidance becomes much easier to recognize. So I ask for guidance all the time, not just for large decisions...I developed the habit of using guidance all the time with a Unity concept: 'Every thought is a prayer.' It really made me stop and consider—and eliminate the garbage."

We can help ourselves to maintain a constantly receptive attitude by a vigilant questioning of the environment. One respondent reported his questions: "Can I learn something important here? Is there something I can do for someone here? Has this occurred before? Maybe it's a lesson I didn't learn the first time." We can also work in partnership with spirit by seeking help at the moment we need it. Even in the midst of a conversation we can express a quick, silent prayer and then relax, knowing that the spirit will work through us.

The communion of prayer and worship and the action of decision-making and service are both conducive to the reception of spiritual guidance, but we must maintain an appropriate balance between the two. Jesus' plan was to provide short retreats from life for his apostles but mainly to keep them in active service. (1000:3)

The final consideration in receiving spiritual guidance is the most important: a desire to do the will of God. Choosing to do the Father's will is a little like being a traveller who enters what he thought was uncharted wilderness only to discover that an explorer has gone before. Not only that, but the explorer has blazed the

best possible trail through the wilderness. The traveller has a choice: he can determine to express his uniqueness and originality and strike out to blaze some lesser trail, or he can gratefully accept the excellent path left by the explorer and eventually arrive safe and triumphant on the far side of the wilderness.

The best way I know of to overcome our desire to express our own wills is by becoming so close to the Father's infinite goodness that we are overcome with the desire to become *that* beautiful. All other motives pale before our yearning to be and do anything the Father asks. Our reward is a greater and greater capacity to enjoy the pleasure of his presence.

I said originally that there were three basic techniques which facilitate the reception of guidance:

- (1) Pray and worship.
- (2) Make decisions and serve.
- (3) Want to do the Father's will.

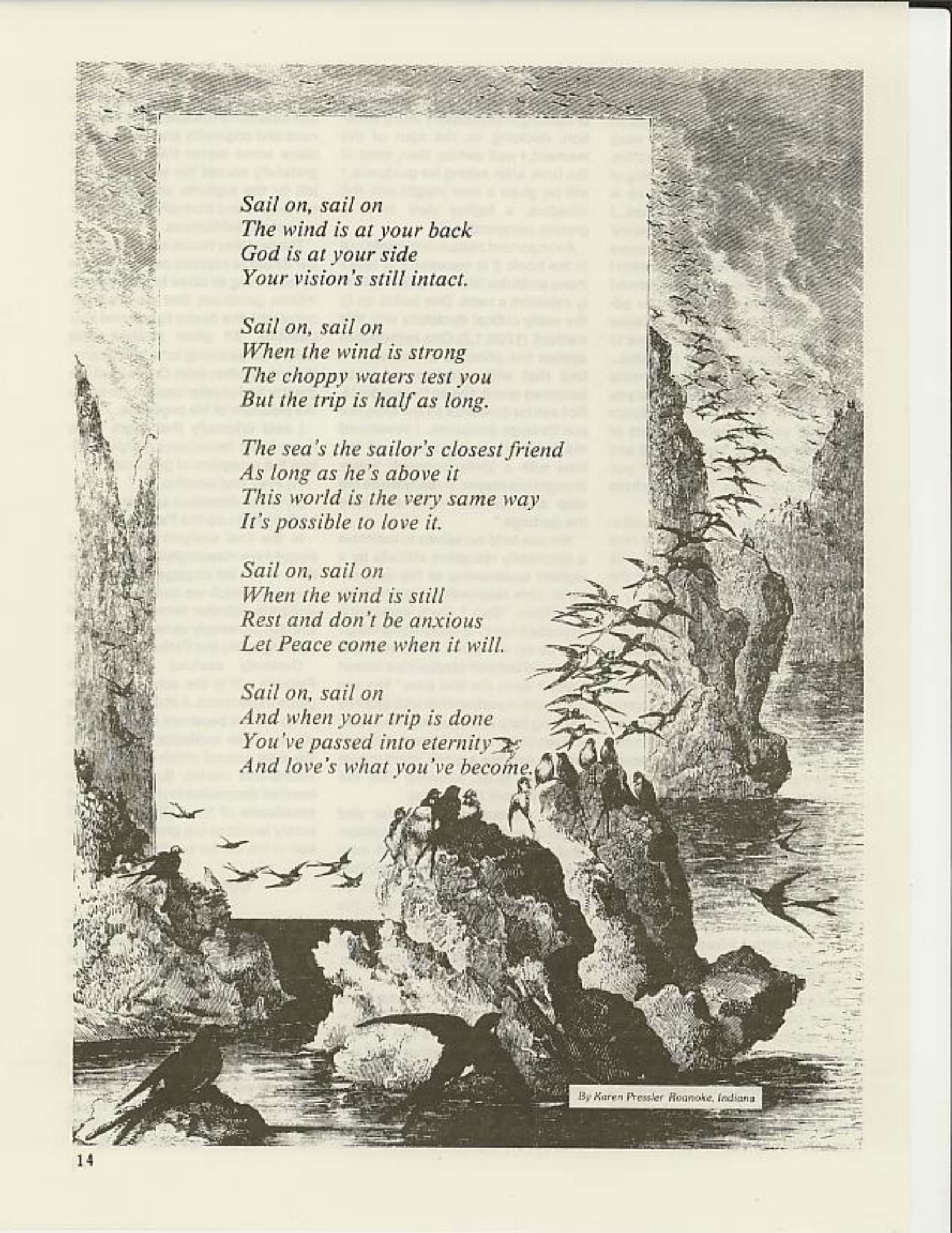
In the final analysis the first and second are meaningless without the third. In the list on page 1206 of four things by which we can consciously enhance Adjuster harmony, three of the four are simply various aspects of wanting to do the Father's will.

