

The Circles ...

Prayers Answered

Vol. XV, No. 3

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Fall, 1992

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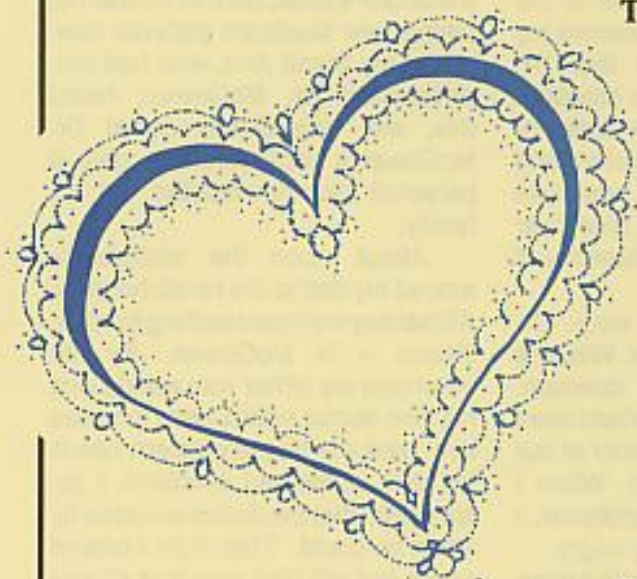
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God's Generous Gifts

By Kaye Cooper
Houston, Texas

Do not be so slothful as to ask God to solve your difficulties, but never hesitate to ask him for wisdom and spiritual strength to guide and sustain you while you yourself resolutely and courageously attack the problems at hand. (999:8/91.6.5)

The call from Texas cut short our Seattle vacation. My vigorous, energetic father had suffered a stroke. The next weeks were frightening and exhausting, but at last, after five difficult weeks in the hospital, the doctors were ready to move my dad to a rehabilitation hospital. The family decided to change doctors at that point. Internists are internal medicine and diagnostic specialists best suited to oversee the care of seniors. Because of that and for several other significant reasons, my brother and I had urged my parents to change from the general practitioner forty minutes away in another town to an internist in their own city. All of the family was in agreement that this change should be made. The logical time for the change was at the point when we moved my Dad to the rehab hospital. The problem was locating a doctor in whom we had confidence and who would agree to take him as a patient.

I don't know how widespread the problem is, but in my parent's city doctors in general and internists in particular have recently refused to accept any more patients on Medicare because of difficulties with the system. Since the only insurance available to people my parent's age is that which is secondary to Medicare, seniors who do not already have doctors are virtually unable to

get one. My mother had faced this problem only a few months before. She was understandably worried about what difficulties we would have in making this change for my dad.

I prayed for help and quickly attacked the problem, requesting recommendations from friends and doctor acquaintances. On Thursday with the names of two possible candidates in hand, I went to the rehab hospital to inquire how to go about getting another doctor. The secretary to Dr. Wilson, who heads the rehab hospital staff, could not find time in the doctor's schedule for me to talk to him, but she answered my questions, assuring me that Dr. Wilson would handle the situation. He would tell the general practitioner of our desire to change doctors and arrange for Dr. McGowen, whom we expressed interest in, to take over when my father arrived on Monday. It all sounded easy.

Of course, it was not easy. On Saturday when I called Dr. Wilson's secretary about another question, she informed me that we would need to tell the general practitioner of our desire to change doctors. When I spoke to the general practitioner, I could tell that he was very angry.

Monday dawned and with it more problems. The general practitioner released my dad from the hospital and from his care. This was a scary situation to be in: old doctor gone and no contact with the new one yet. Even so when I consulted my inner self, I still felt an assurance that all would be well. The nursing staff at the rehab hospital would continue the

same medications he had been receiving and Dr. Wilson would handle any emergencies until our new doctor was involved.

