

The Circles

Feeling the Presence of God

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His Transforming Touch

By Kaye Cooper
Houston, Texas

My Father's presence unfolds me like a flower to the sun, petal at a time, in slow motion or fast . . . until I am open and vulnerable, completely honest and sincere, awaiting a touch, a word, a thought, an attitude—and drinking in his love which radiates to me and through me like the sun on a warm spring day. . . Until I am a cup waiting to be filled yet uniquely myself still. . . Until I am a blossom at its fullest and finest and most fragrant.

Then comes the touch and the filling, the understanding, the lack of need for understanding, the contentment, the satisfaction.

My Father's presence unfolds me from my inward-looking self-centeredness, from selfishness to selflessness, from "me" to "we," from my petty desires to the true needs of others. I am transformed from a vortex swooping inward to the fountain of his love pouring outward,

showering gently on needs and cares, confusions and doubts. And transforming in its own small way those on whom it falls.

My Father's presence transforms me into the true self that I am, which was buried deep inside all this time, transforms me into what I was and am and wish to be and will be, into the eternal me. And there is no boundry line between God and me."

Thanksgiving Songs

*My songs of joy rise
in thanksgiving to the Father
For the showers of gifts
that rain down from a sky
with no clouds.*

*And my words do not cover
the need here inside
The need to tell you,
'It is too much.'*

*"I cannot be worthy
of all of these gifts.
it is too much."*

*But Light showers glisten
and fall on me still
And the gifts keep coming
and coming.*

*And my Father just smiles,
when I talk to him thus,
And touches my head with his kiss. . .*

*And touches my head
with his kiss. . .*

By Kaye Cooper
Houston, Texas

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Walking and Talking With Our Father

By John Lanford
Fort Worth, Texas



Since I began reading *The URANTIA Book* about ten years ago, I have often reflected on the revelation's description of the human perception of the presence of God versus my own experience of that presence. I truly believe that the two are one, that is, the book describes my experience. And for that reason I was very quick to accept the veracity of *The URANTIA Book*.

For one thing, I have always thought it inspiring to wander about in the woods. That Jesus did so, and that he did it so frequently, seems perfect to me. To walk and talk with his Father was the most valued resource to him. What then, may constitute "walking and talking" with our Father? Let me suggest a few elements that have occurred to me.

First, walking by itself is a valuable experience. You put into action the human machine in its simplest, most elegant function. You are being active but almost effortlessly. You are mobile: your body and mind are moving gently through space, but it is more like a meditation than a journey. It is difficult to walk, even in a familiar environment, without encountering a sense of newness. It is always *stimulating!*

Now, when you walk in a natural setting—that is, one without a great deal of human manipulation—you can more nearly see, feel, and hear the movements of space and time. You see the interplay between the

forces of nature—the sun, the wind, the rain, gravity, and so on. Add to that the persistent effervescence of life—evolution. And with that mixture and a contemplative mind you will begin to see the birth of the human spirit. You will see the struggle and conflict, with their inherent successes and failures. You will see the mainstream of evolutionary thrust, along with the accompanying pools and eddies of temporary solutions and inadequate resolutions. You will see through space and time. . . and into the outer reaches of God's plan.

I say "God's plan" and would have said it that way even before my introduction to *The URANTIA Book*. I would have said it in spite of my secular background and scientific studies. But I would have said it that way only after my *experience* had led me to believe it. Indeed, I met Darwin along the road, and I was disappointed for him. Likewise, the Guatama Buddha. One perceived the evolution of the body and the other the evolution of the soul, yet both stopped short of recognizing the personality of God.

The difference which enabled me to recognize the personality of God, I am convinced, is the ingredient of faith. Faith, and not brilliance, or bravery, or purity, or the "blood of the cross," is what introduced me to that first awareness of the presence of God. By standing at the threshold of physical reality and human mind, I

began to glimpse the meaning of such difficult concepts (for me) as soul, spirit, faith, and God—particularly a loving God. By giving faith an opportunity to demonstrate itself as a *real thing*, I realized I had discovered the key to a vast new territory of human experience which began to give order and meaning to the elements to my life that had lacked them before. Mainly, though, I realized that faith was the knocking that opened the door, and I soon learned that of all the teachers who have gone before, one stood apart from the rest.

When one has faith that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness
See WALK on page 15.

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All page references to The URANTIA Book are as follows: The page number is first, followed by a colon and then the paragraph number. Each indentation on a page 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. The international citation which follows the slash refers to paper, section, and paragraph within the section.

Communion

By Bill Cooper
Houston, Texas

Feeling the presence of God is not a verbal experience for me. It is one which transcends words. There is some sort of special communion going on that fills me with a sense of being loved more than any words could convey. Because it is beyond words, it is doubtful that words can really describe it. But at times they can evoke the feeling.

Feeling God's presence is characterized by a joy like the joy of reunion with my best friend. It feels as if it has been too long since we were together, so that I am especially pleased to see my friend. It is a feeling of joy and homecoming.

God's presence is also characterized by a calmness, yet exhilaration. There is a fullness, a satisfaction, a lack of wanting, a contentedness. At the same time there is a spiritual emotion of excitement.

These feelings of being loved, of joy, calmness, and excitement are very personal times of communion. There are less personal times too. There are times when I am doing something and I suddenly realize that God is at work here. There is an amused recognition of God's presence. There is a warm feeling of friendliness, like receiving a letter. It is the experience of feeling his interest in me and my life.

Sometimes I sense the presence of God in other persons. I see them act on meanings and values. I see them express God in their lives. There is an answering joy that springs from me. It is as if I have discovered my brother or sister after years of separation.

