

The Circles

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

Vol. VIII, No. 3

Published by The Dallas Fellowship, Inc.

Fall, 1985

Forgiveness

Begins with me, asking you,
asking God, accepting mine,
receiving yours.

Love away your hate.
Embrace peace,
start within, forgiving self,
standing firm and strong.

Give your for-give-ness,
accept our father's.
He forgives before we know to ask,
we must accept;
there is no receiving without acceptance.

Brother against brother,
cannot love without father.
Choose God's perspective:
He loves, He is love.

Love is here now, each instant.
Express love with acceptance of others.
There is no love—for us—without forgiveness.

Peace, love, happiness,
begin with forgiveness.

Mary Blessing
Clayton, California

*Excerpt at page 556 from The URANTIA Book. Copyright © 1955 URANTIA Foundation—used by permission.





By Bill Cooper
Arlington, Texas

Observations on Forgiveness

While discussing and thinking about the topic of forgiveness, I reread some relevant portions of *The URANTIA Book*. I'd like to share some of my observations on that material.

Types of Forgiveness

Forgiveness can originate from human wisdom—intellect and experience. This is the forgiveness of mercy. It is the forgiveness which recognizes the wrongful action but gives another chance. It is the forgiveness which tempers the apparent harshness of justice. But it is capable of a change of mind to decide that justice is appropriate after all.

Forgiveness can originate from love. Love completely pardons the offense. It is interested in salvation of the wrongdoer, not by the technique of discipline, but by loving affection and example. Love may not even remember the error or sin.

Importance of Extending Forgiveness

Forgiveness is an extremely important virtue. Unfailing forgiveness is the very first of the three spiritual weapons given to us so that we may go forth and conquer the world. The other two are closely related. They are matchless good will and abounding love. (2064:3)

Spiritual Endowment of Forgiveness

Our ability to forgive personal injuries through our love for others is one of many spiritual *gifts* Michael gave us at Pentecost. He gave us the

power to forgive. So we simply cannot say that we can't do it. We have Michael's personal guarantee that we can.

Appropriateness of Coexistence of Love and Hate

It helps to distinguish the person (who should be loved and forgiven) from his bad behavior (which may be deplored). It is possible to love an evildoer in the sense of truly desiring what is cosmically best for him while at the same time we abhor and are revolted by his evil behavior. It is entirely appropriate and consistent to feel and express love in our individual response to another of God's children, while we want and demand an appropriate and wise group response restraining that individual's evil behavior.

Sermon on Forgiveness

Jesus' sermon on forgiveness (1762) illustrates love forgiveness (the shepherd), mercy forgiveness (the king), the Godlikeness of forgiveness, the relatedness of Jesus' admonition to us as individuals not to judge (condemn and punish wrongs) and authority in the group to demand and enforce temporal order (not properly delegated to an individual).

Jesus' sermon on forgiveness is spiritually and intellectually arresting when one considers all of the following pronouncements as facets of forgiveness:

Facet 1.

The shepherd left the safe ninety-nine sheep and expended great effort to find the lost one. And when he did, he never gave a thought to scolding, punishing or penalizing the strayed sheep. No, he called on

his friends to rejoice with him that he was able to salvage the lost one. Jesus said this is God's attitude toward his children. This type of forgiveness focuses on the joyous involvement in our fellows' struggles Godward and not on "giving them what they deserve" because of their erroneous behavior.

Facet 2.

The king, out of mercy, forgave a debt of 10,000 talents owed by his chief retainer but reinstated the debt and threw the man in prison when he learned of the man's unmerciful behavior in a similar situation. Jesus said this was similar to God's mercy in that God shows more abundant mercy to those who freely show mercy to their fellows. God expects us to show mercy unto others as we would have God show mercy to us.

Facet 3.

God loves and forgives his children. We should learn to love and forgive each other because it is Godlike to do so.

Facet 4.

Rather than personally condemning and seeking to punish our brother who sins against us, we should go alone with him and with tact and patience (not anger, accusation and self defensiveness) show him his fault. If he will not listen, then take one or two mutual friends and confer with him. If he will not listen to them, then the matter should be presented to the congregation. If he will not listen to the congregation, then it may, in its wisdom, condemn and punish his actions to enforce temporal order. "Judge not lest ye be judged" relates

See *OBSERVATIONS* on p. 5.



Forgiveness Sharing

By Mary Blessing
Clayton, California

There are special times in each person's life when "asking for forgiveness" becomes the single most necessary mode of action for that individual to proceed upward in his or her ascent to our Father. I have been there many times myself and have benefitted tremendously in my spiritual growth each time I have recognized my need to ask God's forgiveness and the forgiveness of my fellows whom I have affected by my misguided ways.

Through the years I have discovered that "practice makes perfect"—even in the arena of seeking forgiveness! While I continue to err in my judgment, I am quicker to recognize the need to set things straight between the Father and me and between me and my fellows. It is not easy to let go of self-deception and ask for God's loving mercy; it is even more difficult to humble oneself before family and friends, admitting we were wrong and wanting another chance to improve ourselves.

Our Father's infinite love for each of us ensures that we are "forgiven even before we ask." But if we are truly to receive that divine forgiveness as a part of our personal religious experience, we must first go through the process of requesting his forgiveness. Then we must in turn forgive our fellows their misdeeds. (*The URANTIA Book*, 1638:4) If someone asks for our forgiveness, let's accept his or her plea lovingly and sincerely, for we will likewise benefit from the exchange of honest mercy-sharing! Realizing the cosmic balance which is produced by this "ask-receive-give" relationship has made it remarkably simpler for me to ask for and accept God's forgiveness over the years. It is spiritually

liberating to know I can freely give that which I have freely received. To hold a grudge, or to feel a grudge held against me, leaves a sense of imbalance in my relationships with others. My inner guidance is always pressing me forth to get back into balance with these relationships through "forgiveness sharing."

Occasionally my fellow *URANTIA Book* student friends debate me on whether or not it is actually possible for us to forgive one another, for how are we to judge whether or not our brother or sister has "sinned"? We are taught that "*Sin must be redefined as deliberate disloyalty to Deity.*" (984:5) We cannot sit in judgment upon our fellows and with certainty know whether a person has been "deliberately disloyal." Some will argue that they need not request forgiveness, from God or fellows, because, while error may be apparent, the individual was "following the best he knew," *i.e.* was *not* deliberately disloyal to Deity. Nonetheless, I believe it is socially, psychologically, morally and spiritually healthy to request and grant forgiveness even in cases of "error" and "evil" when events in time show that an action taken has borne bad fruit.

Getting in the habit of keeping relationships free of feeling we have wronged or been wronged helps us sincerely love and understand our fellows. Relationships are ends in themselves. We should work to make them pure and unclouded with misunderstanding, mistrust, grudge-holding. While we can continue to be unique in our perceptions of "the Father's will," we must learn to differ

with love. It is through our Father's love for us that we will love one another—no matter what ill we believe our brother or sister has brought against us. We need not subject our social or working groups to the bad influence of a persistent wrong-doer, but we are to forgive that person "seventy times seven" times and even more than that if it is so required! While we may never be in a position to force our misguided friends to see their mistaken ways, I believe we are encouraged to stand spiritually ready to forgive—in our hearts and our minds if not directly—those who "sin against us."

If we do believe we have been "sinned against" and our fellow does not approach us, it is our option to approach him or her with our complaint. Jesus' "Sermon on Forgiveness" (1762:3) clearly outlines a procedure we kingdom-seeking fellows can agree to use in settling our differences in order to get back in har-

See *SHARING* on p. 5.



*Quotations and some other materials used in this magazine (unless otherwise indicated) are from *The URANTIA Book*, © 1955 by URANTIA Foundation, all rights reserved, and are used by permission. Interpretations and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of URANTIA Foundation.

All page references to *The URANTIA Book* are as follows: The first number refers to the page number. Numbers following the colon refer to paragraphs. Each indentation is counted as a paragraph, even if it is a single line long, as in numbered lists. Paragraph 0 on the page is the one which began on the previous page.



Wholehearted Forgiveness

Doing God's will means becoming progressively Godlike. God loves us with an infinite love; his love is so complete that there is no need for forgiveness, because to forgive implies that at some point there was a need for forgiveness, that is, a lack of forgiveness.

The need for forgiveness is entirely a human concept. From God's perspective, there is only infinite love. There is no room in this infinity of love for anything imperfect requiring forgiveness. A full cup can contain no emptiness.

This concept of forgiveness, however, is a very important *scaffolding*, which bridges the gulf between animal resentment and divine love. Here is how that scaffolding works and why it is so important to master, even transcend, forgiveness.

Jesus repeatedly stressed the need for wholehearted commitment to our Father's will. Now most folks can think of someone, who has hurt or offended them at some time in the past. Very possibly it was someone close, such as a good friend, spouse, parent or child. The hurt occurred, *apparently*, because we allowed ourselves to "open up," to become vulnerable. However, in any given universe situation, what we observe may not be the truth. It may be fact that we are offended but not truth that the other person acted offensively. The *true* reason why that hurt occurred is that the person who got hurt did not understand the motives of the other person. Anyone who has ever accidentally offended someone else can readily understand this. The hurt is a creation in the mind of the person who feels pain—a chosen response

By John Hyde
Dallas, Texas

(consciously or unconsciously). Now if traces of that hurt still remain after some time has elapsed (something that was not real to begin with, except in one person's mind), then it has not yet been fully forgiven. There is still need for further forgiveness. Total and sincere forgiveness implies complete obliteration of the offending act, as if it had never been committed.

