

The Circles

Sharing the Inner Life with God

Vol. XIV, No. 1-2 CONTENTS Spring/Sum., 1991



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Worship

It has been my great pleasure and privilege over the last few years to share my inner life with God more and more frequently. My experience has convinced me that doing the will of God is quite *literally* sharing the inner life with God. He is living here inside us. He wants our companionship and attention. He wants to be an active partner in our lives.

While reading an article written by the parent of an autistic child recently, I was struck by the pain she felt because the child would not respond to her cuddling or her attempts to communicate. The child was in an isolated world of her own, and her parents *yearned* to see her respond, learn and grow. Our Heavenly Father wants these things for us. At times we must surely seem to be spiritually autistic!

WORSHIP IS SHARING

At first a great deal of the time I spent with God was spent in prayer. But the more I have come to share my inner life with God, the more I have become involved in worship.

Worship begins as a giving—giving our thanksgiving, our affection, our devotion, our adoration. But worship also involves receiving as well. The experience of worship is one of dropping all inner barriers to our Father. We become spiritually vulnerable, unprotected and trusting. In worship we allow God to come

By Kaye Cooper

closer to "the real us" than anyone else has ever come. His presence fills us, gently invading every inner space. We are truly sharing our inner lives.

What happens in those moments when our spirit mingles with that of our Creator? We are filled with increased enthusiasm. We feel more willing to tackle life's challenges, more eager to learn and experience. We find our confidence strengthened. We feel reassured about the world, God's plan, and our place in it. We discover new aspirations welling up within us. New spiritual goals are illuminated in our minds; goodness becomes more attractive to us, service more alluring.

These and many other changes are likely to occur as we join our Father in celebration of our love for each other. And these changes filter through into everyday life. Oh, not all at once and not with such continued vividness as during the worship experience itself. But little by little, over time, as we spend time in worship, these transformations become visible. Like a photograph developing in slow motion, we become in everyday life what we are in worship. And our lives begin to become what they were meant to be!

WORSHIPPING WITH OTHERS

I love to worship with kindred spirits. I am very fortunate to have

friends who also cherish group worship. There is a sense of sharing God's presence together that brings its own gift to group worship. Sometimes the strength of God's presence in the room when we are worshipping is overwhelming, virtually tangible.

I would like to share some of the techniques that I have observed to be effective in facilitating group worship. In our spiritual support groups we use the pattern suggested in *The Urantia Book* of beginning with prayer and then allowing thanksgiving to lift us into worship. We begin with a round of prayer requests, then we share with each other the things we are thankful for. Finally, we spend quiet time in worship. The prayer and thanksgiving prepares us very well for worship. The order (first prayer, then thanksgiving, then worship) is a very effective one. There is a perceptible lightening of the atmosphere which progresses as the thanksgiving continues. Worship is the culmination.

Another initiator of worship is the sharing of our spiritual goals and aspirations. The "Adventures in Spiritual Living" team meets about every three weeks to work on spiritual exercises and plan for our retreats. We always begin our sessions with a centering time and worship. At various times different ones

See WORSHIP on page 6.

Houston, Texas





Sharing Through Communication

Sharing our inner lives is an intensely personal activity. We each have our own ideas of what constitutes the inner life and how that may be shared. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you how I learned to share my inner life with my Father and with my unseen friends.

I attended a regional conference for readers of *The Urantia Book* about two years ago. One of the highlights of the program was an exercise called "Letter to God." The instructions for this exercise included a relaxation technique, a conscious opening up to superconscious ideas and feelings, and a directive to let the ideas flow without censure or self-consciousness. We were then instructed to write a letter to our Heavenly Father telling him how we felt about having him for a friend. That was a pretty revolutionary idea to me, but I participated. Imagine my surprise when the next part of the exercise called for us to write an answer from God himself. We were instructed to let the words flow, trying not to control the outcome. The results were amazing.

After the exercise we were given the opportunity to share our "letters" with the group. Many did so. It was a very emotional experience to hear the letters from so many individuals. They were all different, yet they had elements in common. Each expressed unqualified love and acceptance for that person from his Father. It was very moving.

I was very pleased at having been told that I was loved. Just that knowledge was enough to keep me

By *Kate Gentry*
Dallas, Texas

going for several months. Then I decided to write another letter in which I poured out my needs. I was rewarded with an immediate peace born of knowing that my needs would be met, that my problems would be solved. They eventually were, but the important thing was that I had the peace of mind for which I had been searching. I began to write more often, pausing after each letter to allow the "unseen powers" to reply.

Gradually this became an activity that I looked forward to several times a week. It has grown into a vital part of my life and has produced so much joy, so much peace, that I cannot imagine being without it again. I write in a notebook which I call my prayer journal. I have several volumes of these journals now. Each entry is dated so that I may look back over time and see prayer requests that have been answered, concerns that have been relieved, and patterns of growth. That is imminently satisfying, but the greatest of the benefits is the greater awareness of the nature of God, the increased ability to perceive his leading, and the feeling of his presence which never leaves me.

Because of this journal and the special times of sharing that its writing has produced, I have been able to identify with my evolving soul, to step back from my material identity and realize more of my spiritual potential. My writing has opened an avenue of communication with my unseen friends, with the Spirit of Truth, with the Father himself. I won't pretend

that I know where these "messages" come from. I won't claim to be in Adjuster contact. I will tell you that I don't care what the source is so long as the information brings the comfort and the peace it brings.

I was privileged for a few months to work with the "Adventures in Spiritual Living" team. During the programs we conducted, I was witness to dozens of emotion-charged experiences in which people were given a glimpse of the love we are all heir to. Seeing these people open themselves to sharing their inner lives and receiving the unconditional love of our Father was, and is, one of the greatest thrills of my life. I believe it is something we should all try.

We are material beings, evolutionary creatures on a planet of time and space. During this material lifetime we are allowed to experience a unique existence. When the material

See *SHARING* on page 11.

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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.



Goodbye to Contracts

By Harry Hebert
W. Monroe, Louisiana

My mother never gave me a contract. She gave me birthday cards, Christmas cards and later, Happy Anniversary cards, each containing an expression of her love for me, ... but never a contract. I do recall that throughout my lifetime she would tell me that she loved me, and that she always would. That is the nearest to a contract I received. Never did she equip me with a signed document listing in detail possible acts of performance which could be enforced in a contractual manner. My children have never received more from me, yet they are content that the stability of my love for them will always be sufficient. As simple as this is, I confess that for three entire readings of *The Urantia Book* as well as for a lifetime of *Bible* reading, I have been searching for contractual provisions which could be relied upon as I exercise my faith. It was an error for me to do so.

Men took the old writings of the Jews and the later Christian writings and bound them together, electing to call them Old Testament and New Testament respectively. Many interpret this to mean Old Contract (or covenant) and New Contract. I reacted incorrectly to all of this. Properly understood, such writings were accounts of God's expressions of love and promises to love and sustain spiritually.

As I read *The Urantia Book*, I always had my pen ready to make note of promises which could be relied upon for my material well being

and prosperity in this lifetime. My open pen went dry from lack of usage. Although Jesus urged his disciples to trust in the great and wonderful promises of God, the ones he referenced always had to do with the security of the believer in spiritual and eternal matters. In no instance could I find suggestions that one's spiritual growth could result in material prosperity, guaranteed good health, freedom from the accidents of time, or anything of the sort. His kingdom is spiritual, and the promises have to do with spiritual issues. I wanted my faith to be honored in removing mountains of material difficulty so that the difficulty and uncertainty would no longer be there. Alas, the promise given regarding material difficulty wasn't what I wanted. We read in *The Urantia Book*, "Genuine faith will remove mountains of material difficulty which may chance to lie in the path of soul expansion and spiritual progress." (1619:4/144.2.6) My reaction was pathetic. I was disgusted. I wanted a calm state of mind, and sure...I wanted spiritual growth and so on, but what about my bills? Where were the promises which could be relied upon for perfect health and trauma-free finances?