Then there are those times when I see the hand of God in nature. Everything material is designed to express some aspect of God. Everything I see holds some insight into the nature of God. Sometimes it is easy to see the hand of God—in color, symmetry, free form beauty of rocks, rich soil, the Grand Canyon, the planet seen from space. There is an ability to recognize the relatedness of beauty to God. I sense his presence through these material things. It is even easier for me to see that presence in living things—plants, animals. Because I seek him, I see him frequently. This seeking is a constant state of communion. I see him everywhere in rocks, in flowers, in people. "

Worship

I rest

Smiling

Recalling blessings in abundance

*Blessings of love; of friends; of beauty
recognized, remembered, invested
within my soul.*

Angels are near

I await my Father's presence

*which comes to me from the
mystery center of everywhere.*

He is present!

Our loves overflow

*The thrill, the exhilaration of his
presence explodes around me in
meanings and insights.*

*Slowly, his presence recedes
but joy remains.*

*I cannot yet endure long seasons
in his presence.*

But that too shall come.

By Bill Cooper
Houston, Texas

To Feel The Presence

By Jeanne Rundell
Pueblo, Colorado

One night in December 1987 I had been to a "mystic reader" and he had told me many things that I had known, at some level of awareness, but in particular, that I had been having a total lack of communication with our daughter. (She had told me she never wanted to see her father or myself again.)

As the night wore on, and I was trying to sort out my thoughts about everything he had told me, I looked for ease of my mind in the "Word." I picked up your winter Circles and read your request for letters from readers of The Circles . . . and . . .

I began to feel the PRESENCE.

Like a cup of water, when one is thirsty,

Like restful sleep, when one is sleepless.

Like peace, when one is at war with oneself.

Joel Goldsmith calls it, "The Click."

It is the presence of "The peace that passeth all human understanding."

It is unexplainable and can only be EXPERIENCED.

I always wondered when I read

or heard of "a state of grace," what it meant. To me, to feel the Presence is a state of grace.

It is the release of the problem; it is a letting go and letting God. It is PEACE. It is THE PRESENCE, in place of the problem.

I feel it is the Release of the Imprisoned Splendor of Robert Browning.

And I am at Peace, I am at Rest, and I am One with God, I Am That I Am and I feel It.

God Bless. «

I Found

I found—

a blade of grass
a leaf
a tree
a flower

I found—

a cricket
a grasshopper
a spider
a bug

I found—

a honey bee
a fly
a wasp
a bumble bee

I found—

a lizard
a bird
a squirrel
a deer

I found—

a rock
a cliff
a beautiful view

At the top of a hill.

I found. . .

Something strange and new
Something warm and good
Something quiet and still
Something loud and alive

I found. . .

Something running free
Something like joy, in watching
a patch of sunlight cross a hillside
Something great but small
Something beyond peace

I found. . .

Something which I had not
fully realized
Something that all must share
Something constantly moving
Something greater than words
Something which never ends

I found. . .

Something revealing itself to me
Something—a feeling bursting
inside me
Something which was, is, and
shall forever be

I found God

At the top of a mountain.

By Annette Sunlin
Plano, Texas





Recognizing Him in Me

By Karen O'Dell
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Earlier today I quickly perused *The Circles* which came yesterday. I noted with interest the topic for a coming issue: how do we recognize the presence of God in our lives? At once I thought of all the ways and means our Father manifests himself through others. Which anecdote might I write about?

Off I went, then, to the market with my grocery list. I found my niche and my pace in Smith's Food King and consulted my list. I carefully scrutinized the pork roasts and selected one that felt right; I checked it off and noted the cost in Column B. The celery, too, received my judgment and I was pleased with the selection. As I considered a quantity of pinto beans and the merits of tomato juices, I couldn't help but take a moment to experience the presence of God in my life in Smith's Food King.

The order with which the items I needed presented themselves, as I thought ahead to the office pot luck and the response of my co-workers to my posole recipe, the chips and dips we would share that evening with friends, the dignity with which I was able to afford my needs . . . all these brought to mind the sweetness of knowing our Father.

And if I keep my head on straight, I can count on that. I've been disappointed by my fellows when they've purported themselves to be Godlike, then turned around and made human errors. And I've miscalculated urgent leanings I've had that turned out to be not my Father's will. But I can take one special moment once in awhile to acknowledge that feeling the presence of God begins with recognizing him in me, and if it rings true in the marketplace, I must be manifesting *something* as I pass by. «

Baptism

Confusion. . .
follow my brain? heart?
What can I do?
Dare I listen to you?

While beastly emotions rage inside,
Our passions can only di
vide us.

I must follow the guide in my mind,
Thought Adjustor inside,
because when we are attuned,
the One way of the Universe rules.

So I stumble and blunder,
Here and there,
And wonder where
you are tonight. . .

While I sit in my room, paying the price for my gloom.

Bloom!
Ugliness inside must go away,
All traces be gone,
Dissolve. . .

My soul dances alive
Round and round
Vibrant White
Off the ground
Hear the sound
See the light
Pound pound pound
In the night . . .

Eternal pool
I plunge into your melting waters

and see Truth,
feel the High Powers
Submerge.

By Brendi Poppell

By Gary Falk
Westport, Connecticut

The Pearl of Great Price

To me, God's presence is both a comfortable and comforting experience. It is a feeling that says, in effect, "God is right *Here*, and with me *Now*. Where do I have to go to find God? *Nowhere*. What do I have to do in order to find him? *Nothing*."

Experiencing God's presence makes everything feel fine and wonderful. There is an experience of completion and fullness. At these times I can freely say, "I am in him and he is in me."

When I think of God and remember his constant and eternal presence, I have the feeling of quiet joy and triumphant faith in his wisdom and goodness. In the midst of anything and everything, remembering him enables me to say, "Everything's O.K. All is well."

What helps me most in feeling God's presence are three things: The first is practice. The second is practice. The third is more practice.

Two books that have helped me immeasurably and have given me almost boundless joy are: 1. *The Practice of the Presence of God*, a Christian classic by Brother Lawrence, and 2. *Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ* by Mme. Guyon, a 17th century "heretic" of sorts.

Thank you for having "Feeling the Presence of God" as a topic for your wonderfully inspiring journal. To me, the presence of the living God, our Father, is the central thing in this, or any, life. His increasing presence has become, in a very short time, "the pearl of great price." Let all of us "sell everything" and like Jesus "burn all our bridges" in order to attain this priceless treasure.