In practical experience, however, overcoming our animal nature can be quite hard to do. Sometimes we seem unable, even unwilling, totally to let go of those pet hurts. Have you ever heard an "enlightened" person say, "Oh, yes, I've forgiven, but I'll never forget." It doesn't sound wholehearted, does it?

If forgiveness is a problem, one helpful approach is to ask the Father to *help* us forgive. Talk honestly and sincerely with him about your difficulties in this area. Another effective technique is to pray for that person, especially if the act seemed deliberate or unusually selfish or thoughtless. Help prevent it from happening again to some other innocent person by praying for the offending person. Another technique works well when used in conjunction with the first two, and that is to objectively and sympathetically try to discover not only the person's *true* motives, but also to determine what circumstances in his life may have led up to the offending act. Try to take as many different factors as possible into account. "If you could only fathom the motives of your associates, how much better you would understand them. If you could only know your

fellow, you would eventually fall in love with them." (1098:2)

Why is forgiveness so awfully important? Jesus taught that in order to receive the Father's forgiveness, we must first forgive those who have offended us. Grudges, hurts, and remembered offenses are not lodged in our heads; they are resident in the heart. It is impossible to give wholehearted dedication to our Father when we are "holding back" a few forgotten or pet grudges. Only wholehearted dedication to our Father can yield dependable spiritual growth.

We may ask, "Have we ever truly liked or loved someone who was indifferent to our feelings of spiritual devotion and friendly affection?" If we just kept on loving him in spite of his inability or unwillingness to return

When God forgives, he consigns the offense to everlasting forgetfulness.

it, then we were demonstrating the Godlike equivalent of forgiveness. As forgiveness begins to become a way of life and as we increasingly are able to discern our brother's motives, then forgiveness becomes so automatic and natural that it can truly be said that we have forgiven even before the offense was committed. Love becomes a way of life. And, as the habit of first holding a hurt and then later forgiving it begins to pass away, then is our love and wholehearted devotion to our fellowman becoming increasingly Godlike, even humanly reflective of the divine love of God. ●

mony with one another and our Father. I personally have found this procedure to be so successful in my interpersonal relationships with other God-knowing, truth-seeking fellows, that I have almost never had to go past "step one" in resolving a difference. Most people respond sincerely to a direct, one-to-one resolution without having to resort to second person or group support to set things straight. My experience of the beauty of this method of settling differences comes in the recognition that when two believers are gathered together to seek truth, they are aided by the real presence of our friend and spiritual helper, Michael of Nebadon. Jesus assures us in the context of this particular sermon that "... where two or three believers are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them." (1763:0) Let us all give thanks for his ever-present willingness to aid us through the trials and tribulations of this life, and beyond! ●

OBSERVATIONS continued from p. 2.

to personal condemnation of another and punishment of him. This is not an appropriate personal action. It is only appropriate for groups, and even then it is inappropriate for the group to delegate this power to an individual. Individuals are to love and forgive and display mercy in dealing with one another. The function of judgment and punishment is proper for the group acting as and for the group.

Jesus' illustration of "love forgiveness" and "mercy forgiveness" in his sermon on forgiveness is readily understandable, but what about the very substantial emphasis on the dangers and inappropriateness of sitting in personal judgment upon one's fellows. Granting that judging one's fellows shouldn't be done, what does it have to do with forgiveness?

The grievance procedure Jesus described is really a procedure of progressive opportunities for love, brotherhood and forgiveness of wrongs to resolve difficulties between individuals. The community becomes involved only if forgiveness and repentance can not resolve the matter. It is only the wrong and

unrepentant who must be dealt with by judgment and punished by the group—only evil persisted in.

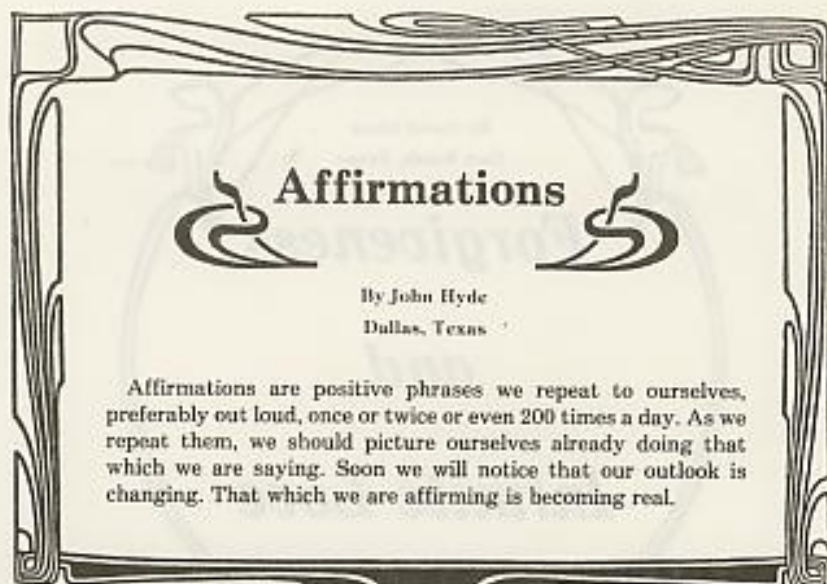
I hesitate to extend this Jesus grievance procedure to serious crimes, but it certainly ought to be applicable at least to the petty economic, dignity and values offenses which even persons of good will and friendship deal each other from time to time. Personally, I think the admonition not to sit in personal judgment is applicable universally even to the most awful offenses. I think we should be relieved that it is inappropriate to expect us to control our emotions sufficiently to be a personal judge of our fellows. Michael-Jesus has told us that we are not responsible for this—and must not do it.

The thing which tends to pull the elements of this sermon together for me is that Jesus probably was teaching the nature of God and indicating that our progress is measured by our living imitation of God's way of behavior. God's way is like the kindhearted shepherd who out of love for the lost sheep tirelessly went searching for him. The

shepherd didn't merely wait patiently for the sheep's possible return, he labored to salvage him. Then when he found him, he didn't scold him, penalize him or punish him. Instead, he rejoiced that the sheep was found. If that isn't an example of love which forgives the errors of sheepness, what could be? And that is our example. We are to love others as God loves us and that means that we don't personally condemn and punish one another for our human errors and that we rejoice with our Father in the salvageability of those who stray. ●

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

We appreciate your sending us notice of any address changes. If we aren't notified, three things happen: (1) we have to pay for each change of address the Post Office sends us; (2) the person who has moved doesn't get that copy of *The Circles*; and (3) people who leave no forwarding address no longer receive *The Circles*. Thank you for your help in this detail.



I am learning to forgive others.
I habitually make an effort to understand each person I meet.
The better I know someone, the more I love him.
I will search out people's motives, so that I will easily love, understand and forgive them.
Divine love for all is increasingly becoming a part of my nature.

By David Glass
Fort Worth, Texas

Forgiveness and Infinite Love

Forgiveness is a feature or aspect of love, and this is especially true of God's love. God's love is infinite, and his mercy fully sufficient for the needs of any creature capable of discerning the truth of God's eternal presence and the supremacy of his will, or of being able to evolve into that consciousness.

Being a feature of love, God's forgiveness is a constant throughout time. It is an eternal and unchanging attitude of the Father in his relationships with his cosmic family of beings. God's forgiveness is also an aspect of his omnipotence: God could not have created a finite universe which would abrogate or even impede his expressions of infinite love for all his children. To do so would have been an un-Godlike action—one inconsistent with the Father's personality traits of righteousness and love. All of the actions and decisions of the Father are infinitely perfect. They exist in a manner which is in complete harmony with all of his other infinite attributes.

Jesus said that the Father rules his universe through the "compelling power of his love." (1608:1) And we could not participate in that glory nor achieve the fullness of our own present and future designations, such as "faith sons," "ascending sons," "co-creators with God," "agondonters," or "finaliters," were it not a part of the divine nature and infinite affection of

the Father to care for us and make provision for our complete forgiveness whenever it is needed. The Father's attitude is described by Jesus as being one which is like that of the "Good Shepherd" who leaves the ninety-nine safe sheep in the fold and goes after the one which is lost. The Father seeks out actively, with his forgiving love, that man or woman who is harboring dejection or guilt, with the intention of revealing his astonishing love for him or her. And we can participate with God in this revelation of love which destroys the need for forgiveness.

God wants to launder us from all unrighteousness; he has the necessary soap, scrubbers, and requisite spiritual rinses. He would not have us flounder in non-forgiving states of mind, troubled at every turn by the inescapability of an unforgiven wrong done or one done to us.

Once we realize the *unconditionality* of the Father's love and forgiveness and acceptance, we experience the elimination of harbored griefs and guilts. We cast them away through the newly discovered ability of God to render as naught all our experiential negativities, actively or passively accumulated. God's omnipotent power of love can crack open the most constricted heart and proffer to any individual an escape from his unfortunate misdoings of the past and present.