Finally, it dawned upon me that neither the *Bible* nor *The Urantia Book* is to be used as a contract with provisions for trauma-free living. Life will have its vicissitudes whether I like it or not, and the issue is really my reactions to them. I was forced to follow the advice of Jesus: "In the

coming kingdom, be not mindful of those things which foster your anxiety but rather at all times concern yourself *only* with doing the will of the Father who is in heaven." (1525:3/137.1.6 emphasis mine) I left the lifetime habit of worrying about money and health reluctantly. I resembled the prisoner who feared freedom. I was being called upon to abandon easily 50 percent of my thinking patterns and conversations. I took some comfort in the statement, "Those who first seek to enter the kingdom, thus beginning to strive for a nobility of character like that of my Father, shall presently possess all else that is needful." (1536:5/137.8.8)

No doubt we all believe that we will always have what we *need*, but unfortunately, we *want* many things, including financial security, which do not fall into the category of what is *needful* for our spiritual growth. I was forced to acknowledge the truth of the statement, "Prayer may not be employed to avoid the delays of time or to transcend the handicaps of space. Prayer is not designed as a technique for aggrandizing self or for gaining unfair advantage over one's fellows." (1639:4/146.2.9) I was led to follow the admonition, "Be not constantly overanxious about your common needs. Be not apprehensive concerning the problems of your earthly existence, but in all these things by prayer and supplication, with the spirit of sincere thanksgiving, let your needs be spread out

before your Father who is in heaven." (1640:5/146.2.16)

Eventually I realized that instead of concerning myself with removing mountains of material difficulty, I should rather concern myself with being in the right frame of mind as I methodically chiseled away at the mountains. The following advice from *The Urantia Book* set me straight: "God-knowing individuals are not discouraged by misfortune or downcast by disappointment. Believers are immune to the depression consequent upon purely material upheavals; spirit lovers are not perturbed by the episodes of the material world. Candidates for eternal life are practitioners of an invigorating and constructive technique for meeting all of the vicissitudes and harassments of mortal living. Every day a true believer lives, he finds it *easy* to do the right thing." (1739:8/156.5.13) "Jesus gives peace to his fellow doers of the will of God but not on the order of the joys and satisfactions of this material world." (1954:4/181.1.7)

Why had I wanted wealth and perfect health? Was it not because I imagined that they brought a satisfied state of mind and satisfaction? I learned I could have a satisfied state of mind which was in no way related to either my wealth or health in the following statement, "The peace of Jesus is the joy and satisfaction of a God-knowing individual who has achieved the triumph of learning fully how to do the will of God while living the mortal life in the flesh. The peace of Jesus' mind was founded on an absolute human faith in the actuality of the divine Father's wise and sympathetic overcare." (1954:5/181.1.8)

I had no *contract* with my mother, and yet her providing for me in my youth would have been in complete compliance with even the most strict provisions imaginable. Never did I miss a meal. I always had proper clothing. My education was afforded me. I was *loved* and from that love came an unending desire on her part to contribute to my well being. Surely

our Father loves us no less than our earthly mothers and fathers. Indeed, all that they know of love they learned from him. So...I say "goodbye" to contracts, written promises, and such things. I shall be happy because I am loved by my Father in

heaven. My faith will be based not upon "It is written," but rather upon his love which I have experientially tasted and enjoyed thus far.

Goodbye, contracts... "Forms are valueless when lessons are learned." (554:6/48.6.32)«

In Him I Live

First God,
And then all else.
In him exists all that is,
Even me.
How can I have free will
When I am his?
Without him and his glorious creation
I would not be,
Not now, not before, not tomorrow,
.....not ever.
Yet, I can feel apart...
Alone.
Maybe separation is inherent in free will,
For that is free,
To be separate, apart.
Free as a bird on the wing.
Yet, the air of God's creation supports my wings.
Free as the wind and breeze.
Yet, God's natural laws consistently equalize
My surroundings and allow the earth to support my
life.
We are so inter-related.
In him I live and breathe and have my very existence.
He has always known my every thought.
What a shuddering thought!
Is what I think fit to share with God?

Even now after I've realized this,
My offerings of thought seem so meager.
My longings, though sincere, so timid.
My fleeting glimpses of inspiration, so dwarfed
compared to you,
My incredibly patient and loving Parent .

Tommie Clendening
Allen, Texas



The Voice Within

*He calls to me when I'm asleep
And speaks to me of things so deep*

*That when I wake,
I wonder...
Did I really hear him?*

*His voice is gentle and so restrained.
I can't be sure,*

*And yet...if I am very, very still
and listen with my heart
I can hear what he wishes to impart.*

*So let me listen, Father,
keep my light glowing*

*As toward Paradise I come
learning and growing.*

*By Kate Gentry
Dallas, Texas
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WORSHIP from page 2.

of us will focus the group's attention on what we are meeting to do. Hearing a beloved friend express the aspirations in his or her heart calls forth a response in one's own soul. The word that comes to mind is "inspiring." It is *inspiring* to hear someone put into words our shared desires. And worship follows easily within each of us in the form of heartfelt prayer, rededication, and confirmation.

Music is another technique which is very fruitful for group worship. The members of our group are

constantly on the lookout for new pieces of music to share with each other. We prepare ourselves to listen by relaxing and establishing a meditative mood. We listen together, and then we share with each other our feelings and even our visual images when those are evoked by the music. Many times the sharing afterward is a worship experience in itself. And often one person's shared experience will enhance the rest of the group's experience the next time the music is played. Music is one of the most powerfully evocative techniques to encourage worship.

WORSHIPPING PRIVATELY

I love to worship privately also. It has become the great joy of my life to spend time in wordless and transcendent closeness with my Heavenly Father.

There are many times during the ordinary events of the day when my spirit rises to touch my Father, much as a young boy might look up at the mother above him with a smile of love and squeeze her hand, much as the young girl might rush by on her way elsewhere and stop to give her daddy a quick hug. Those times hold great meaning and joy for me, but the experiences of depth are those when I sit down in private to spend time with my Father.

I find that several small details make worship easier for me to initiate. One is the feeling of having enough time. When I feel rushed, it is so much harder for me to relax and give all my attention to my Father. It is much the same in any human relationship—feeling that you have plenty of time for your friend allows greater intimacy and a deeper relationship. The habit of being in the same place at about the same time each day for my worship time tends to send signals to my mind to prepare itself for worship. We get conditioned spiritually by the habit. Simply the repetition of worship has its own effect on our ability to rise easily into the experience of worship. The more we pray and worship, the easier it is to do both.

One of the things which I commonly do in my quiet time is very conducive to worship. That is giving thanks in my prayer journal. Thanksgiving is another spiritual habit I have purposefully established and nurtured. Over the years I have deliberately searched for things to give thanks for. As a result, I have progressively found myself more and more able to recognize the good in my life—even when it does not at first look like good! Over the six years or so that I have kept a prayer journal, the quantity of thanksgiving ex-

See WORSHIP on page 19.

A Shared Experience

By Albert Bailey
Sacramento, California

We come more and more to realize that God is our inner life, its source and destiny. However, all too often does the biochemistry of the seemingly separate physical temporal state succeed in keeping the attention preoccupied with the many things which pertain to the transient mortal sojourn. Still, the continuing spiritual ministry ever lifts and broadens our thinking, expanding it so as to include the source of the inner relationship which is effected by that selfsame spirit.

Wonderfully, however, we do not have to attempt this inner awareness alone, as though it is another "do it yourself" project or task; for the inner life is a jointly bestowed facet of existence—or more correctly an integral part of the mutually shared life. Even as the word "God" in scripture is often in the plural form (Elohim), so is our Father further manifest in plural form in the Father Fragments which indwell all rational persons on this and numerous other spheres. Thus as we become genuine friends with such indwelt persons, we are also becoming more aware of his presence as it is so spread abroad in others.

As we become ever more mindful that we are in continual association with the Deity in all others—whether they themselves are so aware or not—we find that the very presence of others can be a reminder of our Father. We relate to others accordingly in work or play or in more

quiet contemplations upon the transcendent character and actual nature of our Father. A handshake, a loving embrace, even a gentle touch can share our inner life in God with others, as can making and distributing sandwiches or fruit to someone feeling abandoned and bereft of friends. Especially at holiday times we all have opportunities for this kind of inner life sharing. The inner life we are ever sharing with God becomes so much more real and practically meaningful as we, during the course of reaching upward and inward, also reach outward to others where the love of God also resides and will be appreciatively returned.

Michael, when among us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, demonstrated that the realization of God in his fullness is a shared experience, as when in Gethsemane he prayed: "...all things which are mine are ever yours, and all which was yours you have caused to be mine. You have been exalted in me, and I now pray that I may be honored in these men." (1964:1/182.1.4) Thus did he verbally relate to us something of the inextricable relationships existing between Father and sons. However frequently we are prone to forget this, it continues as an ongoing fact. Our Father IS in all our relationships, and we can share in enhancing them by being more and more aware of this ever-ongoing fact. What a wonder-

ous privilege has been extended to us!

The more frequently we allow God's will to prevail in even the little things of our daily existence, we gradually but increasingly become aware of the continuing presence of spirit with us always. As we allow our perception of God to be broadened to the point of realization that God is "all things to all people"—whether realized by all people or not—the abiding presence becomes an ever more conscious part of our everyday experience and our relationships with all others.

What some may yet be unknowingly doing is illustrated by the following: *A very wealthy but generous farmer customarily held a harvest feast each year, inviting neighbors and friends and, of course, members of his immediate family. Various members of the family had been busily engaged in all the work leading up to the harvest celebration, some with the ploughing, others with sowing and cultivating, insect control, the gathering of the fruits of the harvest, and their artful preparation and arrangement at the festival itself. Some of the neighbors coming from a distant location did not know just who was holding the feast. Some inquired while others concerned themselves mainly with eating as much as they could. Some began to gather some of the produce into bags and boxes they had brought along so they could*

See SHARED on page 22.





The Activation of Will

By David Glass
Fort Worth, Texas

The first time I read about sharing the inner life with God, the very concept was inexact in my mind as to just what was meant by that phrase. God already knows everything, everything about us. How can we share something with God which he is not already experiencing? What can we reveal to him of which he is not already aware?

The answer which comes most readily to my mind is that he has not experienced *our choosing* to share our inner lives with him, consciously and deliberately—willfully and with faith. While God may already know every event as it happens in time, or even before it happens, that does not necessarily mean that we are sharing our own perceptions of reality as they develop in our inner lives with him. God has taken the first step in making it possible for man to commune and communicate with him by bestowing his spirit to dwell within man. But where there is no decision to share, there is no experiential coactivity.