Can anyone say, "Amen?"



Insight

*When trouble is summer skies darkening,
Often some lightning comes crackling,
A flaming arrow flashing,
Bursting, leaping downward striking,
Spreading fire, is*

Insight.

*Sweet and clear in its quickening,
Help from heaven comes streaming,
Sending night's mystery fleeing,
Leaving new perceptions lingering,
As the smell of the morning, is*

Insight.

*As a friend whispering,
Some secret of powerful meaning,
As a spicy odor flying,
Catches your head to turning,
As the compass needle pointing,
Is the glint in your eye shining,
Showing you the way, is*

Insight.

By Michael Hanna
Pittsburg, California

Sensing the Presence of God

By David Glass
Fort Worth, Texas

Rather like Maria von Trapp who sang of all her favorite things, I would like to share and describe briefly, not a major incident in which I felt the presence of God, but an array of different experiences in which the nearness of the Father has been, for me, humanly palpable.

First, I suppose I should mention births, marriage, and deaths as experiences which bring me, and many people, close to God in thankfulness for a new life (birth), in hope for brides and grooms and prayers for their family life (marriages), and in consolation for others or myself when loved ones are promoted to higher levels of universal life (deaths). I sense the trustworthiness of God and his dependability and faithfulness when I hand over to his watchcare the well-being of a departing friend or family member. These experiences bring me closer to the sense of the Father's attentiveness to all the details of the lives of his universal family of personalities. At such times I know that God loves us each and all boundlessly and that we can have confidence in his omnipotence to do all things doable.

Singing hymns or other religious songs with a group gives me the sense of the Father's presence. And such melodies sing on in my uncon-

sciousness, emerging sometimes into my conscious mind with their comfort, exhilaration, joy, light-heartedness and conviction.

Visual arts, particularly oil paintings, allow me to feel at one with the creativity of God, even though I do not paint myself. Art is an upreach for desired and ideal beauty, and beauty is one of the most potent humanly experienceable realities of divinity. I can sometimes contemplate the creation of a painting happening in reverse, until I reach that point at which initially the entire effect of the work was conceived in the mind or "eye" of the artist. This happens for me in both representational and abstract artworks. Getting back to and perceiving the inspirational catalyst which motivated the artist to create allows me to sense a spark of God.

I sense God when I see, directly or through the media, a person of laudable leadership of almost any kind being rewarded for courage and perseverance. I sense God's being proud of his son or daughter.

Beholding a person's spiritually motivated service or action, performed in sincerity and in union with the Father, gives me the sense of God the Adjuster shining through that man or woman.

Believe it or not, at a football game or other sporting event, when thousands of people are cheering and caterwauling, I surprise myself with the reflection that I can imagine before me a throng of advanced Adjusters peacably monitoring all the commotion.

I sense God in any manifestation of unconditional love or interpersonal forgiveness. Greater love has no man than that he would lay down his life for his friend or friends, and many have.

I sense the anxiety-quelling and real humor which releases fear and apprehension and assists us in not taking ourselves too seriously as a visitation of God's renewing presence.

God is a part of all "transcendental" (in the Romantic, not in the philosophical, sense) experiences which I have. There is the sense of something divine permeating all creation unseen, as is the wind through the fields and trees—a presence which, as Wordsworth put it, "rolls through all things." Jesus himself employed the wind analogy to describe the "motion of the spirit." Jesus preferred to go outdoors amid the quietness of nature for prayer and communion.

Even a glance at the starry heavens of an evening is adequate to inspire the sense of the nearness of God whose handiwork we can thus survey.

I sense the wisdom of God being expressed through some inspiring and experienced writers.

The sense of the Eternal NOW, in any given moment, can create a sense of the directness and present-time-ness, the immediacy, of contacting God beyond all cosmic mani-

The Circles Calendar

The Circles is published three times a year. (We also solicit donations in November and March.) Our yearly calendar:

	Articles Due	Mail
Spring-Summer	Dec. 15	May 1
Fall	April 15	Aug. 15
Winter	Aug. 1	Dec. 1

festations. The unchanging God is progressively better perceived by the changing and progressing son or daughter of that non-varying Deity Father.

I am touched by the experience of those moments when life's pressure and jostling—the efforts to make progress in the various contexts of living—give way to the experience of the conciliating love of the Universal Father and his Local Universe Son, Michael. At such times I can sense being lifted to a higher level of consciousness. It can be a "pause that refreshes."

I sense the companionship of God the Parent in beholding the spontaneous expressions of love and happiness expressed by innocent children.

I sense God's influence in the progress of our world both throughout history and in our day. In the aftermath of rebellion, I perceive the efforts of people in their devotion to the reconstruction and healing of individuals, cultures, and the world as a whole as manifestations of the undaunted First Source and Center who lives within them and whose mandate of perfection points the way beyond the struggles of our era but which is, perhaps unperceived, being faithfully and progressively fulfilled in the positive actions of all persons.

I sense the presence of God when I receive or give love to or from him or other persons. The experience of love can become actualized on a wide range of impact levels and in a variety of manifestations. Sharing love and enacting its inspirations is like finding an oasis for the whole personality. God is, perhaps, best experienced as and through love, for have we not experienced the Father sufficiently to testify ourselves that ultimately: "God is love."«

Paradise Time Shadows

**The present is the movement
of the Paradise-Time-Shadow.
The present is the time and place
of the Kingdom of Heaven.
There is no future time in which
I will be happier,
or more secure
in the Father's Arms.
There is no future moment when
I will be more filled
with His love.
I am a reflection of Paradise Reality
A work of Divine Art,
A cosmic identity of
Truth, Beauty and Goodness.**

**Now! Right Now!
By turning into the Now Presence of God
My Father,
and Staying in his constant fellowship,
My reality becomes His Reality
A continuing reflection of Paradise
in our movement through time and space.**

**Rejoice in his Peace
and be happy in his Presence.
Keep up the Contact
Be Him now
Be Love, In love.**

**Patrick Yesh
Kingston, Ontario**





Homecoming

Is it of the future—or of the past,
This glimmering presence of inward-
ness?