Thereafter do such liberated souls enter with wonder into the newly found and spiritual "kingdom of love." And the unconditional love of the Father will make possible the eternal extension of that kingdom of love which will widen in man's experience of it as it grows in significance from the human level through the morontial level of transformation and to the final spiritual level.

God pledges his eternal and supportive love which so effectively destroys evil—rendering it non-existent—or, rather, revealing its inherent nothingness to the spiritual sensibilities of man and his widespread cosmic family.

Only an infinitely loving Father-God would so generously and continuously and beneficently bestow his forgiveness and his love wherever it may be needed or sought.

As an aspect of the Father's infinite love, forgiveness does not consist of the kind of interplay between the Father and ourselves which is generally accepted today on Urantia. The process of forgiveness has been described in this way: (1) God's infinite love for the individual; (2) man's error or sin; (3) man's sense of guilt, shortcoming or separateness from the love and spirit of God; (4) man's repentance following his discovery of the availability of the "nameless"

Do you know someone who has spitefully used you? Someone who hates you? Someone who has wrongfully judged you? Someone who has betrayed a trust? Such a one is a great challenge and opportunity for you. Such a one is a perfect person for you to love.

patience and forgiveness of the Father; (5) man's sense of renewed and improved relations with the Father.

But *The URANTIA Book* describes a differently conceived process of forgiveness. From God's point of view the sequence is: man's loving relationship with the Father—God's eter-

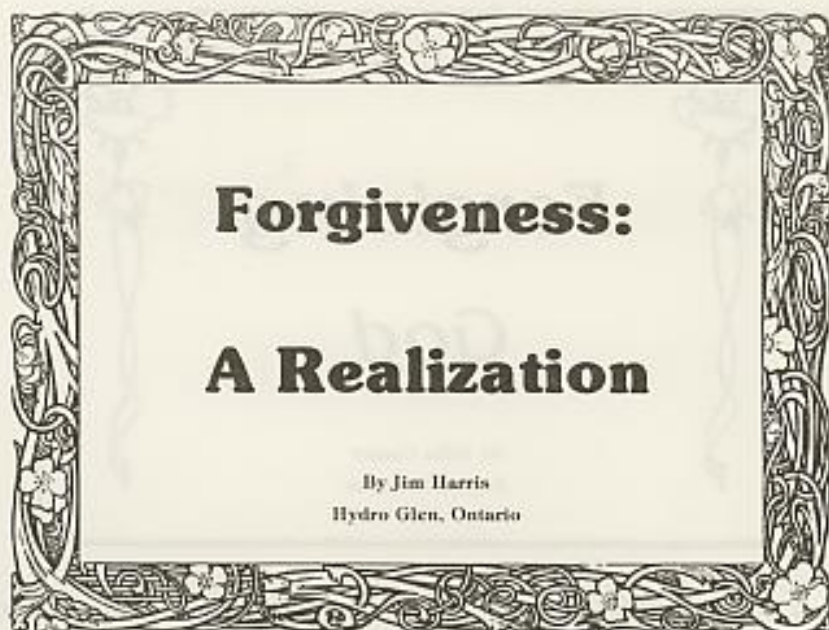
nal love; man's error or sin—God's infinite love; man's sense of guilt and separation from God—God's eternal love; etc. We see that the Father is not *estranged* from the son because of his error or sin. Only is it the *mortal's* experience of alienation that occurs. God does not recoil. To the contrary, God draws nearer in his spirit and through other people, assisted perhaps by some seraphic and other spiritual contributors to the process. The Father can deal directly with the consciousness of the unfortunately un-self-forgiving mortal.

Our determination to become more loving and forgiving will progressively make us more Godlike. And this process is also true and valid for the process of self-forgiveness, should it be needed.

Jesus "knew how far more difficult it is to persuade men to *disown the past*" than it is to sway them by eloquence, appeal to their consciences, their emotional aspect, or their reason and logic. (1722:4) Jesus admonished his Apostles, saying, "...forget those things which are in the past while you push forward to embrace the greater realities of the kingdom." (1736:3) And, in another circumstance, the Master said, "You must not only be cleansed from all conscious sin, but you must refuse to harbor even the feelings of guilt. If you confess your sins, they are forgiven; therefore must you maintain a conscience void of offense." (1736:4) And the Midwayers write, "...the forgiveness of Jesus is not condonation; it is salvation from condemnation. Salvation does not slight wrongs; it *makes them right*. True love does not compromise nor condone hate; it destroys it." (2018:1)

Forgiveness is one of God's techniques for extracting perfecting souls from the imperfections of their origins in ignorance. This truth is demonstrated in Jesus' prayer at the time of his crucifixion: "Forgive them, Father, for *they know not what they do*." [my emphasis] God's forgiveness rescues the divine motivation in man from his potential directional waywardness and strengthens it until it becomes the dominant

See INFINITE on p. 17.



Until recently I held a grudge against a friend. I had not been aware I held the grudge. I had never thought about what was on my mind in terms of its being a refusal to forgive. I recognized my lack of forgiveness while preparing notes for this article.

I called to mind incidents in which I felt I had been wronged and how I had resolved them. Some of the incidents had incited a great deal of pain and expense of energy before they were resolved. Others provided quick and valuable lessons. I realized that, as I learned more about life outside my immediate eco-system, I tended to accept the indiscretions of others with whom I came into contact. As I matured to adulthood, I learned to resolve wrongdoings with as little fuss as possible.

But in the midst of all these memories I discovered the unresolved grudge I was holding against my friend. I had originally met her several years ago after returning from a long period of travel. Whenever we

Everyone should keep a cemetery in which to bury the faults of his friends.

Henry Ward Beecher

met she and I engaged in extended discussions. We often went for long walks or daytrips. But she would never accept an invitation to my home

nor allow me into hers. After spending time among the people of more accommodating societies, I had a little trouble accepting this peculiarity. But I bore up and continued the relationship as well as possible. Then she and I lost contact.

Months passed. Then recently she spotted me on a busy street and made her way toward me. Exclaiming her joy at seeing me, she invited me for tea and conversation at a nearby coffee shop. I accepted.

Seated comfortably with our refreshment, she plied me on my activities of the last few months. Then I asked her, "What have you been doing? Why couldn't I contact you?"

She explained that she had met a fellow who had abandoned his wife and family. She liked him and, as he needed a place to stay, invited him to move in with her. But, she added, she was unhappy because, while she cared for him, he never took her out and didn't seem to care as much in return.

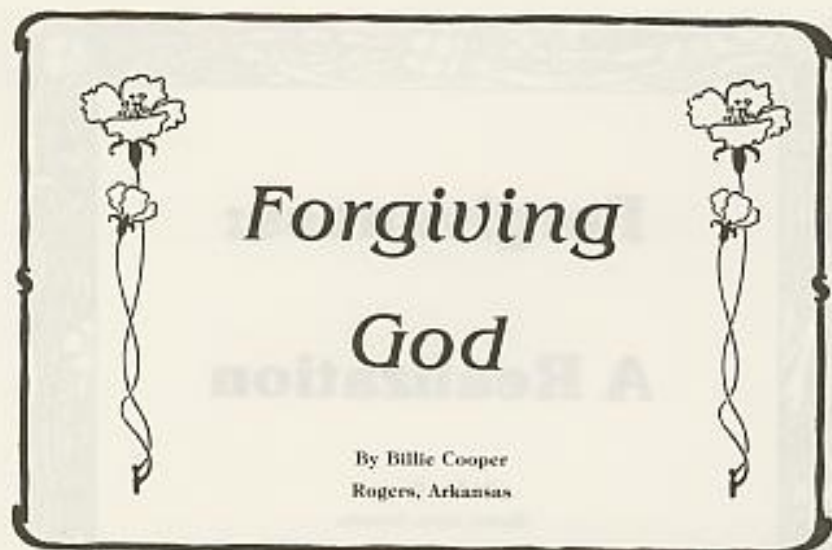
"Why might that be?" she asked.

After I recovered my composure and gave a couple of reasons as to why I thought that might be, I asked her why she had accepted this fellow so completely into her life on such short notice.

"I like him," she replied.

After that encounter, I frequently told myself I was too busy to telephone her and possibly find

See REALIZE on p. 17.



I thought was God's answer, only to have it turn out to be a failure? If there is, do I still feel angry emotions about the situation?

There are, of course, many such questions that could be asked, but these examples give a picture of the technique I use to spot a need to release the anger and other destructive emotions. Each of these situations are ones in which we probably have some emotional reactions. As we grow more mature and understand more about God and the universe, we will gradually stop reacting with disappointment, fear, anger, hurt, and frustration. But for most of us those emotions are still very much a part of life. If we didn't handle our emotions in that productive way at the time, we need to do something about them now.

If a friend I am helping discovers some leftover emotions, I suggest that he or she get off by himself and use the following exercise on each of the situations where emotions need to be released:

Use whatever method you know to relax in a quiet, private place. Recall to mind one of your experiences. Start with a less intense case. Tell God that you would like to release these harmful emotions and to forgive him anything you might be holding against him. Ask his help in this.

If you do not feel a relief from the negative emotions you know are there, then go ahead and express those emotions to him. I call it "shin kicking." Get angry. There are many times when the first thing we need is to be heard, to describe our hurt, our indignation, our anger. Later we can think more clearly and begin to take constructive steps toward recovery of our good humor. Well, God is a great listener—even when you have no one else to blame and feel angry at him. He is big enough and good enough to take it. He is loving enough to allow you to kick his shins. Tell him how you really feel emotionally—out loud or to yourself.