The central element in sharing is the activation of will. Man must *will* to share his inner life with God in order for it to be a genuine, mutual, and two-way participation in the inner life. Without our will decisions, God does not impose his will upon us; he doesn't force his way into our inner lives. Man himself must exercise his God-given freedom of choice in inviting God into his mortal experiences, deliberations, plans, and the activities which are forthcoming from such

coordination with the Father.

There is something of a mystery about the functioning of the will of God as it relates to the free will choices of individual men and women. The fact that the personality of the individual is identified as the "seat of the will," coupled with the truth that personality is one of the unsolved mysteries of the universe, gives us a sense of the tremendous potential significance and cogency, as well as mystery, of the alignment of creature will with Creator will.

Sharing the inner life with God is an exclusively human choice. God has already revealed that he is totally ready to share, participate in, and co-act within each person's inward experiences and responses to his eternal life. How much of God's will, love, and other attributes can enter into the inner life of each individual is solely determined by that mortal's receptivity capacity, his personality and soul comprehension of God's Spirit as it surrounds and indwells his being—together with the sincerity and ardor with which that person wishes to have God interact in his life within.

A revelator tells us that the very experience of sharing the inner life with the Father itself expands the mind and the soul comprehension and receptivity capacity. Thus the two dynamics of sharing with God and experiencing the expansion of the awareness of God function as do the yin and yang in the perfect circle of wholeness—in an ever-increasing mutual stimulation. But this whole-

ness is not an equilibrium! It is a generator of spiritual energy in the interactions of the powers and wills of God and man.

Sharing the inner life is one of those very few things that we can do for the Father, everything else having been bestowed upon us initially. None else but God creates and continues to create man's capacity for a real inner spiritual life, and he accomplishes this through the activity of an Adjuster, a portion of his own infinity. A divine Counselor writes: "The affectionate dedication of the human will to the doing of the Father's will is man's choicest gift to God, in fact, such a consecration of creature will constitutes man's only possible gift of true value to the Paradise Father; and such decisions, effected by the intelligent will creatures of the universes, constitute the reality of that true worship which is so satisfying to the love-dominated nature of the Creator Father." (22:5/1.1.2) Here again we see the high value of the function of free will which is the earmark of universe citizenship. Arriving at that soul attitude—*It is my will that your will be done*—is certainly one of the crucial steps in the establishment of that God-shared inner life which leads ultimately to fusion and finaliterhood.

The Chief of the Urantia Midwayers has written: "[Prayer] is the most potent spiritual-growth stimulant." (1002:3/91.8.11) We have mentioned that the spiritual receptivity of the inner life is susceptible to expan-

sion and development relative to the wishes and authentic desire of the individual. Engaging in prayer, the most potent spiritual-growth stimulant, is directly and causally related to the enhancement of the inner life shared with God.

The Midwayer Commission wrote: "Prayer did not bring the spirit on the day of Pentecost, but it did have much to do with determining the capacity of receptivity which characterized the individual believers. Prayer does not move the divine heart to liberality of bestowal, but it does so often dig out larger and deeper channels wherein the divine bestowals may flow to the hearts and souls of those who thus remember to maintain unbroken communion with their Maker through sincere prayer and true worship." (2065:8/194.3.20) When we expand spirit receptivity, we create a larger arena wherein the inner life can develop and result in a fuller sense of the presence of God which is most directly perceivable by the interior spiritual senses.

The Father desires many things of and for his children, and sharing the inner awareness with him is one of the most desirable and beneficial interactions we can have with him. As a Divine Counselor expresses this idea: "The Father desires all his creatures to be in personal communion with him." (63:6/5.1.8)

On a practical and personal level, we can share everything with God continuously. We behold his universe plan unfolding on this planet and in our lives if our wills have been aligned with that of the Father. Of one thing we are certain: The Father's will will ultimately prevail and universally be accomplished. So why should we delay in making contact with and in pursuing the actualization of that will in our lives and on our world? Paul taught: "Pray without ceasing." In reference to the Master, the midwayers wrote: "The secret of his 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..." (2089:0/196.0.10)

We will receive suggestions as to the solution of life's rewarding challenges as our receptivity grows and as we share our consciousness with the directive Consciousness of the universe. We can play our part, and it is not lowly or insignificant. No one else in the wide universe can make the contribution to the maturation of our earth and our cosmic family that each of us is capable of, preparing for, and endowed to make. And that plan is more clearly discerned as sharing the inner life with God is developed and pursued.

One simple way of doubling, if not quadrupling, one's consciousness is by sharing it with God. It will not be continuous at first. As the day goes by, one can simply notice that one is not sharing his experiences and awareness with God. The Father desires personality partnership with each of us and the fulfillment of his-and-our unification of will and action. When noticing you are not consciously sharing the inner life with the Father you can, very gently, draw your consciousness toward the spirit within and the

Living with Our Cosmic Father

How often in reflection I advise

Myself: "Your Father God did make the skies.

*His velvet black he flung across the heavens
And organized the universe by sevens."*

The many types of beings blessed with life

*Throughout extensions seeming without end
Are cosmic citizens, reducing strife,
Discovering each person is a friend.*

Throughout the vast, dark kingdoms of the skies

*The never-ceasing pulse of perfect power
Sustains the universe, though no one spies
The Maker in creation who, each hour,*

Renews the cosmos. Spirit, love, and energy

*Are sweeping through the far-flung firmament,
Establishing new living entities,
Intending to make clear and eminent*

The many jewels of wisdom's timelessness

*Which we increasingly can understand,
True gems of thoughts revealed from spacelessness
From God's infinity beyond what stands.*

For more remains forever in God's mind

*To learn, to do, to give, to be, to share
Than we shall ever ultimately find—
While always are we in our Father's care.*

So let us live with boldness and conviction,

*Remembering, each moment, God-within,
While seeking to discover God's intentions,
Our Boundless Father and Eternal Friend.*

For many are the joys of endless service,

*As pre-existence breaks above the surface
Of all that shoreless sea of what could be
Throughout the Father's vast Infinity.*

David Glass

Fort Worth, Texas

Spirit of God everywhere and KNOW that God is looking through your eyes, monitoring and adjusting to your level of development, and broadly helping you to tune in to his overall plan for your unique existence and life. Why not try it? Universally, I feel that Jesus' by-line is probably one of the Father's: Be of good cheer. Share your life with me and we shall find increasing fulfillment one with the other. «



Whose Adventure Is This Anyway?

Who am I? Who is the "I" talking right now?

I can define myself as a child of God. Or a unique personality. Or an aggregate of parts—body, mind, spirit, personality, soul.

But which part is me, my contribution? Which part is not only a gift on loan from some other entity, a gift which would be returned to that entity if "I" failed of survival? What I want to know is what—which part—*would not exist* in the universe if "I" don't survive?

By process of elimination:

I am not my indwelling spirit, my Thought Adjuster. He is a gift of the Universal Father, bestowed when I make my first moral decision. If I fail of survival, my Thought Adjuster returns to Paradise. Our life experiences together become *his* possessions. In fact, he's come out to the worlds of time and space to participate in a great adventure. What I call "my" life is really *his* adventure! We humans don't even have names yet—we are often designated by our Adjuster's number.

I am not my mind. My mind is on loan from the Local Universe Mother Spirit. The seven Adjutant Mind-Spirits themselves are part of her consciousness. So, though I may use mind, I am not my mind. Also, I think anything part of a circuit cannot be a discreet entity, cannot be "me."

I am not my body. When I die, my body returns to the earth.

By Kristen Maaherra
Tucson, Arizona

I am not my personality. Personality, although unique, is a gift of the Universal Father, and is part of the Father's personality circuit. If I don't survive, my personality becomes a possession of the evolving God of time and space, the Supreme Being. I want to know what—if anything—in the whole universe *would not exist* if I fail to survive physical death. Personality just can't pass that test. My personality will survive with or without me.

Am I—even now, on this planet—my soul? The soul *feels* values—which means to me I can *experience* my soul whenever I see eye to eye with my Thought Adjuster about any particular subject or situation. But how can I be my soul when my soul is composed of my mind and my Thought Adjuster? Yes, soul is a third thing—not just the mind and the indwelling spirit. What is it that brings that third thing into existence?

The soul comes into being upon the first moral decision of the human. (And then the soul can make decisions of which the human mind is unaware!) The mind may be mother of the soul, and the spirit may be the father—but what makes the baby grow is will, human will. It is by "decisions, decisions, and more decisions" that the soul grows. Consider the Census Directors, con-

cerned with human beings only to the extent of recording the fact of will function.

This review of what "I" am and am not leads me to decide(?) that what I call "me" is my will.

This is parallel to an evolutionary planet being recognized as having evolved humans when mind attains will dignity. How else could we be evolutionary creatures but by *participating in our own creation*—and how could we participate but by *will*?

How can my free will be the *only gift* I can give to God if it were not the *only thing* in the universe I own? My free will does not continue anywhere in the universe if I don't survive.