Then Dr. Wilson's secretary suggested I call Dr. McGowen to ask that he take on my father's case. She had told me earlier that Dr. Wilson would take care of contacting Dr. McGowen, but at her suggestion I plowed ahead, eager to do whatever was needed to make this transition work. The first hint of rough water came when Dr. McGowen's receptionist said she would put the note on the doctor's desk, but that he was not taking new Medicare patients now. When my friend Ann, who had recommended Dr. McGowen, heard this, she immediately called Dr. McGowen's receptionist to give a personal recommendation for my family.

About noon the ambulance moved my dad to the rehab hospital. All that day we heard nothing from Dr. Wilson or Dr. McGowen. By late afternoon my father was asking why his new doctor hadn't been in to see him. Not wanting to concern him in his very weakened condition, I assured him that the doctor would be by when he could. That night I prayed again, but still I felt sure that all was proceeding toward a good solution.

On Tuesday morning my assurance faced a new challenge. I had still heard nothing from Dr. Wilson, his secretary, Dr. McGowen, or his receptionist. So I called Dr. McGowen's office and was told that Dr. McGowen had decided not to

See GOD'S on page 3.

To Know Truth

By Bill Tuffin
Vientiane, Laos



One summer evening back when I was 17, I was sitting on the back porch contemplating my search for truth. Several years earlier I had experienced so-called "Christian fundamentalism." Eventually I had become aware that this path did not ring wholly true for me; at an intuitive level it just didn't fit. However, I had known that God would reveal himself to me when the right time came. With that assurance I had put any serious contemplation of religion aside for a time to enjoy being a teenager. A few years later my spiritual curiosity was piqued by the allure of reincarnation and eastern philosophies. I spent the summer I was seventeen voraciously reading any material I could find on the subject. After reading close to 20 books (I don't think I have read as many books in such a short time since), again I knew that I was finding truth, but still something was missing.

That evening on the back porch, I was frustrated and exasperated. Christianity did not feel wholly right, and these other belief systems did not quite hit the spot. How was I ever going to find the real truth, the whole truth? Suddenly a desire to receive the truth directly from God welled up inside me. I stood up and with tears in my eyes, looking toward the star-filled heavens, I prayed more fervently than I have ever prayed before or since. "Father, I want to know the absolute truth." It was a sincere prayer requesting God to reveal himself to me.

Some months later through a series of events, I was led to explore

The Urantia Book. It satisfied my desire for a written source of truth. Although I may have had difficulty understanding or accepting some of the details of the book, deep down inside, *The Urantia Book* teachings were at harmony with my spirit. They fit. I felt that my search had ended.

Eventually, however, it became clear that in reality the search had not ended and the prayer was not yet wholly answered. Intellectual satisfaction and spiritual fulfillment are two very different things. I prayed, "to know the absolute truth." Now, what does it mean to "know truth"? Certainly intellectual knowledge and understanding are a part of it, but by no means the whole of it. What about

GOD'S continued from page 2.
take my father's case!

This was not the news I had expected, but I checked again and somehow inside felt that all was well. Since I had been singularly unsuccessful getting to see Dr. Wilson through his secretary, I went to see Judy who is the rehabilitation coordinator for all of the doctors and therapists who will be working with my dad—and the family contact person. She made a call requesting to talk to Dr. Wilson about the situation when he was free. "In the meantime," she suggested, "why don't you try to contact the other doctor who had been recommended to you?" She found Dr. Hunter's office telephone number and a free phone for me.

Glad to have some way to be active in the solution of my problem instead of just waiting, I called imme-

diately. The first question from Dr. Hunter's receptionist was, "What kind of insurance does your father have?" You guessed it—Dr. Hunter was also not taking any new patients on Medicare!

I'm afraid I lost my calm at that point. I was very upset and afraid I might break into tears. I had done my dead level best and could not seem to get the situation resolved. With a great deal of emotion in my voice, I told Judy how angry I was to have been misled by Dr. Wilson's secretary into dismissing the general practitioner and expecting there to be no problem getting another doctor. I was also very frustrated at not being able to talk to any of the doctors.

She went off to be sure I got to talk to Dr. Wilson, and I tried to pull myself back together again. First, I

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See *GOD'S* on page 11.