Get it all out. Then tell him you forgive him and state why you forgive him. Don't be afraid to discuss it. Ask him to help you release all resent-

Does forgiving God sound like an unusual concept, a contradiction in terms? It does to many people, yet that is the best phrase I have discovered to describe a need I have found in myself and in many of the people who ask for my help. This life is filled with injustices small and large, tragedies we can't understand, prayers we think are unanswered, needs we find unfulfilled. In our immaturity we try to deal with these disappointments as best we can, but in spite of our efforts we often find we feel anger or hurt at having to contend with them. Hurt or anger must have an object. It could be ourselves or "Fate" or it could be God. What I mean by "forgiving God" is that we need to pull those emotions out of the dark places we have hidden them, face them squarely, and release them.

Many times it is God that we have blamed whether we realize it or not. As we grow to adulthood we are taught many beliefs about God: He is all-powerful, he can do no wrong, he holds out impossibly high standards for his followers. Our logical minds reason from these beliefs. One conclusion frequently drawn in the familiar, "If God is all-powerful, why does he allow bad things to happen to good people?" Another: "God can do no wrong, and he wants me to live that way too. He will reject me if I don't live up to that expectation. And I don't even know what he wants of me many times!" As you can see, these conclusions are based on inadequate knowledge about God and the way the

universe works, but they are powerful and destructive errors to have to live with. They are bound to result in frustration, fear and anger—at God.

Of course, it is not acceptable in most belief systems to be angry with God. After all, God is perfect; it must be our fault. Yet the anger we feel is still there and hasn't been dealt with, only hidden away and denied. Many people with whom I work deny any anger against God. They honestly don't believe they have any. In order to help them discover if that is true or if they have simply hidden the anger away from everyone, including themselves, I suggest that they ask themselves these questions:

1. When I am thinking about God in any way, do I ever feel fear, anger, frustration, any negative emotion?

2. Do I feel any irritation, anger or bitterness because I have asked for something in prayer and don't feel that I got what I asked for?

3. When I think of an injustice which life has dealt me, do I feel anger or hurt that God has let this thing happen to me or that Life has treated me this way?

4. If I have lost a loved one prematurely, do I feel anger or frustration toward a higher power (the Grim Reaper, God, etc.)?

5. When I think of a problem which has not worked out to what I feel is my good, do I still feel discouraged and rejected or frustrated at an unknown force?

6. Is there a situation in my life where I prayed for help, received what

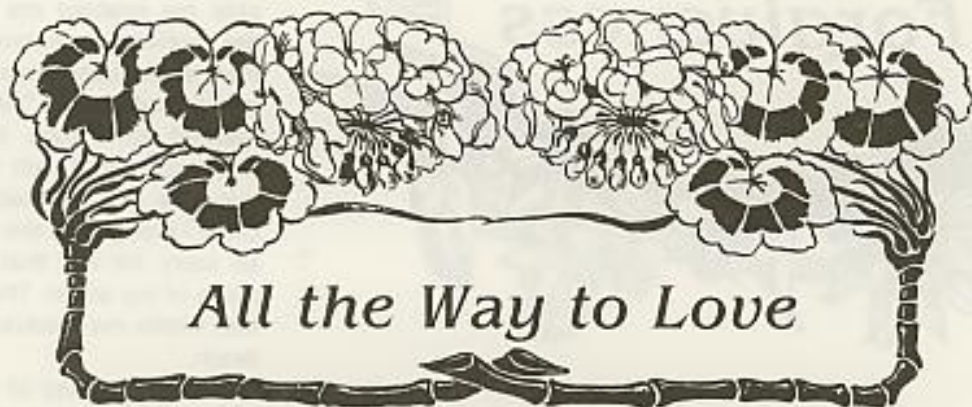
ment, anger, hurt—all negative emotions about this event. He can do it and he will.

When this exercise works for someone, I suggest that they use it as many times as they have old unresolved emotions. Many of them have found a relief from feelings which had been interfering with their full enjoyment of life. I also urge them not to

store up future problems of this sort but to deal honestly with them as they arise in the same manner. I even have an emergency measure which I use. If something triggers my emotional response and I want immediate relief from my own reactions, I relax briefly and ask God to help. I call on him to help me deal with this right now, to interrupt those feelings and get rid of

them. I don't want them. That little preventative measure can save a lot of remedial effort later!

Emotions are a complicated part of life in the flesh. We can't just whisk them away because we "shouldn't feel that way." But with a little ingenuity and a lot of help from God, we can rid ourselves of the troublesome ones and grow in the process. ●



All the Way to Love

By Beth McLeod
Fort Worth, Texas

When we are not able to bring ourselves to forgive someone, it causes much negativity which radiates into other parts of our lives. Often our hatred spills over to include others who exhibit traits similar to the person who has offended us. We can slip into a mode of spitefulness and resentment without even realizing the true cause for it. Another result of the negativity is that sometimes we are distrustful, fearful of loving others and of being hurt by those who profess to love us. When we are not able to forgive, we hash over the conflict constantly. It eats at us and keeps us miserable and unhappy. Because there is no resolution, this conflict leads to frustration.

One of the worst results of an unforgiving attitude is anger. The longer we go without forgiving the person, the angrier we become. This emotion requires tremendous amounts of time and energy to maintain. The person who is angry and cannot forgive is the one who is wasting his time and his energy. He is paying the price for his anger and unforgiving attitude. The harm done is to himself, no one else.

The first step would be to control one's anger and come to a neutral attitude toward the offending person. In my own experience once I realized ex-

actly how much energy I was wasting on feelings of hatred, it became easier for me to replace my negative thoughts with more neutral ones. It was a slow process.

At first it was very beneficial to remove myself from the presence of the person whom I was trying to forgive. Sometimes the more we see the person, the more it brings up our negative feelings. When I would think

A rattlesnake, if cornered, will become so angry it will bite itself. That is exactly what the harboring of hate and resentment against others is—a biting of oneself. We think that we are harming others in holding these spites and hates but the deeper harm is to ourselves.

E. Stanley Jones

disparaging thoughts, I tried to replace them with totally unrelated ideas. These helped to move me into the realm of neutrality.

Many people whose lives are being

harmd by their inability to forgive, seek counselling. Most psychological therapists do not attempt to take their clients past the stage of neutrality. However, an attitude of forgiveness is a step higher and therefore more worthwhile to attain.

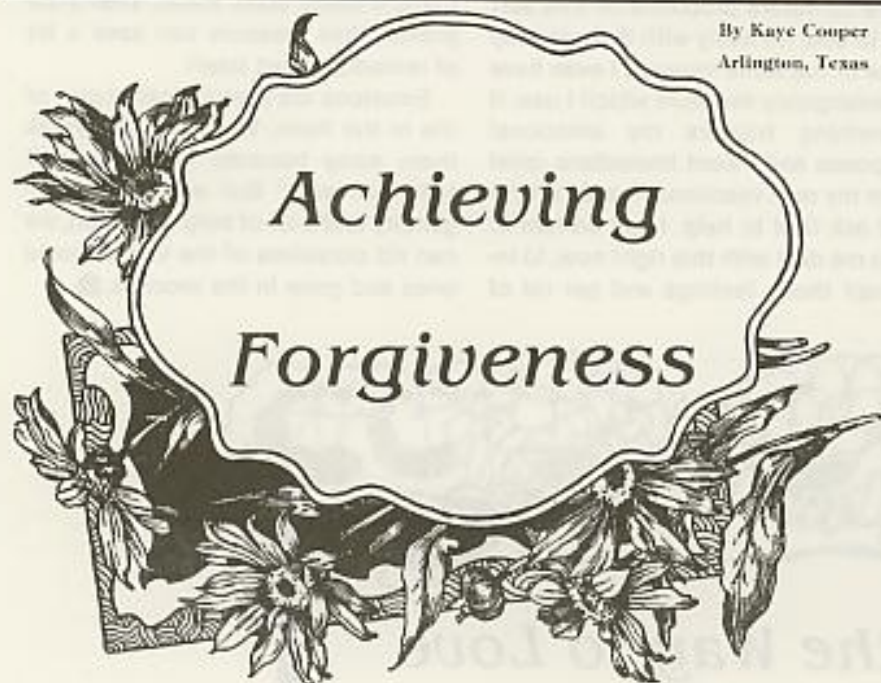
I approached forgiveness by trying to understand the motives of the other person. I tried to relate his position to similar ones in my own experience. I attempted to look back at the situation from his point of view.

One of the ways that I tried to make the transition from neutrality to love was to concentrate on calling up feelings of love for that person. With practice it became easier and the feelings became stronger and nearer to a real love. It was also helpful to think about the good points of that person. I worked at thinking about those things which I liked best about him. This was a person I had once loved, and therefore it was easier to call up memories of the way I had felt about him in the past. It was always helpful to remember happy moments in our relationship.

It is possible to grow from hatred all the way to love. We begin with an unforgiving attitude and move towards neutrality. Then we can learn

See LOVE on p. 17.