Certainly seeking to do the Father's will is the core of our religious experience. A steadfast desire to do his will becomes an active and all pervasive motivator in our lives, the drive around which all other considerations center. Such a whole-hearted dedication to the beauty and excellence of the Father's way will surely facilitate our growing perception of his will for our lives.

CONCLUSIONS

While we must exercise caution and wisdom to avoid the dangers of elevating our own ideas to the level of commands from on high, we should also be sure not to miss the real experience of a living religion.

It is our opportunity to move beyond belief in God's watchcare and guidance to true faith—to actively seek his will and do what we understand that will to be. And in those moments of success, we will indeed be sharing our lives with God. ●



*Sail on, sail on
The wind is at your back
God is at your side
Your vision's still intact.*

*Sail on, sail on
When the wind is strong
The choppy waters test you
But the trip is half as long.*

*The sea's the sailor's closest friend
As long as he's above it
This world is the very same way
It's possible to love it.*

*Sail on, sail on
When the wind is still
Rest and don't be anxious
Let Peace come when it will.*

*Sail on, sail on
And when your trip is done
You've passed into eternity
And love's what you've become.*

By Karen Pressler Roanoke, Indiana

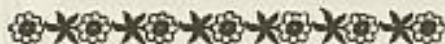


January 19, 1984

Dear Editors:

Thank you for appreciating my article "In Relationship to the 'Other'" enough to have it published in your magazine. It is a very gratifying experience to communicate with "others" like yourselves who can recognize the values that I have come to idealize. The idea that "others" all over the country can also share in these communications makes your publication of *The Circles* not only worthwhile, but a necessary inspiration of the Father's will. Your work is, in my opinion, an important service performed for the URANTIA movement, which, it seems, has become stifled through a lack of unity and is declining towards stagnation. Your publication is a breath of fresh life in the movement each and every time it is published.

Sincerely,
Anthony Porzio
Florence, Oregon



December 1983

Dear Editors,

Should *The URANTIA Book* be evangelized? This is a question which is producing a fair amount of controversy within the URANTIA movement in the U.S.A. I feel compelled to state my views on the matter as evangelization could affect the degree of success of this revolution. Many enthusiastic readers feel frustrated when they see little happening in the spreading of the URANTIA movement. Book sales and study groups aren't on a rapid increase so they feel responsible and quite rightly so. After all, this revelation has been placed in our hands, and we all feel an individual responsibility to the Creator to do what we can in spreading the teachings. The Creator has left it up to us to decide what to do, so we need to do some careful, deep thinking and try to remain open to the leadings of our Thought Adjusters.

I feel a strong warning signal when I hear of plans to evangelize. Statements like, "The world is ready for *The URANTIA Book* now," do not ring true. I believe the world is ready for the teachings of the book, but it's certainly not ready for the book on a mass scale. I don't even believe that the book is intended for all to read, but the essential message of the book is for all mankind. If the book were to be evangelized, I'm afraid it would be labelled alongside hundreds of other "American cults" which would immediately prejudice a great percentage of hungry souls who are ready for the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*. Also there are very strong Christian groups who have dedicated their lives to destroying movements they perceive as a threat to their fundamental beliefs. I'm sure the URANTIA movement would be a prime target if it were to be preached to the world on a large scale. Sure, evangelization would succeed in attracting more people to the book, but it would also attract more enemies. (I believe there will be a confrontation one day, but the movement isn't strong enough yet to withstand a forceful attack.)

The URANTIA Book is an integrated statement. It needs to be read from beginning to end to be comprehended fully. Sections can be taken out of the book and blown up to absolutes which can give a distorted picture of the true meaning. I fear this would happen with evangelization which may turn many away or encourage fanaticism.