Can Prayer Fix a Leaky Roof?

By Ted Lanier
Austin, Texas

Our roof began leaking shortly after the warranty on our new home ran out. I paid someone to fix it, but it still continued to leak. I would have fixed it myself, but I'm terrified of heights. So I prayed...and the roof still leaked.

One evening, while preparing a short talk to be given on prayer, my eye stopped on the phrase, "You must have honestly exhausted the human capacity for human adjustment. You must have been industrious." (1002:8/91.9.3)

This was obviously part of the answer to my prayer—get to work! So I began to think of the roof problem in a new light. I saw that the roof was only eight feet off the ground at its lowest point. If I could get onto the roof there, it wouldn't be such a big risk. I could borrow a sturdy, ten-foot metal step ladder from work. I could place it sideways to the house, so that the house would be beside me on my right as I climbed. Then all I would have to do when reaching the proper height would be to turn to my left and get onto the roof by sitting on it. I figured that by putting my rear end on the roof and staying seated instead of standing up, all that surface area would provide friction, making it difficult to slide off. I couldn't fall down as I was already on my you-know-what. I could wear gloves and tennis shoes to give my hands and feet traction.

I really got into this, realizing also that I could stabilize the ladder by placing heavy sheets of plywood under it to keep it from sinking into the earth, and to keep it level. I could get my wife, Sharon, to hold the ladder firmly against the house so it wouldn't

fall away from me as I pushed my rear end up to sit on the roof.

Finally, the appointed Saturday came. All was in readiness as described above. I was still a little agitated but was headed out to make the climb when Harriett, one of the members of our spiritual development group, rode up on her bicycle. We told her what was up and invited her inside for a cup of tea. After tea, we had a moment of silent prayer, and then off we went to the roof.

It was a snap! I went right up the

ladder, pivoted and swung my behind onto the roof, pushed my way up using my feet and hands while sliding on my behind. I quickly located the leak, patched it, and even enjoyed the view. I felt no fear.

These prayers were answered with: (1) the insight that I should be industrious, to prepare, (2) the sending of an encouraging friend at the right moment, and (3) lack of fear at the moment of execution.

Ordinary? Yes.

Extraordinary? Yes! *



The Trip

By Sharon Lanier
Austin, Texas

For many years when I went to visit my parents in Guthrie, Oklahoma, I always took the plane. Normally that was the acceptable means of transportation as I lived in states that were far removed from Oklahoma.

About ten years ago, though, I moved to Austin, Texas. Now, the distance to my parents' house was merely an eight-hour drive straight up the freeway. But, still I made all kinds of excuses for not driving up to see them. I was too busy. Ted, my husband, wanted to come along, and on and on. Some of my excuses were legitimate. But the truth was—I was afraid to drive long stretches alone on the freeway.

Finally, about a year and a half ago, the truth began to dawn on me.

I began to reflect on my fear of making the trip alone. And I realized that over the years I had grown in confidence and belief in myself. My relationship and prayer life with God had strengthened me a lot. I knew deep inside that I had to make "the trip."

I set the date to go. Several months in advance I started doing some spiritual and mental preparatory work. I talked repeatedly to God about fear and began to realize how strongly it affected my actions. I prayed for strength and understanding concerning my trip. As the date of departure grew closer, I began to feel a strength and commitment to meet this challenge such as I had never experienced before!

My husband helped as we studied the map by marking out the exact

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

route to take. I even planned my time of departure so that I would go through the Dallas/Fort Worth area during a lighter traffic period. I planned to stay in the middle lane so I could exit either way in the complex city interchanges.

The day arrived for my much awaited trip. I was ready with tapes to play in the car to keep me occupied, detailed map in hand, and God's presence of strength and courage ever with me. I will not say that I had no apprehension at all. But even on the uncertain stretches I had the confidence that God was guiding me and was with me. On my return trip I felt like a pro!