I conclude that what "I" am, the "I" who is talking and the "I" that I will feel continuity with on the mansions worlds, is my will. It will always be by our decisions—our will—that we ascend in the universe. It will always be, "It is *my will* that your will be done."⁴

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See back cover.

SHARING from page 3.

life is over, the evolving immortal soul will carry this experiential life to the evolving Supreme. Sharing our inner lives not only allows us to understand this phenomenon, but allows us to actively cooperate with our Thought Adjusters.

Sharing the inner life helps you to focus on the cosmic viewpoint. It decreases anxiety by assuring you of eternal survival. It brings peace and joy into your life by bathing you in the constant love of our Father. It decreases your dependence on the material life and increases your feelings of brotherhood which leads to increased service opportunities.

I believe that the inner life is the creation of an immortal soul by the joint ministries of the Father-endowed personality and the Father Fragment. Sharing this life consists of active participation in the soul-growth: seeking out experiences which will enhance value appreciation, and living every day in your best interpretation of the Father's will for you. Learning how to actively participate is a slow process, but it is achievable. Some of the best tools for achieving this goal for me have been my prayer journal and my commitment to sharing my thoughts and feelings, my desires and accomplishments, my joys and my concerns with my Father on a regular basis.

My reward has been to discover the reality of my inner life and my ability to communicate with my higher self. This communication has led to the recognition of the illusion of the material world. Now that illusion has no power over me, I am free to fulfill my spirit potential. «

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

Are You There, God? It's Me, Carol

Lord, how do I talk to you?
I do not know the way;
I was sure my prayers must be beautiful
for him to hear what I had to say.

My words, I thought, should be eloquent.
They should flow with grace and ease;
So, much effort was given to delivery
to make sure my prayer would please.

In this futile effort to compose my thoughts
I grew tired and lost the way;
Could this be what he really wants?
Won't God hear what I have to say?

Then, one morning on the way to work
I dared give it a try;
A bold new way of talking to the Lord.
It began with a simple cry.

Are you there, God? It's me, Carol
and I need your help today;
Just the simple presence of your company
to help me on my way.

And so our daily chats began
Just as I would talk to any other;
No thought was given to which words to use;
Just friendly chats with my Father-Brother.

We soon became the best of friends
as I began to realize;
My life had become an adventure;
One that leads to Paradise.

Carol Weatherford
Spring, Texas

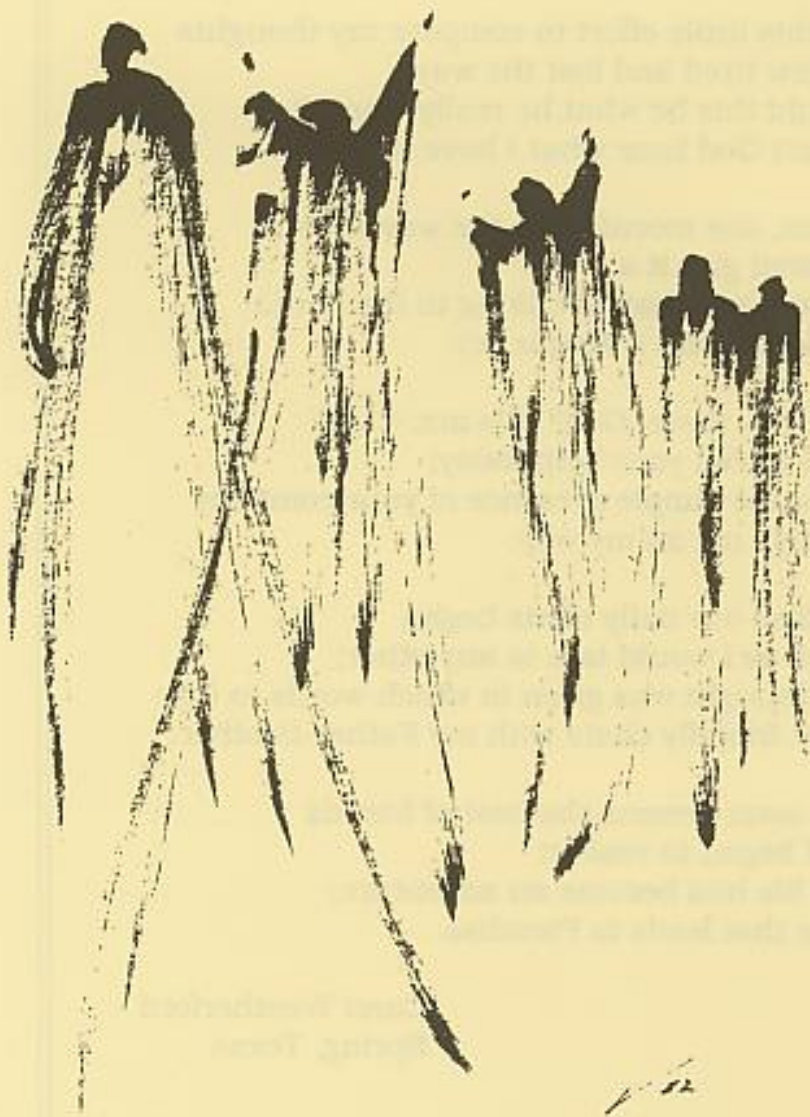
October 18-20
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Adventures
in
Spiritual
Living

A weekend retreat
October 18-20, 1991
Mo-Ranch
Conference Center
Hunt, Texas
(near San Antonio)

Techniques for
Spiritual
Growth

Including:
Seeing with God's Eyes
Prayer in the Moment
Listening from the Heart
Spiritual Support Group
Letters to God
Hot Pen Technique
Spiritual Power Tools



Dear Friends,

Our objective for this retreat is to provide a setting and the processes to stimulate each participant's spiritual life. We think you will find this retreat to be unique. We will be sharing our inner selves and our spiritual lives. Experience, more than discussion or study, will be the major approach.

Jesus taught and demonstrated an incomparable and seldom tried religion of establishing and maintaining a personal friendship with God. We believe the techniques for spiritual growth we will be using demonstrate methods for achieving a personal spiritual relationship with God. These are techniques for finding and living cooperatively with the will of God. We will be exploring how to ask for and interpret guidance, what types of things to ask for God's help on, what to expect as a response, how to build faith, how to discern God's presence in everything. We will also explore the joy, the fun of living the religion of Jesus.

Each activity has been tested by our planners as a group, and we have each experienced accelerated growth as a result of this spiritual adventure. In the two years since our first retreat at Mo-Ranch in 1989, this program has proved its worth to each successive group of participants. Those attending have enjoyed the rich satisfaction of intimate spiritual sharing. They have felt God's presence fill the room and minister to their hearts. Many have described their experience during the retreat as life changing.

We hope you will be able to be with us. Our faith in the effectiveness of God's ministering spirits leads us to expect that your spiritual growth will enjoy enrichment and acceleration through your participation in this retreat. Join us!

*Bill and Kaye Cooper
Ted and Sharon Lanier
Skip and Carol Weatherford*

Registration Deadline: August 1

Where: Mo-Ranch Conference Center
Hunt, Texas (near San Antonio, Texas)
When: Oct. 18-20, 1991. . . Check in after 4 PM,
Friday, Oct. 18; Check out 1 PM, Sunday, Oct. 20

.....
• **Deadline:** August 1, 1991 •

• All registrations and payments must be in by this date. •
.....

Cost: \$110 (hotel style, double occupancy) or
\$90 (bunkhouse) per person food, lodging and registration included.

This amount includes lodging for Friday and Saturday nights and all meals from Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch.

Our facilities are limited to adults only so no children this time, please.

Transportation from the San Antonio International Airport is available on a request basis only at a cost of approximately \$20 each way. Please indicate your need for this service on the Registration Form.

Write or call for a registration packet
(If there is no answer, please leave your evening/
weekend number on the answering machine):
**Carol and Skip Weatherford, P.O. Box 1058,
Spring, TX 77383, (713) 363-1652**

More to Come!

**Vancouver, British Columbia
May 8-10, 1992**

(See Things to Share in this issue.)

If you are interested in attending an ASL retreat but cannot come to this one, write us a note. We will let you know as future retreats are planned.



Sharing the Inner Life with God:

Study Notes

By Kaye and Bill Cooper
Houston, Texas

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

The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God—with the very God who has made such a creature life of inner meaning-value possible. (1221:2/111.5.1)

Sharing the inner life with God is central to our spiritual experience. We are all involved in a search for God's will for our lives. Sharing our inner lives with God is one thing guaranteed to be God's will for us.

The realization of the recognition of spiritual values is an experience which is superideational. There is no word in any human language which can be employed to designate this "sense," "feeling," "intuition," or "experience" which we have elected to call God-consciousness. (1130:5/103.1.6)

This statement gives us a basic and important clue to sharing our inner lives with God—when we are dealing consciously with values, we are involved with God.

There is no other technique [than prayer] whereby every man, regardless of all other mortal accomplishments, can so effectively and immediately approach the threshold of that realm wherein he can communicate with his Maker... (1000:1/91.6.7)

The first and most obvious way of sharing our inner lives with God is through prayer.