By Kaye Couper
Arlington, Texas



Achieving Forgiveness

It's easy to agree that we all ought to forgive our brothers and sisters—but it's often a hard thing to achieve. If we have something to forgive, it is usually because we feel personally injured or insulted by someone. Many times we do not forgive the injury because we don't want to. Our anger and resentment is our revenge. Sometimes our pride is involved. We have been powerless to prevent the betrayal, but we can sure punish the betrayer by withholding our esteem, love and respect. We have to overcome our personal pain enough to be willing to forgive. That is hard but it isn't impossible to do.

We don't have to become willing to forgive someone all in one big step. We can take little ones—just one little step at a time. The first step is to look for motives. Why did the person act as he did? What reasoning would make sense out of his actions? We can talk to him about it, asking his reasons. We can talk to friends, seeking their help in understanding. God is a great partner in sorting out someone's motives. When no one else can make sense out of it, he can, and through persistent prayer, we can obtain his enlightenment. Sometimes we get so involved in the challenge of discovering the other person's

motives that we forget to be so hurt or angry.

Uncovering the person's motives may be all that is needed to release us from the hold of anger and resentment. Many times we discover that to him his actions made perfect sense. His reasons may in fact be quite laudable—even if his methods were offensive! A mother I knew several years ago made this comment about her five-year-old: "What he's doing always makes sense when I bother to ask him. He doesn't make noises or messes just to annoy me. There's always a perfectly logical reason. My anger just melts away when he explains."

Once we determine the individual's motives, we may recognize ourselves in him. We may have been in similar situations or behaved in similar ways. Because of our own experience, we suddenly have a changed perspective. We may realize that growth is the answer to the problem. So often we find that the other person is handling the situation in the very highest way that he is capable of. It's hard to remain angry with someone who is doing the best he can.

But what about the situation in which the person's motives are not good ones? Detecting low motives

may still help us to forgive. I recall such a situation when I was in my teens. A girl I had thought to be a friend suddenly began talking about me to our mutual friends, trying to destroy those friendships. When I confronted her, she was cold and uncaring. I was mystified by her behavior and puzzled about her reasons long and hard. Something inside me enabled me to understand her motives as jealousy and resentment against someone she thought to be a "goody-goody." My habits of life seemed to irritate her, especially when compared with the aspects of her own life she felt guilty about. Once I recognized the sad truth, I felt so sorry for her that pity took the place of my anger. The pain and protest within me gradually died a quiet death.

Taking that step of looking for the motives of the one who has hurt us can frequently solve our problem. As understanding grows, the way is cleared for forgiveness. But there are times when understanding is not enough. As an adult I found a situation where that was true. I spent over a year in the midst of a conflict between a co-worker and myself. I tried and tried to grow and cope with it on a higher level but always seemed to fail. Understanding was not enough help. I had been able to understand her motives all along. They were not bad motives—I just couldn't cope with the way she went about trying to achieve her ends by trampling on my feelings. I hated what she did and I hated my reaction to it.

Finally, in desperation I severed our working connection. But I was left with a disgusting lump of anger at her for the way she behaved and at myself for not being able to rise above the situation and cope with her. Fortunately I perceived that such poison could not be allowed to remain within me. I had to have some help to dislodge it, so I prayed—not just once, not just one day or one week but for months on end. I prayed for my growth, for her growth, for good things in her life and for the removal of my hunk of unforgiveness.

See *ACHIEVING* on p. 17.

Workshop on



Forgiveness

By Lisa Renn
Evanston, Illinois

At the 1984 URANTIA Brotherhood General Conference in Wisconsin, Lisa Renn led a workshop on forgiveness which provided an extraordinarily moving experience for the participants. After hearing reports from some of them, we asked Lisa if she would allow us to reproduce her workshop plan for this issue.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read aloud the following selections from *The URANTIA Book*:

Sermon on Forgiveness, pp. 1762-4.

The four kingdom steps of inner righteousness, p. 1862.

The last two paragraphs of page 1898.

Then divide into small groups and discuss the following questions. Each group will have a spokesperson to give the group's answers at the close of discussion time.

1. How can we understand the inner impulses of our fellows?
2. Can we love our fellows without having an understanding of their inner impulses?
3. Does understanding of ourselves precede understanding of our fellows?
4. Where does forgiveness of self fit in?

GUIDED VISUALIZATION

Now that we have explored forgiveness on an intellectual level, please join me in an experiential process—a guided visualization on forgiveness.

Feel your body relax, from your toes upward, slowly flowing upward until the restful sensation reaches the tip of your head. Breathe out tensions and anxieties. Breathe in quiet and peacefulness. Feel the love of the

Father, the people in this room and our spirit helpers.

We are going to work on a process of forgiveness first by answering some questions. We will then share some time with a partner in a question-and-answer period. We will conclude the process in our visualization state.

Think of the people with whom you now have or have had a relationship. In your mind's eye you can see these people very clearly. Review their faces as they pass in front of you. As I ask these questions, think of any one person. Key in on one individual.

1. Is there someone with whom your relationship is less than loving?
2. Is there someone who has angered, damaged or hurt you in some way?
3. Is there someone whom you hold a grudge against or wish to get even with?
4. Are the mental poisons of fear, anger, envy, jealousy, suspicion or intolerance affecting your relationship with someone?

Pick one person that has come to your mind, the person who was the most vivid as you thought of the questions. Allow this person to become real in your mind. You find that it is easy to picture him or her. Remember any association that allows you to bring this person into as clear a focus as you can so that you can feel him with you.

At the count of ten, I would like you to bring your thoughts back to this room and to the person on your left so we can work in partners.

WORK IN PARTNERS

Each team of partners will use the four questions below. The questions relate to the person whom you chose to visualize. Partner one will ask all four questions of partner two and listen to his answers after each question. Then partner two will ask the questions and partner one will answer. You will ask the questions of each other and give answers four different times.

Maintain eye contact with your partner. When it is your turn to be questioner, you are not to act as therapist or commentator. When answering, don't give your life story. Answer briefly. You will find that your answers begin to change and deepen as you repeatedly answer the same questions.

1. What do you experience with the person you visualized?
2. How does this make you feel?
3. What would you like to experience?
4. What do you need to do to attain that experience?

FINAL VISUALIZATION

Let us now quiet ourselves. Close your eyes and bring back into your mind's eye the person toward whom you've directed this process. You find that it is easy vividly to picture this person. Take a moment to look at them and let them look at you. From the most perfect part of yourself, the part that feels the Father's love and acceptance of us, you might want to tell this person something. Release this person and slowly let this person walk away. Direct your energies to silent thanksgiving. ●



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

The Urantia Book in Society

By Meredith Sprunger
Fort Wayne, Indiana

The following was taken from the 2/25/85 Newsletter of the Fort Wayne URANTIA Society which was shared with us by Dick Bain. Used by permission.

Several recent events illustrate the gradual advancement of *The URANTIA Book* into our society.

American Academy of Religion

The American Academy of Religion at its national meeting November 23-26, 1984, in Anaheim, California will be presenting papers on the significance of *The URANTIA Book* for scholars of religion. The Academy is the top professional organization for scholars of religion in the United States and Canada. This is the first recognition of *The URANTIA Book* by any academic or professional group which suggests that the book is gradually attracting attention and intellectual recognition in our society. Although *The URANTIA Book* has already been the subject of a doctoral thesis at the University of Ottawa by Dr. Jacques Rheaume, I'm confident it is only the first in a long line of masters and doctoral dissertations which will be inspired by the book.

The Network of Kindred Spirits

Recently John Hales sent us a copy of *THE COMMON BOUNDARY between Spirituality and Psychotherapy* published by the Network of Kindred

Spirits—an association of professional psychologists interested in both Pastoral Counseling and Transpersonal Psychotherapy. This group of psychologists has just discovered *The URANTIA Book* and are interested in obtaining a copy of the book to review for their publication. The editor and reviewer may be surprised when they see that it is a two thousand page book!

The Encyclopedia of American Religions

URANTIA Brotherhood has also been asked by Dr. J. Gordon Melton, the editor of *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, to help in the preparation of materials telling about *The URANTIA Book* for the new edition of this widely used reference book. A couple of months ago a number of us met with Dr. Melton in Chicago to structure our assistance in this project.

The Christian Fellowship of Students of The URANTIA Book

Interesting events are regularly taking place through our work with The Christian Fellowship of Students of *The URANTIA Book*. Last week a teacher of an adult Sunday School class in Fort Wayne asked for a loan book for her class to consider for placement in their church library. She said that a number of the people in her class were somewhat acquainted with the book.

Not long ago we had ministers in the Boston and St. Louis areas write to ask where they could find study groups in their areas. Today we sent out the 169th, 170th, and 171st loan book to ministers during the last year or so. This week a local minister told me he was enjoying what *The URANTIA Book* has to say about nationalism and world peace. Gradually more and more people are discovering the book and are usually surprised that a book of this quality could remain virtually unknown for so long! ●

Music for Seniors

By Francyl Gawryn
Boulder, Colorado

I have always felt a special kinship to senior citizens, and through the years I have been blessed with the wonderful opportunity of knowing quite a few as my good friends. It's sad but true that in our society the elderly are so often neglected because we think they are slow or seem rather self-centered with their latest ailment or at worst are just too much to put up with. In our culture we have evolved a convenient way to "take care of Mom and Dad" so that they are not a burden to us. That evolution has resulted in the thousands of rest homes and convalescent hospitals throughout our country. But in these homes are to be found some of the most wonderful surprises of life.