I thank God that my prayers were answered even on such a simple thing as this. As I continue to work on larger fear issues, I am confident that if I do the work and have faith in God, I will succeed. «

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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 indention 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.

A Prayer for Trust

Father, you know of my capacity for devotion; you know my deep trust in others that has repeatedly been thrown back in my face. I fear to trust again. I know I need to open my heart to others, but I fear being so deeply hurt anew.

My child, we have discussed going the extra mile and turning the other cheek, not once or twice but 70 times 7 and beyond. As long as you deal with human beings, you will be hurt. You are all still imperfect beings. Mary, love me, give me your heart and devotion. I will never reject you or let you down. Depend on me.

Yes, I know, Father, but I am so human. I need human arms around me to share this spiritual life and adventure. This is what I have searched and longed for all my life and never really known.

Mary, I love you perfectly, trust me.

Father, it is my will that your will be done. I know that you are providing me with the learning and growing experiences that I need to be the person I am capable of being. I trust you. My heart is in your hands. I feel your comforting presence. I trust that you know what I truly need and what I would just like to have. My job for the moment is to love those around me with your love and with whatever of my love I am capable. Thank you for being you. I love you.

*Mary Huggins
Round Rock, Texas*

By Carol Weatherford
Houston, Texas



Unexpected Opportunities

I remember a day when my job was so frustrating I thought I would scream. Due to cutbacks I found myself doing what I considered remedial clerical work that I had done when I first began working some 25 years ago. This, piled upon my administrative responsibilities, was just too much. Besides, I thought I was above that type of work at this stage of my career. Anyway, that particular day as I was typing file labels I found myself talking to God about my frustration. I remember saying, "God, I really hate this. I feel as though all I have been doing all these years is spinning my wheels. I am right back where I started. It isn't fair! Help me to find a way to feel better about my situation."

As I continued my work, I began to get an impression that I was doing something of importance. The work I was doing was a service that made the work others did easier. And then I remembered what Jesus had said, "When you have done it unto the least of these you have done it to me." Now I wasn't getting water for the thirsty or food for the hungry, but I was making work easier for others—easing their burdens in a way.

"Do it for God, Carol, and do it the best you can," were the words that came to mind. Yes! Hadn't I been praying for a way to serve God? Of course, in my romantic imagination I had envisioned service opportunities of great significance where I could really make a difference in people's lives. These visions never involved my job. As I continued typing, I sensed it wasn't just the physical job

that was important but that I had an opportunity to influence others. "Influence them how?" I wondered. I didn't hear the words, but I could feel Jesus saying, "Be of good cheer."

That day I realized I was facing one of the greatest opportunities (and challenges) of my life. The company I was working for was going through the painful process of reorganization and down-sizing. The atmosphere was tense and people were just plain scared. The rumor mill was running rampant with fear at the helm. It was really easy to get caught up in that rumor mill and no one was exempt from the panic it effected. Here, in an atmosphere enshrouded with fear and uncertainty, God wanted me to be cheerful. Here was my opportunity to serve. My challenge was to help other people feel better—to help them to laugh a little and to smile at a time when there seemed little to smile about. "I will do it," I thought, "but I can't do it alone. I will need your help, Father." Before I could begin, I was

going to need a small miracle to relieve my own fears and tension.

God sent this miracle to me through my friends in my spiritual development group—my prayer partners. They unfailingly expressed their faith in me and boosted my confidence just when I needed it the most. But even more significant, I was aware of their constant prayers for me. At my friends' suggestion, whenever I felt the pressures and tension mount, I imagined them praying for me. Through their prayers I felt God's gentle hands dip into my chest and cradle my heart. As he gently caressed my trembling and troubled heart, all stress would melt away, and I was filled with a new strength. His loving touch was so comforting that I reveled in the job and the peace he gave me.

Months have passed and finally all the layoffs are completed. And I know, because of what others have said to me, that my attitude did have a positive effect on those around me. Some have made comments about how I was always cheerful and smiling, even as I listened to their complaints. One person told me that he really like seeing me in the mornings because he knew that I would always have a smile for him—and a smile during that time was a rare thing. Still another said she like to be around me because I was the most upbeat person she knew.