To him [Jesus] prayer was a sincere expression of spiritual attitude, a declaration of soul loyalty, a recital of personal devotion, an expression of thanksgiving, an avoidance of emotional tension, a prevention of conflict, an exaltation of intellect, an ennoblement of desire, a vindication of moral decision, an enrichment of thought, an invigoration of higher inclinations, a consecration of impulse, a clarification of viewpoint, a declaration of faith, a transcendental surrender of will, a sublime assertion of confidence, a revelation of courage, the proclamation of discovery, a confession of supreme devotion, the validation of consecration, a technique for the adjustment of difficulties, and the mighty mobilization of the combined soul powers to withstand all human tendencies toward selfishness, evil, and sin. He lived just such a life of prayerful consecration to the doing of his Father's will and ended his life triumphantly with just such a prayer. The secret of his 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)

One very effective way to en-

hance the quality of one's inner sharing through prayer is to study, discuss, and pray for understanding of this quote describing Jesus' prayer life. This passage is so wonderfully replete with meaning that study of it can expand our concept of prayer progressively over years of study.

The contact of the mortal mind with its indwelling Adjuster, while often favored by devoted meditation, is more frequently facilitated by wholehearted and loving service in unselfish ministry to one's fellow creatures. (1000:2/91.7.1)

Wholehearted, loving service is God's way of life and the inner life which accompanies such service (sympathetic listening, creative planning, affection, recognition of potentials as well as actuals, etc.) is a life which can easily be shared with God—if we seek to be spirit-led as we serve. By opening an inner channel to God as we try to help others, our Father becomes our active partner at that moment.

If you so fully conform to the Adjuster's mind that you see eye to eye, then your minds become one, and you receive the reinforcement of the Adjuster's mind. (1205:3/110.2.5)

Avoid missing issues:
send us your
change of address.

The more skillful we become at discerning wise and Godlike ways to serve our fellows, the more likely we are to be in harmony, at least momentarily, with our Adjuster's mind. The result is a reinforcement of our minds by that of the Adjuster. And I suspect that such an experience would be perceivable by us, to our great pleasure and satisfaction.

And indirectly and unrecognized the Adjuster is constantly communicating with the human subject, especially during those sublime experiences of the worshipful contact of mind with spirit in the superconsciousness. (1203:3/110.1.1)

If we are really interested in sharing our inner lives with God, then we will want to be sure to enjoy plenty of worship time. We are not able to perceive most of the communication with our Father which goes on during this time, but that communication has a powerful effect on us. The achievements of the Adjuster during worship gradually make changes in us. The aspects of worship that we are able to perceive can be a highlight of mortal life. Such an experience of our Father's presence satisfies deep longings within us.

Jesus taught his followers that, when they had made their prayers to the Father, they should remain for a time in silent receptivity to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul. The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in an attitude of true worship. (1641:1/146.2.17)

We tend to think of worship as a giving—giving of our devotion and adoration—but it is very important to realize that true worship also involves receiving. In worship we express our desire for his attributes, his ways, and his companionship by opening wide the inner door to ourselves and inviting him in. This is sharing our inner lives at great depth.

Supreme and self-acting Adjusters are often able to contribute factors of spiritual import to the human mind when it flows freely in the liber-

ated but controlled channels of creative imagination. At such times, and sometimes during sleep, the Adjuster is able to arrest the mental currents, to stay the flow, and then to divert the idea procession; and all this is done in order to effect deep spiritual transformations in the higher recesses of the superconsciousness. (1199:2/109.5.1)

This wonderful statement about the mind flowing freely in the liberated but controlled channels of creative imagination has been a favorite of mine for years. It has inspired me to strive for the delicate balance between liberation and control in my imagination. It also suggested to me the possibility of inviting God into my creative imagination. I do that by opening my inner channel to him as I use my imagination. This sharing of the creative imagination on the conscious level of mind produces articles, poetry, books, visualizations and so forth. Who knows what it does in the "higher recesses of the superconsciousness!"

Since this inner life of man is truly creative, there rests upon each person the responsibility of choosing as to whether this creativity shall be spontaneous and wholly haphazard or controlled, directed, and constructive. How can a creative imagination produce worthy children when the stage whereon it functions is already preoccupied by prejudice, hate, fears, resentments, revenge, and bigotries? ...freewill creativity embraces the potential of freewill destructivity. And when creativity is turned to destructivity, you are face to face with the devastation of evil and sin—oppression, war, and destruction. (1220:8 & 10/111.4.9 & 11)

I located several references to things which would work against sharing the inner life with God. The balance between liberation and control of the creative imagination is apparently important in this regard. A spontaneous and wholly haphazard creative imagination can cause destruction and evil. Sharing a balanced creative imagination with God

produces the optimum benefits.

The list of things detrimental to the creative imagination bears some reflective thought. All of those listed result in blockages within the person. They put up barriers to seeing our brothers as fellow children of the same loving Father. Even more minor habits such as resentments are a hazard.

All physical poisons greatly retard the efforts of the Adjuster to exalt the material mind, while the mental poisons of fear, anger, envy, jealousy, suspicion, and intolerance likewise tremendously interfere with the spiritual progress of the evolving soul. (1204:3/110.1.5)

Here we are warned against physical poisons. Since they failed to give examples, each person must decide for himself what a physical poison is. Surely anything which diminishes one's capacity to think clearly or prevents one's body from functioning optimally would be a physical poison.

We probably all recognize that envy, suspicion, intolerance, etc. would interfere with the sharing of our inner lives with God, but we may feel that we have no power to change such behavior. Given time, such thinking can be changed. Our desire to rise above this level of thinking is the beginning of deliverance from it.

The indwelling Adjusters are particularly tormented by those thoughts which are purely sordid and selfish; they are distressed by irreverence for that which is beautiful and divine, and they are virtually thwarted in their work by many of man's foolish animal fears and childish anxieties. (1193:1/108.6.2)

Here are yet more clues to help us sift out the elements of our inner lives that cut us off from God. It gives us a new perspective to see those concerns which to us are so overwhelming described here as "foolish animal fears and childish anxieties."

By reversing what is said here, we can see that sharing our inner lives with God is facilitated by uplifted

See NOTES on page 18.

Inventor Left High If Not Dry

By David Jaquith
Newberg, Oregon

I've told you about my next-door neighbor, Horace Himmelstrasse. The inventor. When he gets hold of an idea, he doesn't give up easily.

You heard about his steam-powered microwave oven. The first three experimental models exploded, each time knocking out transformers and rattling dishes all over town. PGE officials, Newberg Fire Department and White's Collectibles all had long talks with him.

The solar-powered microwave oven came next, but sadly, it is gathering dust in a corner of his garage. It seems that on a cloudy day it couldn't generate enough energy to make the bell ring or the LED clock light up.

Himmelstrasse decided to go back to his old standby, the hand-cranked microwave, Model X. To make the bell ring, you have to hit it with a tiny brass hammer. "But it's explosion-proof," he is quick to tell you.

Mrs. Himmelstrasse brought over a plate of biscuits she had "cooked" in the hand-cranked version. "I microwove 'em myself," she said proudly. "I'm going to microwove a big batch for the whole neighborhood." Microweave, Microwove, Microwoven. Right. Why not?

I went next door to see him. He was in his garage, working on a battery-operated laser beam bread slicer, using parts from an old 1949 oscilloscope and what was left of his controversial "Portable Self-Respect Recycling Machine."

You've got to admire the fellow. He is determined. "He's undauntable," his wife told us. "I've known him for 40 years and he refuses to daunt."

Who can forget his Hess Creek whitewater raft enterprise?

Newberg city officials and a few close friends had been invited to the headwaters of Hess Creek to witness the maiden voyage. I'll never forget the scene. There on the bank of the creek was Himmelstrasse with his raft, inflated and ready for its test run. Attached to the front end was what looked like a pair of giant egg-beaters. Revved up, they were supposed to whip the water into a foamy froth. "It means you can go whitewater rafting anywhere—even in a duck pond!" he announced proudly.

The earlier model, he told us, didn't work, as the eggbeaters made the raft go backward. "I solved that problem easily," he said with a flourish. "I direct your attention to the stem." There was a contraption I recognized as an old John Deere harvester reel, rigged up to a Briggs & Stratton engine. It was supposed to power the raft like a paddle wheel. Why do I think of Mark Twain and the Mississippi?

The raft had decals all over it. USHIO. A-DEC. CLIMAX. SMITTY'S TV REPAIR. DON'S STYLE SHOP. Himmelstrasse wore a basic black wetsuit made of old innertubes. Lots of patches. He climbed into the raft, did a check on all instruments and started the engine.

I'll spare the details, but I can tell you the front end was so heavy that the raft took a quick nose dive, pitching Himmelstrasse headfirst into the creek, with the reel mower at the back end whirring furiously a good six feet out of the water.

Owners of property on Hess Creek breathed covert sighs of relief

Lighten Up



when our intrepid inventor turned his fertile mind to other things.

Having a neighbor like Himmelstrasse is a challenge. You could say he's predictably unpredictable. His electrodes may not always be connected to the right capacitors, but he's got a spirit I like.

Most of us "normal" folks go through life marching to the beat of conformists' drums. Not Himmelstrasse. When I tried to talk to him about this, all he would say was, "I don't like to get set in other people's ways."