For about five years while I was living in the San Francisco Bay Area, I carried on my own personal program of sharing spiritual truth and our Father's love with senior citizens by visiting on a monthly basis our many retirement homes, hospitals, and convalescent homes. These visits usually consisted of playing my guitar and singing some songs, but more important have been the times of sharing and just spending time with these people who all too often are left by themselves.

When I first started this program, I joined a group called "Bread and Roses," which is a non-profit organization in Marin County which brings entertainment into the lives of people who for some reason cannot get out and about. They service

hospitals, jails, retirement centers, nutrition sites—just about any place where people have restricted access to the community. Later I moved into an area that was far enough away from Marin County that it was silly to drive all the way. There were plenty of senior citizens there in my new community. So I decided to start my own system of booking entertainment into the homes there. I asked other spiritually-minded musicians if they would like to join me in starting up a program in our community to provide this service. They enthusiastically agreed!

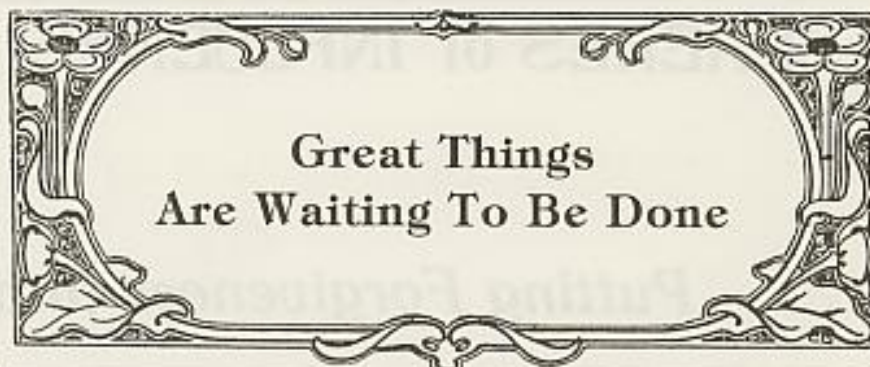
I set to work. I went through the phone book and called all of the hospitals, convalescent homes, etc. within a reasonable driving distance and asked to speak with the Activities Directors. When each Activity Director heard my reason for calling, they were ecstatic that someone would be willing to make the arrangements to bring in some uplifting and entertaining event every month.

I went to meet with each Activity Director to get to know them and to get a feel for the kind of institution and facilities they had. It was important to find out if they had a comfortable dining room or sitting room where people could gather to listen to music or just talk. I wanted to know if they had a piano. I needed to find out the best times to schedule events for their people. And I also wanted to get a sense of the people themselves who lived there. What were their needs? Are most of the people there simply unable to respond to someone coming in to be with them? If so, are there just a few who spend most of the time in their rooms because there is little in the way of a warm and supportive environment? What kinds of programs do they already offer there?

These are all questions that I had in mind as I talked with these people who scheduled the daily activities for those in their care. I also took a tour of the facility just to become familiar with it.

After this I started setting up times when I or one or two of my friends could go in and play music for these folks and enjoy some conversation. It

See MUSIC on p. 18.



Great Things Are Waiting To Be Done

Help us hold firm in our minds the idea of our sonship with God and the resultant brotherhood of all peoples.

Help us hold forever in our souls the heavenly wealth to be found in the pleasure of doing good to all others.

Help us gain clearer communication with the spirit of our Father living within each one of us and help us to resolve ourselves to ever faithfully follow the leadings of this same Gentle Persuader with every fiber of our beings, even as if our very lives depended on it.

Were we able to glimpse the blueprints of the universe and see the magnificent plans the Master Architect has in store for us, perhaps we would be all the more cheerfully willing to hold up our end of the structure with strength and pride.

Were we able to read the Grand Conductor's score, we would perhaps more fully understand the part we play with the instruments of our lives in the symphony we call life, and thereby become more harmonious with our fellows.

And were we able to see a movie of what our lives could be if we were truly loving, we might instantly cease all other attitudes toward each other.

Ah, but we are creatures of a circumscribed view. Our vision is severely limited, and our perspective on all that is far from infinite.

We stumble blindly through much of our lives as if it were night and a dense fog hovered over and around us.

Were we able to rise above the dark clouds of despair, would we not be able to see the light of Day?

The Divine Navigator knows the Way.

Trust the small still voice within.

Become friends with God.

Take comfort in the assurance of sonship with the Father and have faith in the promise of eternal life.

We can each make a difference if we will love one another as we would be loved.

We are the evolving.

It is up to us.

Great things are waiting to be done.

We have but to do them.

*by Preston Bailey
Los Angeles, California*



Putting Forgiveness into Practice

By David Glass
Fort Worth, Texas

Putting Forgiveness into Practice, Doris Donnelly. Published by Argus Communications, A Division of DLM, Inc., One DLM Park, Allen, Texas 75002. Copyright 1982, \$4.95.

Dr. Doris Donnelly holds a master's degree from the University of Southern California and a Ph.D. in theology from the Clairmont Graduate School and presently teaches courses in sacramental and spiritual theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Dr. Donnelly's book on forgiveness, *Putting Forgiveness into Practice*, is a clear and very readable study in five major parts: (1) Where to Begin, (2) Steps in the Process of Forgiveness, (3) Misunderstandings about Forgiveness, (4) Obstacles in the Way of Forgiveness, and (5) God's Forgiveness.

This book, in general, is very helpful in assisting people to come into an awareness that virtually everyone has some situation in his or her life which stands in need of forgiveness, or in which forgiveness from others needs to be accepted. As the title of the book implies, this is not simply a discursive presentation about forgiveness; it is a practical *workbook* in which the reader provides input and information in response to poignant questions about some perspectives on forgiveness introduced by the author.

Wisely, I think, Dr. Donnelly begins with the family, suggesting that the basic needs for forgiveness and love can have a more powerful and enduring persistency when they originate in the home situation. She next invites her readers to take an objective

"inventory" of their interpersonal relationships to see if there are unresolved and unattended hurts in their relations with others.

She astutely points out that there are no barriers of time or space in the process of achieving or bestowing forgiveness. An individual may be remote geographically from another who is in need of forgiveness or removed through years from the unforgiven incident. The unforgiven individual may even be dead. The author, who clearly writes from a

religious point of view, calls on her faith to assert that in an eternal universe, it is always possible to resolve all interpersonal difficulties and their seeming impasses or stalemates left over from one's mortal career.

The author points out that forgiveness is an active enterprise rather than a passive resignation to an unalterable past fact. The greatest thing about forgiveness is that it can provide peace between two or more parties, the primal achievement of

Proven Ways to Introduce The Urantia Book

By Bill Cooper
Arlington, Texas

Proven ways to introduce the Urantia Book. A tape by Sek Seklemian. Published by the Center for Urantia Book Synergy, P.O. Box 3915, Santa Barbara, CA 93130. \$8.50.

Sek Seklemian passed on to the mansion worlds in August 1983. Only three days before he died, he taught a seminar at the August 1983 Santa Barbara conference on his techniques for introducing *The URANTIA Book*. Sek was an advertising and sales consultant and a recognizable master of his profession. He understood the necessity of whetting a person's appetite even for what Sek considered to be the greatest, most valuable material object on the planet—his greatly beloved *URANTIA Book*.

Sek thoroughly understood the

psychology of introducing people to new ideas and new products. The "Seklemian technique" is Sek's gift of his art to us in the cause of spreading the Fifth Epochal Revelation to those who are ready for it. The tape displays and explains Sek's technique. It is a simple, sincere, personal and entirely ethical and loving technique. The quality of the tape copies is poor, but this is easily forgiven because of Sek's personal charm and the usefulness of his technique.

Get the tape. Learn Sek's technique. It will be useful to you the rest of your life in telling friends and acquaintances about *The URANTIA Book* or about anything you really believe in. It tells you what others need to hear from you and how they need to hear it in order to be interested. ●

which was at the heart of Jesus' teachings. In his morontia appearances, he began some messages with: "Peace be unto you." And that peace which passeth all understanding is the product of many spiritual transformations of which the most significant is forgiveness, acceptance, and love.

Dr. Donnelly believes that forgiveness and peace must begin with the individual; he must find the motivation to initiate the forgiveness encounter.

She has analyzed the forgiveness process and recognized several steps: (1) acknowledgment of the unforgiven hurt, (2) the decision to forgive, (3) the allowance of sufficient time for the forgiveness to reach its maturity and completion, (4) the making of an allowance for the difficulty of the forgiveness process, (5) the listening to others when they relate their own experiences, (6) the true forgiveness of oneself, (7) the re-envisioning of the forgiven individual in a new and better light as a result of the forgiveness episode, and (8) a celebration of the release from unexpressed forgiveness.

Just as the father of the prodigal son celebrated the final homecoming of the wayward son, so should we forgive and in celebration welcome a penitent individual into the fullness of personal relationship once more. And, of course, the Father never initiated any severance of relations with him in the first place.

Dr. Donnelly suggests the benefit one can derive from studying persons of great forgiving capacity. Among them might be listed: Martin Luther King, Sr. who forgave the killers of his son and his wife; Jesus who prayed for his executioners; Gandhi who raised hands of forgiveness toward his assassin; and Stephen who prayed for those who stoned him.