Do I know IT? Do I discern
The meaning of IT's tacit testimony?
Or—is it so obvious
That I cannot distinguish
IT's inner leadings from my
Chattering brain? Solemnly,
Will I seek that Peace:
Be still and know that I am God.

We are to be one, IT and I. But
Are we even now yet two?
Or—have we not begun
Our eternal romance, our
Divine Betrothal, one to another?

It is a pre-Father entity
Who inhabits my soul.
Before Abraham was: IT IS.
Indeed, before personality:
It IS!—Our pre-cosmos partners,
Today, court and attract us
With spiritual intuitions
And with the love drawn from eter-
nity.

Is my home Urantia?
Or—is it Ascendington, I being,
In my Father's eyes, already
A Paradise finaliter?
And whence hails IT, if not from
That Pre-ALL which IS
Homed and harbored in my
Earthbound soul, soon to fly.

Is IT not the "Pre-pre"!
And the "Post-post"! Yes!
Hence, where is IT's true home?
IT's home must be me!

I will say: HE-IT IS
Homed in me. Even as
I am homed in HIS everlasting arms.

And the vast cosmic career
Which I see stretched out before me
Is the star-path IT has spanned
To achieve its HOMECOMING to my heart:
I, IT's future personality,
IT, my future-eternal Spirit.

And I shall climb to IT's
Exalted HOME, even Paradise.
A home of God, despite HE-IT's
Ubiquity. My temporary limits
Will teach me wisdom and patience
As we approach each other: IT and I.

Come, O Fusion, and make an end
To our temporary twoness.
Become me, Spirit, I hail you!
Unite with me so that your
Endlessness will instruct me also
In your Beginninglessness.

We can, in our achieved identity,
Commence our interminable adventures.
Will not our mutual HOME be
In one Another? Yes, I say,
And hear resounding within me
A silent acquiescence, an
Eternal commitment. And
The Father speaks: My son,
We are ONE, Come HOME!

David Glass
Fort Worth, Texas

Approaching the Presence of God

Approaching the Presence of God

By Vince Ventola
Venice, California



*By Vince Ventola
Venice, California*

Approaching the Presence of God

*By David Biggs
Flint, Michigan*

Waiting with unimaginable anticipation, he was about to be ushered into the presence of God, the Father himself. He still found it strange and wonderful to exist in the circle of eternity with its sequence of events, but no time—the everlasting now. Remembering the eons of effort it had taken to get here, he thought back. He recalled his resurrection. His Guardian Angel had been there at the roll call. The fragment of God that had indwelt him during his life on earth had been there also. They had invested him with his new body and started him on his Paradise ascent.

He remembered the feeling of sublime fulfillment at the moment of fusion, and with it the realization that he was now eternal.

The coming into the presence of Christ Michael. What a tremendous milestone it was! "No man goes to the Father except through me."

He recalled how he had waited in a similar fashion to come into the presence of that third God-Personality of the Trinity, the Infinite Spirit. He wondered then if he had achieved the level of perfection it would take for him to recognize the Spirit and for the Spirit to be aware of his presence, and if so, the Spirit would embrace him. What would the embrace be like?

His Paradise teachers thought he was ready . . . he was! He recognized the Spirit and the Spirit embraced him. The embrace was a soul-wrenching swirling delirium of fulfillment. It left him, however, with the knowledge that his perfection and spirituality were not as totally perfect as he had thought, and much more preparation was required before he had been able to approach the second God-Personality of the Trinity, the Eternal Son.

The approach to the Eternal Son had been similar, and once again he had been successful—he had been able to recognize the Eternal Son and the Son embraced him with the same effect as the Spirit, except immeasurably more grand.

He knew as he waited that almost all the Paradise ascenders who had preceded him had been successful candidates, as he had been, in their recognition of the Spirit and the Son. He also knew that many failed in their first attempt to recognize God the Father and had to make an additional attempt. The level of spirituality and perfection required to stand in the actual presence of

Between Me and Thee

*Something—someone—is here with us.
He/She/It is Holy—the Spirit.
Jesus is here.*

*You are near, my mortal friend,
but it is he that I feel.*

*A moment occurs between us—
a brush with Eternal Presence.
Almost touching his presence,
my back turned to you.*

*Spiritual intensity so great,
mind/bodies cannot sustain the moment.
Unspoken word-thoughts pass between us,
Spirits connect where bodies cannot.*

*Quietly, images of finitude come forth;
Self-conscious thoughts of closer realities.
"Everydayness" returns. The moment is gone.*

*One brief moment with the Infinite
—together—
An eternal moment refreshing weary souls
on a mortal journey.*

*Paths part, memory of "the moment" stays.
He remains with you.
He remains with me.
You are far, my mortal friend,
still, it is he that I feel.*

In him we are one.

*By Mary B. Blessing
Clayton, California*

God himself is the ultimate of ultimates, and if attained, the embrace of the Father is the prize of all creation, utterly beyond any description. He knew that the result of the Father's embrace would be his initiation into the Corps of the Finality.

This goal had been his driving force for eons, and now he was standing at the threshold. Would the Father be recognizable? What could the embrace be like?•

Feeling the Presence of God: Study Notes*



By Bill and Kaye Cooper
Houston, Texas

[In the following notes, the quoted material appears in italics. Our comments about the reference follow in regular type.]

"Many of your brethren have minds which accept the theory of God while they spiritually fail to realize the presence of God. . . . It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to feel the presence of God." (1733:0/155.6.2)

Why should we desire to feel the presence of God? Why isn't knowing that he exists enough? Why isn't it enough to be able to name and describe the universe functions of God the Father, the Eternal Son, the Infinite Spirit, God the Supreme, the Spirit of Truth, the Thought Adjuster, etc.?