It got me thinking. Here is a rare soul, a person who is free to be himself. Not as a banner-waving crusader for individualism, or a champion of self-expression, but one who has found the secret of being at peace within himself. While the rest of us rush around trying to please or impress or bluff our way through life.

I learn from the Himmelstrasses. There is a childlike quality in their trust in goodness and their respect for others. Theirs is a friendly universe; each day is a treasure to be experienced, a gift to be shared.

"If you are hooked on misery," he says, "you just have to sweat out the good times." And Mrs. Himmelstrasse tells Mary, "Tomorrows are designed so our hopes will always have something to look forward to."

What If God Called!

By Tommie Clendening
Allen, Texas

All this looking at things from other viewpoints has really started me thinking. I've always been such a spiritually oriented person. Just waiting for God to speak to me, to give me my personal instructions as his special agent. I mean I used to meditate for hours, with special music, my own personal mantra and meditation mat. I tried all the latest techniques. Of course, that was before we had any kids. Now, with three, meditation is definitely a thing of the past!

You know this lack of quiet and solitude used to really bother me. What if God called and I had the phone on hold?!

Suddenly, one day as I was vacuuming, like a flash, it came to me: Maybe God's always been talking and I just haven't been listening. What if his voice is so subtle that it just kinda blends in with life around you? What a shock this thought was to one as spiritual as me!! Not me!! Who's always been so focused on attaining God's will! Could it be that the baby crying, or the nursery worker on the phone begging for volunteers could be his voice?.....Nahhh!!!

Boy, that was a scary thought! I'd better watch the state of mind vacuuming can trigger. Could it be residuals from all that LSD? I know my day will come to do GREAT things for the kingdom on earth. God probably just hasn't found the perfect assignment for me yet. I mean, look how high a son Lucifer is, and he's still waiting for the phone to ring!

You know this job of becoming spiritual is really hard, not to mention the total lack of self-gratification. Thankless, that's what I call it! I mean what does God expect, anyway? He puts us down here in this clumsy physical body and then expects us to

become spiritual?! In the midst of all this external stimulation—we're supposed to hear his still small voice? Right!! I'd say that's like talking to your teen-ager when he's got his headphones on!

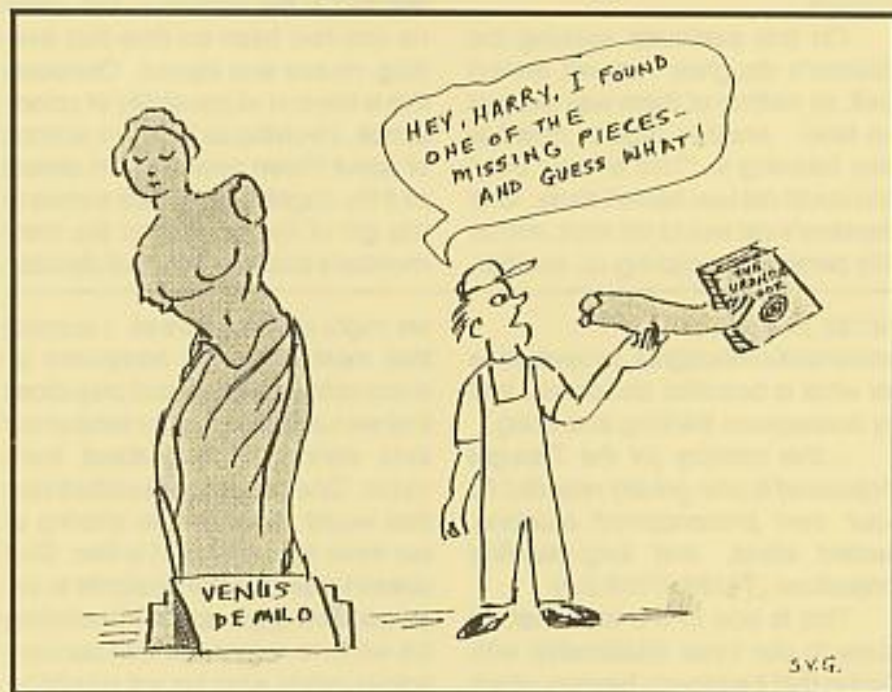
So finally he sends us a book. (Well, after what we did to the last son he sent, you didn't expect him to send another living example, did you? I mean would you volunteer for Urania duty? Yeah, well me neither.) So he sends us a book. A great book, right!! Well, that is as long as you have a vocabulary the size of Webster's latest edition.

Well, I've kept on reading and waiting—I mean *The Urantia Book* is still the best revelation I've found. It feels so right. There just must be some truth to it. And at least its followers don't require me to do anything wierd like burn incense that makes

me sneeze or wear a wierd hair cut or even go to meetings or pay large amounts of money regularly (well, unless I want to attend their conferences).

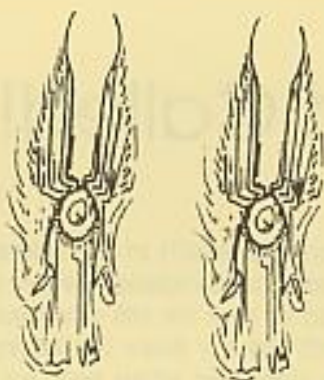
But my luck is always so bad. I can just see it now..... After my brief vacation on the first mansion world, I'll head for Mansion World #2. I can just see it. The day will come. I'll be wisked off toward my first glimpse of the sea of glass. I've always tried to imagine what it will look like and *feel* like to land on. Then as we prepare to land, we get a signal from the morontia ground crew that we're being diverted to an alternate destination. Because just a short while earlier, some angel miscalculated in the landing pattern and *broke* the sea of glass. I really have to wonder about the intelligence of giving lower creatures free will!!-

Putting It All Together



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 are told in *The Urantia Book* that seraphim "guard" us, and that it is possible, in cases of emergency, for their superiors to order them to actually intervene in the affairs of men. It is possible that the following story could be such an instance. It appeared on a recent TV program entitled "Unsolved Mysteries."

During the sixties in a small Southern town there was a youth choir with a very conscientious director. She had repeatedly instructed all the members of the choir, "If you are going to be late, don't come." There were usually about fifteen persons present.

On this particular evening the director's daughter was not feeling well, so neither of them was present on time. Another regular member was listening to "This is Your Life," and could not tear herself away. One member's car would not start, and as this person was picking up another,

two more were late. A sixth person was deep into working a geometry problem and chose to finish it. One was cooking and lost track of time. Another just felt lazy and could not get moving. The end result was that not a single person turned up on time for choir.

One member happened to be standing on her balcony looking toward the church at exactly the time when choir practice usually began. She was horrified to see a huge explosion and stunned when a hymnal, virtually undamaged, landed at her feet. Shortly after the explosion, all of the choir members turned up at the church to learn what had actually happened.

An undiscovered gas leak had resulted in the explosion, but since no one had been on time that evening, no one was injured. Obviously this is beyond all possibility of coincidence, involving as it did the actions of about fifteen persons. It is almost as if the angels signed their names to this gift of life for each of the choir members and their punctual director.

NOTES from page 15.

and unselfish thoughts, by reverence for what is beautiful and divine, and by courageous thinking and living.

...this ministry [of the Thought Adjusters] is also greatly retarded by your own preconceived opinions, settled ideas, and long-standing prejudices. (1199:4/109.5.3)

This is one of the most helpful clues to our inner relationship with God in that it suggests barriers which

we might not be aware of. I suspect that most of us are hampered by many opinions, ideas and prejudices that we have accepted for most of our lives without thinking about them much. One example of a settled idea that would constrain the sharing of our inner lives with God is this: God doesn't make his will available to us, so our best approach to discovering his will is to reason out with our conscious minds what his will should be

in each situation.

Certainly reason is one of the ways that we may seek God's will—but it is not the only way. Our minds are partially conscious of our souls. Because our souls feel values, we may be guided toward God's will by this spiritual sense. It is important to recognize that the revelators emphasized that values are *felt* by the soul, in contrast with the mind's ability to *know*. (1219:5/111.3.6) Apparently the closest word available to use for the spiritual sensing of values was "feel." (On the other hand, this feeling is to be distinguished from the feelings arising from our physical emotions.)

Another non-reasoning way to find God's will is through the Thought Adjuster's unconscious leading. We can help the Adjuster to lead us unconsciously by maintaining a dedication to doing the Father's will and being alert to the possibility that his will is different from what we have projected with our conscious reasoning.

The preconceived opinion that reasoning our way to God's will is virtually the only way to find his will would reduce the probability of our perceiving his will through either the soul's feeling of values or the Adjuster's unconscious guidance.

Sharing our inner lives with God would be aided by our becoming more aware of those assumptions we habitually operate under and by becoming more open to new viewpoints.

The secret of survival is wrapped up in the supreme human desire to be Godlike and in the associated willingness to do and be any and all things which are essential to the final attainment of that overmastering desire. (1206:0/110.3.2)

This may be the most important element in sharing our inner lives with God—simple willingness. I am more and more impressed as years go by with the overwhelming importance of *our desire*. In the spiritual realm, once we have a strong desire

See NOTES on page 20.

WORSHIP from page 6.

pressed in it has increased tremendously. And that, I am certain, has been to my great benefit. You might think that giving thanks results from a better life, and I am sure that is true to some degree. But I am also sure that giving thanks has progressively made me view life as better.