Dr. Donnelly points out some very significant truths about forgiveness: She states that forgiveness is not easy to accomplish, often takes time to be achieved, doesn't mean that all the parties involved will completely forget the forgiven act or attitude, will bring moral strength to the forgiver,

See *PUTTING* on p. 16.

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." (419:1)

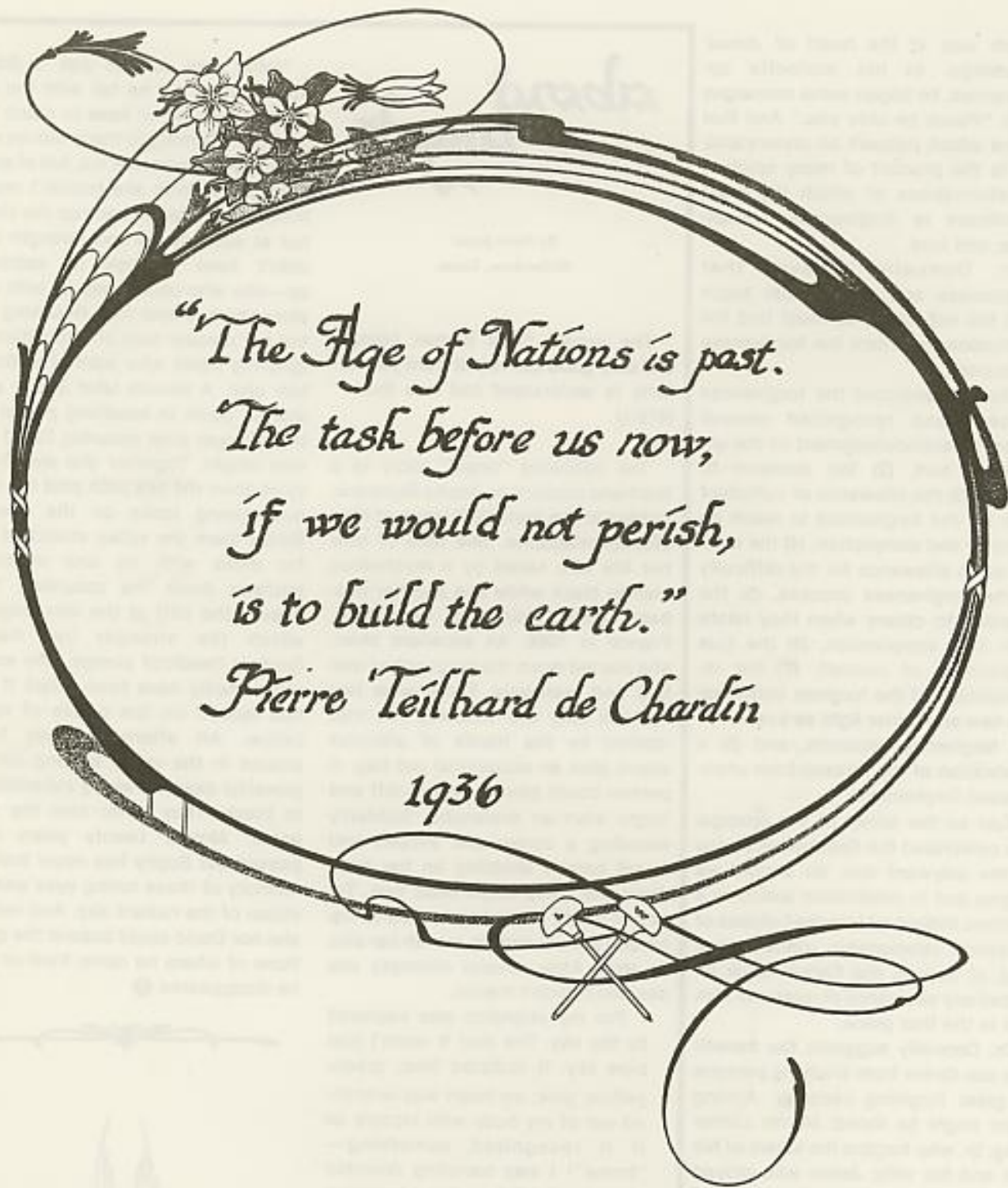
The following "angel" story is a firsthand account by Sophy Burnham, printed in the April 1985 issue of *New Woman* magazine. She tells of how her life was saved by a mysterious man in black while she and her husband were skiing at Val-d'Isere, France in 1966. An excellent skier, she started down the hardpacked trail fast and fearlessly. There were two reasons why she followed the trail marked by the tracks of previous skiers plus an occasional red flag. A person could plunge over a cliff and might start an avalanche. Suddenly rounding a corner she slipped and found herself skidding on her back down the steep slope head first. Try as she might it was impossible to flip herself around and dig in with her skis to stop. After several attempts she decided it didn't matter.

For my attention was captured by the sky. The sky! It wasn't just blue sky. It radiated blue, green, yellow, pink; my heart was wrenched out of my body with rapture as if it recognized something—"home"! I was barreling downhill at 30 or 40 miles an hour, bumping over stones, yet filled with joy. I saw the perfection of all things, including this mad, headfirst slide. What did it matter if I died right then?

Still at the top of the skirun her husband, David, saw what happened. A man dressed all in black shot past him "out of nowhere", raced down ahead of the plunging Sophy, then turned and dug in his skis. She fell against the bulwark of his legs.

"What was curious was it didn't hurt. Neither did he fall with the impact or even tip or have to catch his balance." Turning to thank him as she stood up her eyes met his, full of such light and warmth she couldn't move. Instantly he started back up the slope but at such speed and strength she didn't have a hope of catching up—she who could keep up with any skier she had ever met. Reaching the top her rescuer took off immediately, ignoring David who wanted to thank him also. A minute later Sophy also started down in headlong pursuit of the stranger after assuring David she was alright. Together she and David sped down the one path past the only outcropping rocks on the course. Below them the valley stretched out for miles with no one in sight. Halfway down the mountain they passed the cliff at the very edge of which the stranger had halted Sophy's headfirst plunge. She would undoubtedly have been killed if she had landed on the rubble of rocks below. All afternoon they hung around in the valley looking for the powerful skier, so easily identifiable in black. They never saw the man again. Almost twenty years have passed but Sophy has never lost the memory of those loving eyes and the vision of the radiant sky. And neither she nor David could answer the questions of where he came from or how he disappeared. ●





PUTTING continued from p. 15.

and will help that individual attain new spiritual benefits and blessings.

Each of these points is quite briefly elucidated in the book—indeed, the entire book contains only 84 pages of text, the treatment of the various aspects of forgiveness being penetratingly cogent but at the same time *brief*. Its strength as a practical approach to forgiveness in regard to

its brevity is that it initiates helpful contemplation in the reader, rather than stating outright all the ramifications of forgiveness and the refusal to forgive.

Probably the worst result of the refusal to forgive or the refusal to accept forgiveness is that the “getting even” syndrome will entrap both parties in a mutually destructive “cycle of vengeance”. One of the cardinal

teachings against retributive abuse and violence was Jesus’ refusal to thwart any form of evil visited upon himself by his morally responsible antagonists. The extreme case of this refusal to launch out vengefully against his adversaries, instead of forgiving and praying for them, lay in his acceptance of the death of the cross, which was the ultimate extent of the humanly-divinely possible ex-

pression of this God-man's love for man, his sons and daughters, his brothers and sisters before the Father.

Among the possible obstacles to forgiveness, Dr. Donnelly lists: (1) The forgiven person does not want to fulfill a reconciliation. (2) The party to be forgiven withholds his acceptance of forgiveness. (3) The person to be forgiven is dead. (4) The forgiven individual continues in his objectionable behavior. (5) The forgiven party is not an individual but an institution, society itself, or an organization. And she finds ways of dealing constructively and positively with each of these obstacles.

Dr. Donnelly has an excellent approach, I think, to virtually all of the forms of forgiveness. The only significant flaw in the book, from our standpoint, given our awareness of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, is in her description of God's forgiving nature. She asserts that sometimes God is angry with his children because they have not asked his forgiveness or have refused to accept it, even though he is usually a loving Being. We are aware, through the service of the revelators, that "God is love"; therefore his only personal attitude towards the affairs of the universe is always a reaction of divine affection." (38:6)

Our author discusses cases in which the individual involved needs to "forgive God." This idea has always puzzled me: How can an infinitely wise and loving and just Father stand in need of our forgiveness? Perhaps this relates to the individual who blames God for some personal mishap or tragedy.

Included in each section are evocative questions which the reader is supposed to apply to his or her life. I think they would be quite helpful, if not taken too seriously. Jesus cautioned us against over-self-analysis and introverted self-examination. Indeed, I see virtually nothing that would have to be altered in light of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, apart from the inaccurate portrayal of some of the Father's personality traits. To the contrary, the rest of the book is a brave and intense and in-

clusive look into our interpersonal relationships and provides excellent reading and workshop materials for ridding oneself of the distorting and discouraging aspects of the lack of forgiveness. ●



INFINITE continued from p. 7.

characteristic in such a son or daughter of God. Forgiveness is a method of harmonizing and transforming the inevitable errors of inexperienced free will with the later-appearing greatness and glory of those sons and daughters who advance in the Father's Paradise Ascension Plan. After fusion, the ascending once-mortal need only listen to the guidance and revelations of the Thought Adjuster-soul being to discern God's will, and the need for forgiveness will decrease as the ascending son or daughter perceives more clearly the "new and better way." Forgiveness, like mercy, is an aspect of love in action. ●

LOVE continued from p. 9.

forgiveness and ultimately grow into a love relationship.