It is stated and implied throughout the book that Christianity is the cocoon for the real teachings of Jesus. Christianity has buried the human Jesus under the rubble of dogma and tradition. The human Jesus needs to be resurrected and his living spirit needs to be proclaimed to the world. The true teachings of Jesus can be infused into present day Christianity without ever mentioning the words "URANTIA Book" or "Michael of Nebadon." Jesus has shown to us the real nature and character of the loving Father, and sincere, thirsty Christians respond to such things. There is an invis-

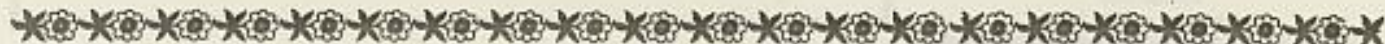
ible brotherhood of Jesus followers and potential Jesus followers who are longing for a more convincing meaning in Christianity which they can relate to. Our understanding of the real nature and character of God can be of benefit to all religionists. Jesus never preached against Judaism. Rather he took the good from it and added more. He only challenged a philosophy that presented a distorted image of the true nature and character of his Father.

I believe the first three sections of *The URANTIA Book* are a preparation for the fourth. The fourth section is the real purpose of this revelation. The first three sections have given us an outline of the order of the universe and our position in it. They have also given us a glimpse of where we're going—the endless, eternal surprises of an ascension career and the true status of Christ Michael. We have a much clearer concept of what is going on out there instead of a hazy, cloudy view of eternal bliss if we're good. All this has allowed for a greater impact of section four. Knowing just who Jesus really is makes his life and teachings so much more valuable. But how many are really going to sit down and read the book from cover to cover? It's a massive, highly intellectual piece of work and the masses at large will not accept the task of reading it for themselves. It's up to those who've received the full message to infuse it into society somehow. It's up to the individual.

Christians have made the mistake of interpreting "Go forth and preach the Gospel" as go forth and preach the Bible. I only hope URANTIA Book readers don't make the same mistake. Go forth and preach the Gospel—the true teachings of Jesus, but don't mistake the book for the Gospel. People respond to another's personal experience far more readily than to what a book says.

If a dedicated reader of *The URANTIA Book* is totally frustrated in wanting to share his or her concepts and can find no social means of infusing them into society, I suggest that he go and join his local church and share his concepts of the nature and character of God with his fellowman. After all, adaptability is the meaning of life.

Kathleen and Trevor Swadling
Sydney, Australia



headquarters), it was immediately obvious that all of us had experienced something new. Anyone peering in the window would just conclude we were all rude, since we were all talking at once. Our excitement had originated in a rare and joyous type of life experience which derives from contact with spirit—a soul satisfaction which registers when God's will has been done. Clearly it's not something I can put in words.

There were several interesting reflections shared that evening. Our signs definitely helped draw people—both their beauty and what they had to say. The open books allowed the timid souls to warm up to us at their own rate, having a way to "check it out" without being confronted with immediate talk. It was wonderful to watch each and every person who visited our table read in silence, often several minutes. We found the booth took on a warmer ambience when there were women there too. An unusually high percentage of the people we met (25%) said they had heard of *The URANTIA Book* before, but that this was the first time they had ever seen a group of people in public talking about it. We understood. As for our hard core Bible friends, while they were few, they taught us much. Several had an axe to grind that had little to do with religion or what they believed. But all of our encounters were worth the effort; each has become a tool for further, more successful, attempts to share the Revelation. If you would like more specific details on our experiences, contact:

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Jesus said . . .

"...I give you this new commandment: That you love one another even as I have loved you. And by this will all men know that you are my disciples if you thus love one another.

"When I give you this new commandment, I do not place any new burden upon your souls; rather do I bring you new joy and make it possible for you to experience new pleasure in knowing the delights of the bestowal of your heart's affection upon your fellow men."
Jesus p.1944*

The writers of *The URANTIA Book* said, "If you would share the Master's joy, you must share his love. And to share his love means that you have shared his service. Such an experience of love does not deliver you from the difficulties of this world; it does not create a new world, but it most certainly does make the old world new." (p.1945*)

The URANTIA Book offers its readers initiation into the religion of the spirit. Believers are gradually transformed spiritually into new beings. These changes can only be contained for a while. Eventually the love growing inside each new universe child insists on expression. That is when the kingdom believer seeks his fellows without desire for his own gain. He is drawn irresistibly by the lure of each unique and precious brother, seeking to give whatever his brother truly needs. Often he finds his experience inadequate for his brother's needs and he must grow into the capacity to help—right then and there. Then comes the challenge of discovering one's talents, the areas where one may best be of service. The believer finds that his old world has become a new one, filled with true joy. Our theme for the Winter 1984 issue is

To start you thinking:

- Share your desire for service.
- Describe your growth into brotherly love.
- What motivates you to serve?
- What joys of giving have you discovered?
- Tell what spiritual values you realize from your service.
- Expand your thinking—what do you think service might include?
- There are many avenues of service—to God, to our unseen helpers, to unbelievers, to the progression of civilization, to the brotherhood of God-knowing believers. Share the ways you have found to serve.
- Send your articles, art work, etc. by August 15, 1984 (we try to limit articles to three double-spaced, type-written pages) to:

Gifts to Our Brothers

The Circles
P.O. Box 1203
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