It was a long six months, but every day I was given the strength I needed to remain cheerful. It wasn't always easy, but with God it was always possible. «

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addresses.

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See back cover.

My All Points Bulletin



By David Glass
Fort Worth, Texas

I have been very fortunate to have had many prayers answered, and I am happy to share one of them with you. Perhaps this instance of answered prayer may bolster your faith even more and lead you to pray more boldly for those things which relate to the establishment and growth of the "kingdom of heaven." Likewise, do I expect to benefit from reading about answers to your prayers.

Of course, the greatest answer to prayer in my life has been finding *The Urantia Book*. Discovering that graduation from a liberal arts college does not necessarily confer upon one the wisdom of the ages nor an undergirding philosophy with which to prepare oneself for a productive life on Urantia, I felt that graduation was something of a disappointment.

Soon, however, I found a form of education that I could pursue on my own—reading books in the field of religion and some in philosophy. There had to be more. I felt that I had not dealt with life sufficiently seriously. With the assistance of a

friend, I began hatha yoga and meditation, which proved to be a spiritual lifesaver; performing the asanas followed by meditation was for me a species of calm prayer and devotion.

The same friend gave me a copy of *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda. Having a degree in literature, I was at once very impressed with Yogananda's nearly poetic eloquence, especially considering that he had mastered English as a secondary language. His was a spiritual eloquence full of spontaneity, lively tangents, and inner reflection.

Reading continued: Buddhism, Hinduism, history, cosmology, inspirational (quasi-spiritual) books by Pierre de Chardin, Edgar Cayce, TM materials, a book of Sufi spirituality, Krishnamurti, materials from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Joel Goldsmith, the gospels, the Baghavad Gita, etc.

But I felt that there had to be a unity or reconciliation which could create order and harmony among all these perspectives. It was obviously

too great a task for me (UNDERSTATEMENT), and I didn't know anyone who would like to pursue such a project with me. Then, I sent out what I later referred to as my "All Points Bulletin" that I would like to encounter...something. I felt as though I were trying to enclose dozens of towels in one linen sheet, fastening it together at the corners with scotch tape. I couldn't encompass my reading within an overall understanding.

With some friends, I went to a spiritual celebration in Colorado, where I first heard the words, "*The Urantia Book*." Shortly thereafter I found the book in San Francisco.

Returning to Florida, I learned of only one person in my town who knew about the book. I discovered that a fellow who worked across the street from me had become interested. I had not verbally prayed for another reader in my vicinity, but such was the attitude of my soul—which counts as prayer! Later, a lady moved in also across the street, next door to my friend's workplace. She had been told by friends that someone in that town was interested in the book and that his name was David Glass. Through conversation with my father, she learned that I was his son and that I lived just across the street.

Ruth Carothers was the lady's name. She had been among the original "Seventy" in Chicago and had known of the book before its publication. This lady was a world traveler and had many interesting

See MY on page 9.

The Circles Calendar

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

	<u>Articles Due</u>	<u>Mail</u>
Spring-Summer	Dec. 15	May 1
Fall	April 15	Aug. 15
Winter	Aug. 1	Dec. 1



The Common Thread

By Diana Malley
N. San Juan, California

When I read that the theme of the Fall 1992 issue of *The Circles* was to be prayer, I began reflecting on my life. I come from a very dysfunctional family, but somehow, I retained my faith in God. Prayer has always been an important part of my life. As I continue on my spiritual quest, which began in my teen years, prayer has been the common thread woven throughout. I have changed. God, however, has not. He remains the same yesterday, today, and forever.

There have been three instances in my life in which prayers have been answered in incredible ways. First, after some trying times, I finally felt that I was ready to be involved in a marriage relationship. I

surrendered myself to God. I felt that I was ready to do whatever was needed in my life to become a partner in a deep relationship—a relationship with a strong spiritual foundation. Within three weeks of that prayer, I met my husband-to-be. He introduced me to *The Urantia Book*. This is not to say that it has been an easy path, far from it! However, we have grown both individually and as a couple. God, indeed, is the cornerstone of our relationship.