Before we forgive, we are unable to view the offending person in a positive manner. The poisons of resentment or hatred create a barrier against beneficial growth. Once a person has learned to forgive, then he can begin to foster a relationship that is filled with love and understanding. He has learned to work his way through from the most negative feeling of hatred to the ultimate feeling of love. ●

ACHIEVING continued from p. 10.

Every so often I'd feel for the size of my unwanted lump. Sure enough I could tell that it was progressively diminishing. And one day it wasn't there.

I could have hidden my un-forgiveness away where I didn't have to notice it daily and pretended the thing was over, but I would have been fooling myself. I think it would have

sat right there and quietly fed poison to my relationship with her (which continued on a social basis) and with other people, too. Had I not understood that prayer's primary effect is usually to change the person praying, I might not have known that there was help available. I wasn't able to forgive by myself, but together God and I could—and did.

It may seem like too giant a leap from hurt or anger to forgiveness but we can get there. We can if we take it one little step at a time, if we keep after the goal in persistence and faith, if we are sincere in our desire. It always seems to be God's way: if we will do just a little, he will do the rest.

REALIZE continued from p. 7.

myself talking with the male cohabitant. Numerous writing commitments and part-time jobs kept me from the telephone.

It was while preparing notes on this topic that I realized, clearly and with a resulting jolt, that I was actually accusing my friend of a slight, as viewed from my perspective. In reality there was no slight involved, and I should forgive her and keep in touch as I had promised. The situation, I reasoned, did not involve me. It was therefore outside my area of concern.

I understand my religion is not passive. It manifests itself in loving service, those personal experiences which can only be gained by encounters with other people. Membership in the brotherhood of mankind implies love of people. If we have encounters with people, we have dealings with them, however minimal. If we have dealings with them, we must have agreed to some kind of terms with them.

Does this imply that, to refuse to encounter or deal with, other people, is to refuse to forgive them?

I must phone her! ●

It is amazing how many times a delicate situation can be straightened out by talking it over with the other party.

Thank You For Your Financial Support!

We still need funds to finish out the Circle's year. If there are those of you who have intended to send something, we would appreciate your help — the editors.

MUSIC continued from p. 15.

is a bit of work to fit schedules together but not really hard. I have found that it is most fun to go with someone else to do this. (Remember Jesus sending the apostles out two and two?) Always uppermost in our minds was the idea to share in some personal and loving way the truth of our Father's love and caring for each of these people.

One week my husband Marvin and I went to Park Lane Convalescent Hospital. (It was Marvin's first time to go as a musician!) We played music for about 45 minutes—that's about the length of program that is suitable for such a place—and after that we stayed to visit with the patients. We ended up staying two more hours! One of the men hadn't particularly

responded to the music while we were playing. Afterward I approached him. When we first started talking, he avoided eye contact and stared at his hands which had been badly burned in a fire. His voice was barely above a whisper, but I persisted in trying to draw him out. I asked him what he would like to hear about if we were to come in and lead a discussion group. He answered, "I'd like to hear about Abraham—Abraham and Isaac." I asked him if he liked to read his Bible. He said that he did, but he couldn't read any more because he had lost his glasses. I was surprised to learn this but delighted to think that I might be able to help this man to find his glasses or get another pair. As we talked it became obvious that that was just what I could do for him.

When I promised to help him get another pair, his gratitude was almost overwhelming! From that moment on, his attitude was so cheery. He was cracking jokes and laughing! It was as if the sun had just come out from within him and he was letting his light shine. From then on our conversation turned to how he could be a light for the other people there and how he might be able to help them to live happier and more God-centered lives. This is only one of the many experiences that I have shared in these places.

After visiting a number of these institutions, it became apparent to me that other types of programs would also be helpful. Many would benefit from having discussion groups, and there might be people who would like to be read to. Another idea is to start up a cassette service of readings from the Bible and other inspirational materials.

One of the wonderful things about this type of service contact is the realization that there is truly so much that we can do for each other if we would only ask. ●

An Opportunity For You To Share

We need your help. Please share your experiences with us. Bill and I are writing a book on prayer. The strategic element, the one which will bring the book to life, will be the personal experiences of many different religionists. That's where we need help.

We are interested in whatever you would be willing to share about your prayer and worship relationship with the Father. What techniques have worked particularly well for you? What realizations have you made? What surprises have come your way? How have your prayers been answered? We need examples which illustrate the importance of faith to prayer, a willingness to

change, a sincere desire to do the Father's will, persistence, patience ...the list is endless!

Real names will not be used. You do not need to be able to write well. I will handle the wording. We can even do it over the phone for those who don't have the time or desire to write. If you would be willing to help in this project, please call or write to me within the next month at the address below. I will send you further information at that time.

Kaye Cooper
c/o The Circles
P.O. Box 1203
Arlington, Texas 76004-1203
(817) 265-3775

THINGS TO SHARE

OREGON URANTIA BOOK FAMILY REUNION

Connie and Mark Draper wish to extend an invitation to attend the annual "Oregon URANTIA Book Family Reunion." It will take place on the weekend of August 23rd (Friday) through August 25 (Sunday). The "Reunion" will consist of three days of "study, worship, spiritual intimacy and social rejoicing," and will be held at Silver Creek Falls, one of Oregon's loveliest state parks. Near Salem, the park offers comfortable, affordable lodges, camping and meals.

A year of painstaking effort has gone into preparing an ideal blend of thoughtful study, practical workshops, inspiring speeches, and outdoor family fun.

Contact: Nancy Votrain
P.O. Box 2046
Corvallis, OR 97339

A NEW PUBLICATION

A new URANTIA Book-related publication is being written and distributed. With low "overhead", this publication, That Monthly Message of Inspiration, brings its readers six single-spaced legal-sized pages of enlightening information on such revelation-relevant topics as: a new Peace Academy set up as a part of the UN, the fascinating enigmas of contemporary physics, religions new and old, news on the progress of the World Future Society and Planetary Citizens groups, poetry, reflections on the teachings of The URANTIA Book, and more. Annual subscriptions of twelve monthly issues are available for \$6. Please send for your first issue at no charge.

Contact: David Glass
5885 Chesapeake Place
Ft. Worth, TX 76132

A NEW BOOK OF POEMS

Dr. Conrad Sommer has published a booklet of poems, Death, Our Universal Faithful Friend. It is worth noting that Dr. Sommer is 80 years of age. All the poems are about the subject of death and dying and can impart meaning, comfort, and inspiration to their readers. The booklet is dedicated to the dying and the bereaved. The booklet is available for \$1.50 post paid. The poems are also available on cassette tape.

Contact: Conrad Sommer, M.D.
2 Tamarack Drive
St. Louis, MO 63124

A TAPE ON SHARING THE URANTIA BOOK

The Center for URANTIA Book Synergy has made available a tape by Sek Seklemian who shares "Proven Ways to Introduce The URANTIA Book." The cost is \$8.50. For more information, see "Spheres of Influence" in this issue.

Contact: The Center for URANTIA Book Synergy
P.O. Box 3915
Santa Barbara, CA 93130



Friendship

"Friendship enhances the joys and glorifies the triumphs of life." (1776:2)

"...the noblest of all memories are the treasured recollections of the great moments of a superb friendship." (1779:4)

"His (Jesus') life association with us exemplifies the ideal of human friendship. . . . The better you know him, the more you will love him." (1785:3)

The theme for the Spring-Summer issue of *The Circles* is friendship, in all of its many aspects. There is friendship with our brothers, friendship with Jesus and even friendship with God. The *URANTIA* Book elaborates on many of the benefits gained through friendship. This is a subject on which we all have some knowledge and much experience.

What makes a friendship special to you?

What do you do in order to be a friend to someone?

Does familiarity breed contempt—or love?

What benefits are to be gained

1) by being a friend?

2) by having a friend?

How can friendship between husband and wife enrich a marriage?

How does the presence of a friend enhance the perception of beauty and exalt goodness?

Will you share your personal friendship with Jesus with us?

How can you be a friend to God?

Send your poetry, art-work, and articles (We suggest articles be limited to three double-spaced, typed pages.) by December 15, 1985 to:

The Circles
P.O. Box 1203
Arlington, Texas 76004-1203

STAFF

Mike Appleby

Gene Joyce

Tommy Clendening

Diane Lanford

Bill Cooper

John Lanford

Kaye Cooper

Beth McLeod

Jeannie George

Mark McLeod

David Glass

Louis Morris

John Hyde

Sarah Nachtwelch

Jonathon Johnson

Edith Pennartz

Betsy Slavik

SUBSCRIPTIONS: *The Circles* is published quarterly and distributed on a donation basis. Send your name and address (and donation if you can) to:

The Circles
P.O. Box 1203
Arlington, Texas 76004-1203

The Dallas Fellowship, Inc.
P.O. Box 1203
Arlington, Texas 76004-1203

Address Correction
Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ARLINGTON, TEXAS
PERMIT NO. 308