Feeling the presence of God is religion of the spirit. Feeling is a sensory experience, like sensing the warmth of the sun. Feeling the presence of God is an experience of the spiritual senses. It is very much like the subtle feeling of joy when you are in the company of a friend.

We are experiential beings. Effective experience gathering is fully involved in the present much more than it is involved with yesterday or tomorrow. If you are to grow by experience with God, it is essential that you exercise your will to put his will into action. Merely thinking about what God is like and what God wants is mental, and that usually isn't quite experiential.

Religion is only an exalted humanism until it is made divine by the

discovery of the reality of the presence of God in personal experience. (2084:1/195.10.1)

This statement points out dramatically the essential importance of feeling God's presence in personal experience. Feeling the presence of God is the essence of genuine religion. But the big news is that you can experience the reality of the presence of God. That is what Jesus' religion is about. That is the real gospel which he taught and preached—and it is just as true today as then.

To the Epicurean teacher he said: "You do well to choose the best and esteem the good, but are you wise when you fail to discern the greater things of mortal life which are embodied in the spirit realms derived from the realization of the presence of God in the human heart?" The great thing in all human experience is the realization of knowing the God whose spirit lives within you. . . ." (1474:5/133.4.5)

Jesus called this experience of God the great thing in all human experience. This suggests that nothing in our life here is greater than experiencing the presence of God. Knowing the God who lives within you is different from and more personal and real than knowing the fact that he lives within you. Knowing him is different from knowing all the facts there are to know about him. Jesus described experiencing the presence of God within as the way to the greater things of mortal life embodied in the spirit realms and Jesus was entirely serious about the availability

of this experience to everyone and anyone who sincerely wants it.

Descriptive words of things beautiful cannot thrill like the sight thereof, neither can creedal words inspire men's souls like the experience of knowing the presence of God. (2083:4/195.9.8)

The experience of knowing God's presence will inspire our souls. Such an experience is contrasted here with formulated thoughts about God and religion ("creedal words"). Thinking and talking about the fact of God is interesting, but the level of inspiration from these for our souls is much less than what results from first-hand experience with God.

When you once begin to find God in your soul, presently you will begin to discover him in other men's souls and eventually in all the creatures and creations of a mighty universe. But what chance does the Father have to appear as a God of supreme loyalties and divine ideals in the souls of men who give little or no time to the thoughtful contemplation of such eternal realities? (1733:1/155.6.13)

This reference says to me that thoughtful contemplation of supreme loyalties and divine ideals is one way to enhance our ability to feel God's presence. Supreme loyalties include devotion to the one God, commitment to growth, dedication to doing God's will. Divine ideals include truth, beauty, goodness, love, mercy and sincerity.

The spiritual presence of Divinity must of necessity be differential in the universe. It is determined by the

See NOTES on page 17.



Potpourri

Promoting the UB in a Skeptical Climate*

By Paul Whitmoyer
Landisburg, Pennsylvania

My promotion of The URANTIA Book to a certain clergyman turned fruitless, mildly backfiring in that he investigated my qualifications and made public judgments of me. To handle my feelings I developed this fantasy. (The clergyman is the First Skeptic.)

Fantasy On Skeptics and Freedom to Grow

There are skeptics and there are skeptics, folks who habitually question assertions, mostly thoughtful folks.

Once three skeptics were approached to consider *The URANTIA Book* which deals with vast creation, evolution of this earth, and the history of both man and religious developments. It is "heavy stuff." A descriptive pamphlet was provided along with several reproduced pages reporting some words which Christ spoke.

The First Skeptic rejected examining the book, out of hand, never seeing it, refusing on a later occasion to look at an additional three-page article referring to the book. "My mind is made up; don't confront me with any new developments." The freedom to read and experience was rejected.

The Second Skeptic was resistant and cautious. "I want to see for myself. Where do I get a copy?" On seeing the size (over 2000 pages), he put off any examination. "My priorities keep me from an examination currently. Maybe someday." Someday did not arrive.

The Third Skeptic, on seeing the size of the book, gave it an initial brief

look-through. "This book may or may not be of value to me. I'm curious. I will find an early time for a serious and adequate evaluation. Then I will know for myself and decide." And he did just that.

There are skeptics and there are skeptics, folks who habitually question assertions, mostly thoughtful folks. Some judge by the initial promotion and reject; some reject by neglect; some discipline a fair examination before judgment.

Said the Third Skeptic: "I'm grateful I'm free to read whatever is available. May I never stop growing."

Lessons

From this experience, what did I learn?

(1) In my frustration to use the Serenity Prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can change, and the wisdom to know the one from the other."

(2) To be concerned for readiness. Jesus said, "Ganid, the man was not hungry for truth. He was not dissatisfied with himself. He was not ready to ask for help and the eyes of his mind were not open to receive light for the soul. That man was not ripe for the harvest of salvation; he must be allowed more time for the trials and difficulties of life to prepare him for the reception of wisdom and higher learning." (1466:2/132.7.2)

(3) To seek to be "wise as serpents and gentle as doves." Said Jesus, "In all the business of the kingdom I exhort you to show just judgment and keen wisdom. Present not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample your gems under foot and turn to rend you." (1572:5/140.3.18)

(4) In promoting *The URANTIA Book* I'm confronted with my need for progressive learning."

Let Us Join In Prayer*

"When a group engages in community prayer for moral enhancement and spiritual uplift, such devotions are reactive upon the individuals composing the group; they are all made better because of participation . . . Confession, repentance, and prayer have led individuals, cities, nations, and whole races to mighty efforts of reform and courageous deeds of valorous achievement." (999:5/91.5.2)

We invite you to join us for the next few months to pray daily or weekly, as you prefer, on the following topic. (We would be happy to have your suggestions for future topics.)

PRAYER

Let us pray that each day we become more and more able to feel our Father's presence—in our lives and in ourselves, that each day more and more of our fellows find their way to this intimate and important relationship.