Thanksgiving is a natural road to worship. As I write down the many joys in my life, I find my spirits lifted higher and higher, until the words cease and worship takes over.

One of the most beneficial things I have done to encourage worship is to include music. Every day during my prayer and worship time I play recorded music. As I write in my prayer journal with the music quietly playing in the background, I often find an inner urge arising which is so insistent that I must interrupt my writing so that I may stop to enjoy the undivided pleasure of my Father's companionship in worship. (Even as I recall these experiences, I feel that inner call so strongly that I find I must stop typing for a few moments of intense sharing of his presence.)

There are certain pieces of music that I use in those times when I feel a need for my Father's presence to right my inner world and restore it to harmony with him. I simply put them on and sit down to give the music and my Father my full attention. I frequently find my peace restored by the musical communion.

I have spent several years maturing in my ability to allow music to touch my soul in this way. I recommend that modest expenditure of time and effort to you without reservation. I say effort because I have spent some creative effort in learning to allow the music to work for me. I made private time for it, which is not always easy in this harried world. I learned to relax physically. I experimented with the music internally, visualizing and feeling with the music. I learned to be flexible in my expectations, allowing different experiences with the same piece of music at different times. I overcame

Background Music for Worship

Land of Enchantment by Deuter (Kuckluck)
Standing Stones of Callantish by Jon Mark (Celestial Harmonies)
Imaginary Roads by William Ackerman (Windham Hill)
Phantasys by Danny Wright (Nichols-Wright Records)
Language of Touch by L'Esprit (Serenity)
Machu Picchu Impressions by Rusty Crutcher (Emerald Green Sound Productions)
Overcurrents by Robert J. Resetar (Whispering Trees Records)
The albums listed below are also good with the exception of parts of *Themes*.

Individual Pieces I use for Upliftment

"Arcturian Sunbird" and "The Final Journey" from *Sptnfield* by Steve McDonald (Hearts of Space)
"Main Theme from Missing" from *Themes* by Vangelis (Polygram Records)
"The Oh of Pleasure" from *Deep Breakfast* by Ray Lynch (Music West Records)
"Drifted in a Deeper Land" from *No Blue Thing* by Ray Lynch (Music West Records)
"Majestic" from *Shadows* by Danny Wright (Nichols-Wright Records)

prejudices against certain kinds of music and certain instruments. These costs were minor, but the results were prolific. Music has made a tremendous improvement in my worship life.

Because people sometimes ask me for music recommendations, I will include a list here. These albums may or may not work for you. They are all in the category of New Age Music and they lend themselves well to spiritual imagination. However, you may find classical music, hymns, or some other category more to your liking. Experimentation and spiritual

intuition will help anyone who is interested to find the best music for her or him.

Sharing our inner lives with God is similar to sharing our outer lives with a human friend. There are times when we are able to simply be together comfortably as we go about our daily lives. But if we want a relationship of depth, we must also spend some time, effort and attention on that relationship. Taking time to worship, both privately and with our brothers and sisters, is an immensely effective way to deepen the sharing of our inner lives with our Father. »

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

PARENTING

By Gene Joyce
Richardson, Texas

How Many Times Must I Tell You?

Why are parents so often blind to the imperfections of their children and so impervious to constructive criticism that even those nearest and dearest are reluctant to offer it? Can it be pride? These are harsh words I know, but I say them in the interest of prevention rather than cure because I believe the majority of parents are truly concerned with what they envision as the welfare of their children.

The Urantia Book came to me when my son was five just after the adoption of my daughter. So the keys to intelligent, loving parenting were in my hand but not yet in my heart and head. It took me ten years to accept it unconditionally as true and even longer to absorb it into my daily life. Unfortunately, those were the ten most important years of Chris and Lisa's childhood. This is intended as an explanation, not as an exoneration for me. To help others avoid some of my mistakes, may I remind you of some of the rules Jesus gave us in his example of raising his brothers and sisters and in his instructions to his apostles, who were, in a very real sense, also his children:

1. Selflessness is inherent in parental love.
2. It is an unfortunate and mistaken notion in our culture that child rearing is primarily the mother's job. Children need fathers.

3. Make use of the services of the older children, particularly in teaching the younger ones what they have learned.

4. Carefully transmit your culture to the next generation.

5. Remember, being a good parent reveals the attitude of the Creator to his children and is the first step in disclosing the love of the Paradise parent for his mortal children.

6. The entire religious experience of a child is greatly influenced by whether fear or love dominated his parent-child relationship at the time he transfers his ideas of omnipotence from his parents to God.

7. Bear in mind the chief inhibitors of growth are prejudice and ignorance. Children are lastingly influenced only by the loyalties of adults within their circle. Ideas or even example do not leave as permanent a mark.

8. Jesus was a superb teacher and he saw to it that the children were inculcated with the arts and crafts and trades of their day. Of course, the excellent example set by Joseph and Mary contributed greatly. Those of us who were raised in a dysfunctional family have our homework to do. We must observe and study and create a better way to go.

9. Jesus provided play materials for the children—sand, blocks and stones. He told them stories and encouraged them to laugh.

10. Never betray a child's trust. Avoid all deception. The truth, lovingly administered, cannot hurt them. Avoid suggesting suspicion and wisely assist them in selecting appropriate heroes and in choosing a lifework. «

(Article to be continued in next issue.)

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to do or become something worthwhile, it seems that we are frequently provided with whatever aid is needed to accomplish our goal. Barriers to achieving our spiritual goals lie not so much with our inability to achieve the goal, as with the *strength of our desire* to achieve it.

You can consciously augment Adjuster harmony by:

1. *Choosing to respond to divine leading; sincerely basing the human life on the highest consciousness of truth, beauty, and goodness, and then co-ordinating these qualities of divinity through wisdom, worship, faith, and love.*

2. *Loving God and desiring to be like him—genuine recognition of the divine fatherhood and loving worship of the heavenly Parent.*

3. *Loving man and sincerely desiring to serve him—wholehearted recognition of the brotherhood of man coupled with an intelligent and wise affection for each of your fellow mortals.*

4. *Joyful acceptance of cosmic citizenship—honest recognition of your progressive obligations to the Supreme Being, awareness of the interdependence of evolutionary man and evolving Deity. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty. (1206:4-8/110.3.6-10)*

Here we have an expansion of what to desire: to respond to God's leading, to be like him, to serve our fellows, to contribute to the growth of

the Supreme Being (i.e. to pursue ever more challenging spiritual experiences).

All nonreligious human activities seek to bend the universe to the distorting service of self; the truly religious individual seeks to identify the self with the universe and then to dedicate the activities of this unified self to the service of the universe family of fellow beings, human and superhuman. (67:1/5.4.3)

This quote gives us further insight into our "obligations to the Supreme Being." Our thinking needs to expand to perceive ourselves as an integral part of our larger self—the universe of beings—and then proceed wholeheartedly to serve our universe family.

The success of your Adjuster in the enterprise of piloting you through the mortal life and bringing about your survival depends not so much on the theories of your beliefs as upon your decisions, determinations, and steadfast faith. (1205:6/110.3.2)

So much of the inner life is composed of decision making. If we are to share our inner lives with our Father, we must involve him in our decisions.

Every decision you make either impedes or facilitates the function of the Adjuster... (1210:1/110.6.6)

Now this is a startling statement. Every decision involves God. I've given this a great deal of thought and decided that we have a choice in any decision—to seek God's will or not. If we ignore God's will in any decision, we impede the Adjuster. If we seek to make the decision according to his will, we facilitate his function—and we share our inner lives with him.

But what about small decisions? Even small ones often have the possibility of being selfish or unselfish. A habit of unselfishness is Godlike. And every unselfish decision shares our lives with God for we join with him in that moment.

They [Adjusters] are not interested in making the mortal career easy; rather are they concerned in

Tidbits

COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL DUTY

Defining and protecting rights is important in any political culture, but this culture has reached the point where the obsession with individual rights is making it hard for us to think socially, let alone restore the balance between individual and community rights, between personal rights and personal obligations.... Amitai Etzioni, the George Washington University sociologist, predicts that communitarianism will be to the '90s what neoconservatism was to the '80s.... America is more and more coming to look like a random collection of atomized individuals, bristling with rights and choices but with no connectedness or responsibility for one another....communitarian thinking....asks for social responsibility and laws based on connectedness.

Editorial by John Leo
U.S. News & World Report
January 28, 1991

EXPLOSIVE EVOLUTION

If a family reunion were held among a type of fish called cichlids in Africa's vast Lake Victoria, the entire population would have to be invited. For even though the nearly 200 different species of cichlids in the lake vary widely in size, shape and feeding habits, they are all possibly recent descendants of the same ancestral population....The fishes' family tree is a stunning example of what researchers call "explosive evolution," where hundreds of species arise from a common ancestor in an extremely short time.... the new discovery is expected to help scientists fine-tune their understanding of the biological and geographical forces that cause new species to arise.

U.S. News & World Report
October 22, 1990

making your life reasonably difficult and rugged, so that decisions will be stimulated and multiplied. (1192:1/108.5.5)

The importance of our decisions is underlined here. Our Thought Adjusters strive to insure that we have plenty of opportunities to make decisions. Many of us—myself included—have made it one of our primary goals to reduce both the number and the difficulty of our decisions; and we are certainly interested in reducing the ruggedness of our lives! This probably qualifies as a

"settled idea" which is in the way of our progress.