WALK from page 3.

thereof," and that "Jesus is the Light of the world," one can begin to walk in the hills with greater faith, less fear, and with great anticipation and joy. It is at that point when the presence of God is most discernable. In a spirit of Joy and faith, one discovers greater joy and greater faith. They are like muscles, which thrive when exercised and atrophy when not used. Hence the law of the spirit: to him that has, more will be added.

By walking in that spirit, one begins to perceive the miracle of creation, and to do so in the light of the awareness that it is not only a thing of the past, hidden in the layers of rock and the shapes of living creatures, but that it is ever active in the eternal now. And, perhaps even more miraculous, one sees that he or she is invited to participate in this process of creation. And how does one go about that? My response would have to focus on growth and development, and there is, perhaps, no better way to do that than to walk and talk with God.

My own experience leads me to believe that the presence of God is best experienced after a period of exertion or struggle. If you meet a challenge, overcome a fear, subdue a discomfort, then, I think, you are more inclined to be activating your higher mind; subsequently, you are more able to discern God's whispers. We, as readers of *The URANTIA Book*, can speak of Mystery Monitors, angels, and midwayers, but my own subjective description would clearly have to eliminate most or all references to "in here," meaning a sense that the Thought Adjuster was speaking to my mind, or "out there," meaning that I sensed God in the external environment. What I am saying is that I could never discern a distinct or definitive sense of *inside or outside* myself, but always *inside and outside*. Something was happening which transcended the duality of subjective experience and the inner and outer realities were in total concert—a unity.

For me then the net effect of a

Tidbits

Happiness is a by-product of an effort to make someone else happy.

Worry does not empty tomorrow of its trouble. It does empty today of its strength.

We can complain because the rose bushes have thorns or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses.

Blessed are those who can give without remembering, and take without forgetting.

INTERESTING QUOTE

“Applied to the female of the species, the word ‘different’ has, for centuries, been read to mean ‘inferior.’ At last, that is beginning to change. And in the end, of course, it’s not a question of better or worse. The obvious point—long lost in a miasma of ideology—is that each sex brings strengths and weaknesses that may check and balance the other; each is half of the human whole.” U.S. News and World Report, August 8, 1988

walk in the woods, when everything is working just right, amounts to a peek, a glimpse, a whisper of the divine mind. And when there's time to linger and really immerse myself, I can begin to hear the symphony, the "music of the spheres." Sometimes it can be more like a dialogue so that I might ask questions and the wind, the trees, the birds will work together to answer them or perhaps more often ask the more intriguing question! I might describe such a walk as a community affair, since I often have the sensation that the animate and inanimate creations are as aware of me as I am of them! "The rocks themselves will sing." It seems the perfect place for prayerful reflection.

What I speak of here would presumably be experienced differently for each individual. I have the slightest inkling that I have seen the work

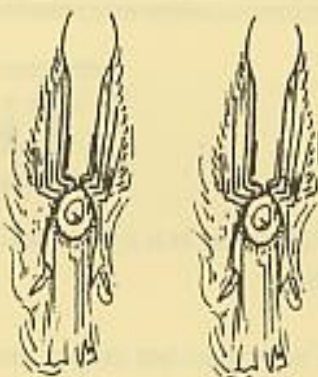
of the Thought Adjuster and perhaps other spirit creatures as well. But as we are reminded, prayer, for the mortal human, is apt to be more like a dialogue with the alter ego, and may well be indistinguishable from the individual consciousness of the person involved. So seek your own experience of God and expect the best for you. As for me, I think of Jesus' frequent walks in the woods, and I imagine how that must have been for him... and I long to meet him there. "

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See back cover**

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." (419:1/38.2.1)

We know that our guardian angels influence us in every possible way without violating the prerogatives of our personality and do their work within our environment to promote circle-making decisions. In certain emergencies they have the power to carry out the orders of their superiors. The following story could be an illustration of how they go about their duties.

Not Yet the Appointed Hour

At the end of May, 1981, my family buried my mother who had suffered severely from cancer of the pancreas for seven months. I don't remember many tears being shed by anyone in the family, as we were almost glad that death had finally delivered her from her terrible suffering.

In a few days I went back to San Antonio to my job. At my mother's funeral I was cheerful, almost happy, but on returning to San Antonio I became irritable, despondent and depressed. I began taking more and more sleep medication. The center of

my universe had crumbled; there was no home to go back to and no parents. I was alone, single, divorced, no children—no close ties. I felt completely alone and alienated from everyone. Even the drugs stopped working.

One night I must have taken too many pills. It was around July 3, 1981. I could remember nothing from then until I woke up in the hospital on July 16. I had missed some appointments, parties, etc. People started looking for me. They were afraid that someone might have killed me since I was working as an undercover investigator. Eventually, on the night of July 16, 1981, my brother and a policeman friend of mine forced their way into my apartment and found me unconscious and nearly dead. I was rushed to Baptist Hospital where I stayed until August 23. I nearly died. The doctors did not know how long I had been unconscious. Some said two days, others said six, but they all agreed that it would be a miracle if I lived. Somehow I got through that first week of hell and insanity and began to recover.

By the summer of 1984 I had

again become addicted to sleeping pills. Without a job I drifted around a lot, always alone and wound up in Alpine, Texas by the summer of 1985. While in Alpine I had a very unusual experience. I took lots of long walks that summer because I loved being out of doors. One Sunday afternoon during August I had returned from a long, hot walk, and sat down in my recliner to rest. I was just sitting there not thinking of anything, just being glad to rest, when I began to receive a message. This was not a voice, or handwriting on the wall, but seemed to come from deep inside—a welling up, so to speak. The main message was, "You are not depressed because of your mother's death but are grieving because of the long suffering she endured." The message continued: "In San Antonio when you were dying, the Heavenly Messengers came to God and said, 'Lord, Gilbert Moody is dying,' and God said, 'Tell the angels it is not yet his appointed hour, and that they are to minister unto him until he is found by his kind.'" I sat and cried for an hour, relishing the bitter-sweet pain of the moment. I was found by my kind and later learned that there were many people and entire churches praying for me.

I am not prone to receive such messages, this clearly being my first significant one, and I was fifty years old. It was so vivid and powerful to me that I wrote it down that afternoon, although I didn't tell anyone about it for a long time, and then only a very

select few. Even now I tend to get very emotional when I try to talk about it and am close to tears.

My life did not turn around at that point, nor did I stop using drugs, but the message gave me something to cling to when I lost everything (material) and ended up in treatment three times in 1986-87. It gave me something to cherish for the remainder of my life—a once-in-a-lifetime experience. And I am now more aware and sensitive to other people and their needs.

Gil Moody
Dallas, Texas

NOTES from page 13.

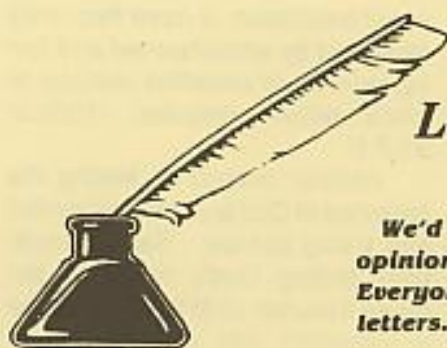
spiritual capacity of receptivity and by the degree of the consecration of the creature's will to the doing of the divine will. (64:4/5.2.1)

Especially important among those supreme loyalties and divine ideals is consecration of the creature's will to the doing of the divine will. We may all be temples of God, but our perception of him will be influenced by this dedication to his will.

Spiritual capacity of receptivity may seem to be somewhat determined by genetic factors and circumstances, but in fact prayer enhances spiritual capacity of receptivity (2065:8/194.3.20). To pray and enhance receptivity or not pray and live with one's undeveloped natural receptivity is a creature choice. Consecration of our creature will to the doing of the divine will is also a creature choice. So these two deter-

**Got an idea
for an article?**

The back cover tells about our next theme, but we are happy to have articles on other topics too.



Letters to the Editor

We'd like to hear your opinion too. Write to us. Everyone enjoys reader's letters.

June 1, 1988

Dear Editors:

I applaud the call in your Spring/Summer 1988 issue for readers to join the Pentagon Meditation Club in praying for our enemies, but I am disturbed that you chose to put the word "enemies" in quotation marks.

Enemies are real. Jesus often spoke of his enemies. The entry "Enemies" under "Jesus" in the Concordex has about 60 references. Moreover, Jesus "did not look with approval upon the refusal to employ force to protect the majority of any given human group

against the unfair and enslaving practices of unjust minorities. . . " (page 1891) One sober look at the world today will reveal unjust minorities enslaving many and plotting to enslave more. May I mention Poland as but one case in point.

The United States, the most progressive society on Urantia in realizing the ideals of liberty and statehood set forth in The URANTIA Book, most certainly has enemies. It is our duty to defend ourselves against them, even while we pray for them.

Sincerely,
Daniel Love Glazer
Chicago, Illinois

miners of the spiritual presence of divinity are both controlled by our individual wills. Such immense power God grants us—the power to choose to turn up the Deity volume in our lives!

The divine presence cannot, however, be discovered anywhere in nature or even in the lives of God-knowing mortals so fully and so certainly as in your attempted communion with the indwelling Mystery Monitor, the Paradise Thought Adjuster. (64:6/5.2.3)

In our desire to feel God's presence we may seek to be inspired by nature or other God-knowing mortals but it is attempted communion with our Thought Adjuster that is most useful. No doubt we find inspiration in nature and other God-knowing mortals *because* we have felt God's presence within us.

The promise in this reference should be very encouraging. The

promise is that *attempted* communion with our Adjuster will fully and certainly lead to our discovery of the divine presence. Communion is the best way and the certain way to experience the presence of God. So, shouldn't we figure out what communion with the Thought Adjuster is and get on with attempting it?

The secret of his [Jesus] unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship—unbroken communion with God—and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices. (2089:0/196.0.10)

It is a relief to know that consciousness of the presence of God is available to us through the ordinary avenues of prayer and worship, that nothing strange or foreign is required. Unbroken communion is

See NOTES on page 18.

**Remember:
send us any change of
address to
avoid missing issues of
The Circles**

simply consistent awareness of your friend God—as you would be aware of any other friend. It includes two-way communication, personal rapport, mutual enjoyment of each other, the requesting of counsel and advice, confiding honesty and sincerity, etc.

Every human being very early experiences something of a conflict between his self-seeking and his altruistic impulses, and many times the first experience of God-consciousness may be attained as the result of seeking for superhuman help in the task of resolving such moral conflicts. (1131:3/103.2.4)

This comment suggests that our experiences with the presence of God go far back into our youth. It also points out the value of inner conflicts—if through prayer we seek superhuman help to resolve them. It is curious that God-consciousness may be the result of seeking for superhuman help, not getting it, just seeking it and that it is discoverable through *attempted* communion. God must be very appreciative of motives and efforts since he doesn't demand that we figure out the correct way to reach him. He *guarantees* the eventual success of our efforts to know him. We *will* be successful even if we fail to recognize it at the moment.

Mysticism, as the technique of the cultivation of the consciousness of the presence of God, is altogether praiseworthy, but when such practices lead to social isolation and culminate in religious fanaticism, they are all but reprehensible. Altogether too frequently that which the overwrought mystic evaluates as divine inspiration is the uprisings of his own deep mind. The contact of the mortal mind with its indwelling Adjuster, while often favored by de-

voted meditation, is more frequently facilitated by wholehearted and loving service in unselfish ministry to one's fellow creatures. (1000:2/91.7.1)

Another avenue to feeling the presence of God is our wholehearted and loving service. Service facilitates feeling God's presence because it causes us to be more like he is—unselfish and unself-centered. And it is by becoming like God that we find him and understand him.