The Thought Adjusters would like to change your feelings of fear to convictions of love and confidence; but they cannot mechanically and arbitrarily do such things; that is your task. In executing those decisions which deliver you from the fetters of fear, you literally supply the psychic fulcrum on which the Adjuster may subsequently apply a spiritual lever of uplifting and advancing illumination. (1192:3/108.5.8)

See NOTES on page 22.

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We can contribute toward God's influence in our inner lives by executing those decisions which deliver us from the fetters of fear. What kind of decisions will relieve us from fear? Our human logic would say that we reduce fear in our lives by striving to make our lives easier and less challenging. But it has finally begun to dawn on me that such behavior increases my fear. The more I avoid the things I fear, the more I fear them!

No, I think the decisions that deliver us from the chains of fear are the courageous decisions, the ones we approach with pounding heart and dry mouth. Now, I'm not a believer in doing things just because you fear them. That course allows circumstances to control you just as not doing things because of fear does. But when I feel that it is right for

me to take a particular action, I'm beginning to muster up the courage to act in spite of my fears. One of the ways I handle my fear in these circumstances is to go to God for aid, to turn my fears over to him. I suspect that he had that very thing in mind!

And I take great comfort from this last reference:

Having started out on the way of life everlasting, having accepted the assignment and received your orders to advance, do not fear the dangers of human forgetfulness and mortal inconstancy, do not be troubled with doubts of failure or by perplexing confusion, do not falter and question your status and standing, for in every dark hour, at every crossroad in the forward struggle, the Spirit of Truth will always speak, saying, "This is the way." (383:2/34.7.8)«

SHARED from page 7.

later sell the provisions to others, neither asking for permission to do so nor having any intention of thanking the person originating the feast. As the family and friends sat nearby at the table, these self-seeking guests became so preoccupied with eating and placing foods in their containers that they would not pass the foods being served to those next to them in the line of serving. Many looking on were greatly annoyed and a few even attempted to take the boxes of food away from the self-seeking guests. An argument broke out and a brawl ensued. Do you suppose such persons would be welcomed to the next harvest feast?

Our munificent Heavenly Father rightfully expects us to share with his children and family that which we ourselves have received from him. «

Good Cheer Press

The Good Cheer Press Catalog is an excellent source of secondary works. It offers:

Clyde Bedell's Concordex
The Paramony
Introduction to The Urantia Book

Family Meeting Handbook
Life After Death
The Call of the Spirit
Starwind

David Zebedee and Ruth
Reaching High

Science and Religion
Friendship with God

Evolution of the Soul
Angels All Around Us

and many other items such as pamphlets by Meredith Sprunger, art prints of John Byron's paintings, post cards, book covers and the Mustard Seeds. To receive a catalog, write:

Jesusionian Foundation
1790 30th St. #400
Boulder, Colorado 80301
USA



Letters to the Editor

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

March 4, 1991

Dear Editors,

Two or three years ago I wrote you about a pen pal project I had, requesting an announcement be printed in *The Circles*. Well, here is an update for you: through my efforts on this I began writing another reader, a man, in New Zealand. To make a long story short, I finally went to visit Dennis in January and will be returning in a few months time to marry. We will be living there.

So, I am hoping you again will consent to printing my project announcement with my New Zealand address. (See *Things to Share* in this issue.)

While I was in New Zealand, I met several of the other readers who are very nice. Their group is small but meets regularly on Tuesday evening. Dennis tells me they are discussing plans for a possible conference around Easter of 1992. It would be great if people outside New Zealand could come. It's a really wonderful country, not too unlike California. Except they have just over three million people and 70 million sheep!

Best Wishes,
Sharen Bonebrake
Redwood City, California

Things to Share

ADVENTURES IN SPIRITUAL LIVING MO-RANCH

The Adventures in Spiritual Living team will be returning to Mo-Ranch near Kerrville, Texas (outside San Antonio) for a weekend retreat October 18-20, 1991. For information, see the centerfold of this issue.

ADVENTURES IN SPIRITUAL LIVING VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

"Companions On the Way" of British Columbia, Canada, will sponsor an Adventures in Spiritual Living retreat May 8-10, 1992 at Pioneer Chehalis Camp, located two hours east of Vancouver, British Columbia. The Adventures Team (Bill and Kaye Cooper, Ted and Sharon Lanier, and Skip and Carol Weatherford) will facilitate a spiritual weekend similar to programs presented recently in Texas, Kansas and Colorado.

Plan to join in. The camp location is beautiful; childcare and children's activities will be provided; and the program will supercharge your spiritual life! More information will be available in the next issue of *The Circles*, but if you would like to receive advance registration materials as soon as they become available, call or write to: **Gwen and Norm Knighton, 1008—224th St., Langley, British Columbia, Canada V3A 6H5, (604) 534-1178; Eef and Alice Hoedemaker, 26045—62 Avenue, RR #1, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada VOX 1A0, (604) 856-8323; or John Vissers, 4669 Charley Spruce Place, Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada VOX 1E0.**

TALES OF JOSHUA BY BOB SLAGLE

Last chance to purchase the first edition of *Tales of Joshua!* First come, first served; we are running out of copies of this illustrated children's story of the childhood years of Jesus' life based on *The Urantia Book*. Send your check or money order for \$9.00 (U.S. dollars) per copy post paid for domestic orders (Foreign orders: please include postage fees for 1.3 pound parcel, specify surface or airmail.) to: **Family Relations Foundation, Box 462, Sebastopol, CA 95473, USA**

PEN PAL PROJECT

The Pen Pal Project announced in the Spring-Summer 1989 issue of *The Circles* has been quite successful. I am still receiving letters but mainly from the U.S. It is my aim to connect readers from all over the world, for the purpose of sharing ideas, projects, questions, concerns, etc., with general support for the work we're all trying to accomplish. Newletters have their place but more can be done on a one-to-one basis to foster understanding and good will among readers from different countries and hopefully to help those readers who may be unable to attend a study group. I hope readers from all over the world will become interested in participating.

I will be marrying and moving to New Zealand in the next few months (see Letters in this issue). Anyone interested in participating in the Pen Pal Project can write to me for more information: **Sharen Bonebrake (soon to be Sharen Clampitt), Unit 1, 81 Seabrook Ave., New Lynn, Auckland 7, New Zealand.**

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Friendship with God by Kaye and Bill Cooper is an inspiring and practical "how to" book on prayer. Retail price is \$11.95 (plus shipping and tax). **Special Circles price is \$9.95** (plus \$2.00 each for shipping). For five or more books *Circles* price is \$7.95 (plus \$1.50 each for shipping).

Make checks payable to Latham Publishing. (Texas residents please add 87¢ tax.) Outside North America shipping will be \$4.00 for surface mail and \$10 for air mail.

Checks drawn on banks outside the U.S. or in currencies other than U.S. currency are very expensive to collect. Please use Visa or MasterCard, American Express traveler's check, international money order in US funds, or easily exchangeable currency.

To order by phone (with Visa or MasterCard only), call (713)586-9109. To order by mail, send Visa or MasterCard information or check along with your name, address and phone number to: **Latham Publishing, P.O. Box 680857, Houston, TX 77268-0857, USA.**



What Are We Here to Learn?

"The entire universe is one vast school." (412:2/37.6.2)

If the universe is one vast school, then Urantia must be kindergarten. What are we here to learn? Who are our teachers? How can we become more enthusiastic and active students? Our theme for the Winter 1991 issue of *The Circles* will be "What Are We Here to Learn?" The following quotes may stimulate your thoughts:

"One of the most important lessons to be learned during your mortal career is teamwork." (312:1/28.5.14)

"Although Jesus might have enjoyed a better opportunity for schooling at Alexandria than in Galilee, he could not have had such a splendid environment for working out his own life problems with a minimum of educational guidance, at the same time enjoying the great advantage of constantly contacting with such a large number of all classes of men and women hailing from every part of the civilized world." (1366:1/124.0.1)

"A human being can find truth in his inner experience, but he needs a clear knowledge of facts to apply his personal discovery of truth to the ruthlessly practical demands of everyday life." (1222:6/111.6.7)

"The necessity for labor is man's paramount blessing." (773:6/69.2.5)

"The family is the fundamental unit of fraternity in which parents and children learn those lessons of patience, altruism, tolerance, and forbearance which are so essential to the realization of brotherhood among all men." (941:9/84.7.28)

"Seraphim function as teachers of men by guiding the footsteps of the human personality into paths of new and progressive experiences." (1245:1&3/113.4.1&3)

"Religious perplexities are inevitable; there can be no growth without psychic conflict and spiritual agitation." (1097:4/100.4.1)

"It is not so much what you learn in this first life; it is the experience of living this life that is important." (435:6/39.4.13)

"The spiritualization of the human soul requires intimate experience with the educational solving of a wide range of real universe problems." (1719:1/154.2.5)

Send your article, poem or artwork by August 1, 1991 to:

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The Circles is published quarterly and distributed on a donation basis. Send your name, address and donation to:

The Circles

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