"Wholehearted," "loving" and "unselfish" are stringent and intimidating standards for many of us. But they aren't really such impossibly high standards. "Wholehearted" means undertaken with sincerity and energy. "Loving" means done with affectionate concern for the other persons involved. "Unselfish" means generous, not out of self interest. "Service" is work done for others. The world needs business people, politicians, policemen, accountants, etc. who practice their service energetically and sincerely for the welfare of all concerned. Unselfishness and generosity do not require exploitation of self, family and associates. But

they do require unselfish giving of self to help others help themselves.

Religious habits of thinking and acting are contributory to the economy of spiritual growth. One can develop religious predispositions toward favorable reaction to spiritual stimuli, a sort of conditioned spiritual reflex. Habits which favor religious growth embrace. . . living as in the presence of God. (1095:3/100.1.8)

The temptation in attempting to live as in the presence of God might be to put on a false front—to be on one's best behavior. The real point here goes much beyond good behavior. Living as in the presence of God means maintaining an awareness of our Father, having enough faith to treat God as a real and constant associate in all our activities.

Talk to him; confer with him; ask for help and guidance; expect to receive it; listen and watch for it. Tell him your sincerest thoughts. He is your best friend and he loves you in spite of every weakness. He will listen and redirect, uplift your thoughts and actions, so subtly that you may not know he had a hand in it—you'll think you did it.◀

SOURCES OF MATERIALS

The URANTIA Book	\$22.00
Asoka Foundation P.O. Box 82009 Oklahoma City, OK 73148	
Concordex	\$10.00
Concordex/URANTIA Book set	\$27.50
Center for URANTIA Book Synergy P.O. Box 3915 Santa Barbara, CA 93130	
Case of 5 Concordexes	\$40.00
Paramony	\$10.95
Case of 5 Paramonies	\$40.00
The Jesusonian Foundation 620 12th Street Boulder, CO 80302	

Things to Share

THE SPIRITUAL LIVING PAMPHLETS

The Spiritual Living Pamphlets are designed to enrich people's lives by sharing experience inspired in the writers' lives by contact with *The URANTIA Book*. Each one (whether a reprint of a *Circles* article or new material) is appropriate to share with friends and family who might not be interested in *The URANTIA Book*, since any references to the book have been removed.

Cost

The cost of publishing and mailing each pamphlet is approximately \$.75 for single copies, \$.50 each for five copies or more (any combination of titles). Anyone who is unable to help us with the cost is, as always, most welcome to have them free. We appreciate the assistance of anyone who can send extra to help cover the cost of the free copies. In each issue we will list the pamphlets still available as well as new publications. (Pamphlets are 7 by 8 1/2 inches.)

Pamphlets Still Available

Achieving Forgiveness suggests a step-by-step method for forgiving the injuries and insults of life. By Kaye Cooper

Action stresses the importance of overcoming hesitations in order to take action. It gives some hints for getting started. By Adrienne Jarnigan and Gene Joyce.

Asking for the Mind of Jesus describes a very effective way to cope when you have exhausted all of your own resources. By Jonathan Johnson.

Faith in God clarifies the rather abstract concept of faith and offers methods of exercis-

ing and strengthening your personal faith. By Kaye Cooper

Forgiving God explores the somewhat startling idea that you may have hidden resentments against God and provides very usable exercises to dissolve those resentments. By Billie Cooper

God's in the Shower provides a delightful insight into those times when it seems that God just is not listening. By Joanna Cassetti.

Group Decision Making introduces a God-centered way to function together effectively in small groups. By Kaye Cooper.

Living the Spiritual Life explores your individual relationship with God and the effects it can have in your daily life. By Kaye and Bill Cooper.

Communicating Feelings describes a successful way to enhance the marriage relationship through the honest and loving sharing of each partner's feelings. By Tommie Clendenning.

Friendship in Marriage discusses techniques essential for a mature and successful marriage. By Kaye Cooper.

Contact:

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Special Financial Needs

The Circles has need of extra funds to purchase additional equipment. If you are able to give a little extra at this time, it would be appreciated.

Thanks

The Power of Prayer

Genuine prayer adds to spiritual growth, modifies attitudes, and yields that satisfaction which comes from communion with divinity. . . . It is the most potent spiritual growth stimulus. (1002:2-3/91.8.11)

Prayer possesses amazing spiritual power. It is a marvelous storehouse of experiences awaiting our interest, as well. Let's explore together the Power of Prayer. This will be the theme for The Circles Spring/Summer 1989 issue. Thought stimulators:

What are the benefits of prayer?

Why is it important that our prayers be unselfish?

Sincere? Non-materialistic? Persistent? Believing?

Intelligent? Trustful? Fair?

Why does prayer increase our spiritual receptivity?

What effects do our prayers for others have on them? On us?

How does prayer relate to healing?

What is the "subconscious reservoir of mortal experience." (997:3/91.3.5)

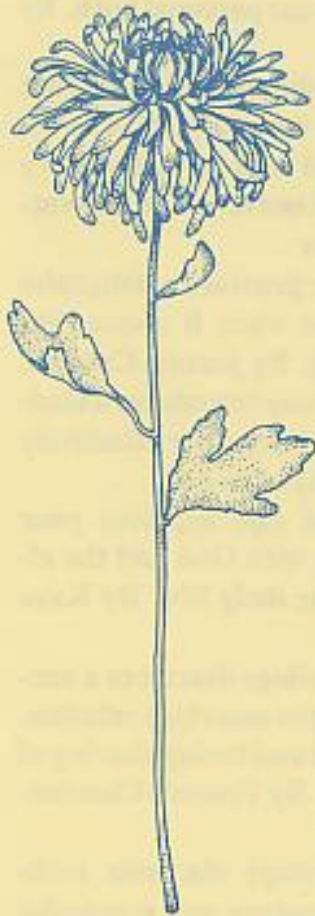
What are your experiences of prayer?

Send your articles, poetry and artwork by December 15, 1988 to:

The Dallas Fellowship, Inc.

P.O. Box 1203

Arlington, Texas 76004-1203



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