I had always hoped and prayed that children would bless our marriage. After several years and numerous inquiries, I had given up the idea of having children. I vividly remember walking home on the dirt

road from our neighbor's home. He is an acupuncturist, and I was being treated for stress symptoms. I felt so depressed about not being able to get pregnant. I prayed that if God didn't want me to have children and be a mom, then I would surrender to that and ask him to give me guidance in my life. Three months later, I found that I was pregnant!

In the two instances above, the key factor was surrender. Prayer is an active process in which we must "rest" in God—rest in the knowledge that we must let go and trust in him. Earthly fathers want the best for their children. Even more must it be so with our Heavenly Father.

I had hoped for several children, but I was able to give birth to only one child. We finally contacted an adoption agency which mainly placed special needs children. Again, I prayed for the right child/children to become part of our family. As I look back on our home-study activities, I realize that the two children who came to us were exactly the type of children I felt that I could *not* parent. I feel that God knew best.

Our one little guy, who has been with us since he was three weeks old, is severely developmentally delayed. He will be six years old by the time this issue is out. I don't know how long we will be able to care for him at home because his needs are so great, but I know that my life is far richer for my experience of parenting him. He has stretched me further than I ever thought I could go. He always has a hug for me.

Our other little guy came to us

Doing Business With God

By Gene Joyce
Richardson, Texas

A young man named Jerry had recently joined a Jehovah's Witness congregation and was eager to attend their school which teaches its members public speaking with special techniques for approaching strangers to tell them about Jehovah. Jerry felt he didn't have the proper clothes for such a venture so his first prayer to God went something like this: "Dear Jehovah, I don't know you very well as yet, but could you please see that I get a decent suit to wear?"

The very next day a neighbor

who was related to the Bass family in Fort Worth asked him to come to her house to look at quite a few suits someone in the family wanted to give away. When he tried them on, they fit as if made for him and were all practically new. He estimated that they must be worth several thousand dollars.

Not only was Jerry's prayer answered within twenty-four hours, but I was told the story even before I knew I needed one for *The Circles*. It's fun doing business with God. *

when he was five years old. I am his fifth mother figure, as far as we can tell. He had an incredibly difficult beginning in life, with illicit drugs in utero, withdrawal at birth, and neglect his first three years. He has attachment problems and difficulty bonding. This parenting experience has been extremely difficult for me and has stressed our marriage. There is a positive side to this, however. Of my three children, he especially has been a mirror to me. Each child reflects parts of my life which I'd rather not look at. These shadows come out of the depths of my dysfunctional past.

It has been prayer which has been the catalyst for change in my life. This change has been a slow process which involves accepting the gifts that I have been given in my children, taking time to look into those mirrors, and taking time to pray. This is an endless process. I feel that the prayer which has been present in my marriage and in my family is the bonding agent which keeps us all together. I can feel its presence as surely as the sun rises each day. «

Avoid missing issues:
Send us your
change of address.

MY from page 7.

stories to tell of her experiences. As with some other *Urantia Book* reading friends of mine, sleep seemed almost unnecessary to her, and we frequently talked past midnight.

My two-fold prayer had been answered: an enlarged vision of reality and like-minded friends with whom to share it. Faith became sight. «

Somebody Said a Prayer for Me

By Francyl Streano-Gawryn
Mercer Island, Washington

Today my troubles had me down.
Found no comfort in my mind.
All the answers I had found
Seemed to leave me way behind.

I felt so awful and alone.
Seemed I'd lost my light upon the path.
I just wouldn't get back home
When hope came flying in at last.

Somebody said a prayer for me.
I feel a peace within my soul.
Somebody said a prayer for me.
I've never felt this good before.

Somebody prayed that I'd be well.
Somebody cared to send me strength.
Somebody wants me to have faith.
I'm feeling healed once again.

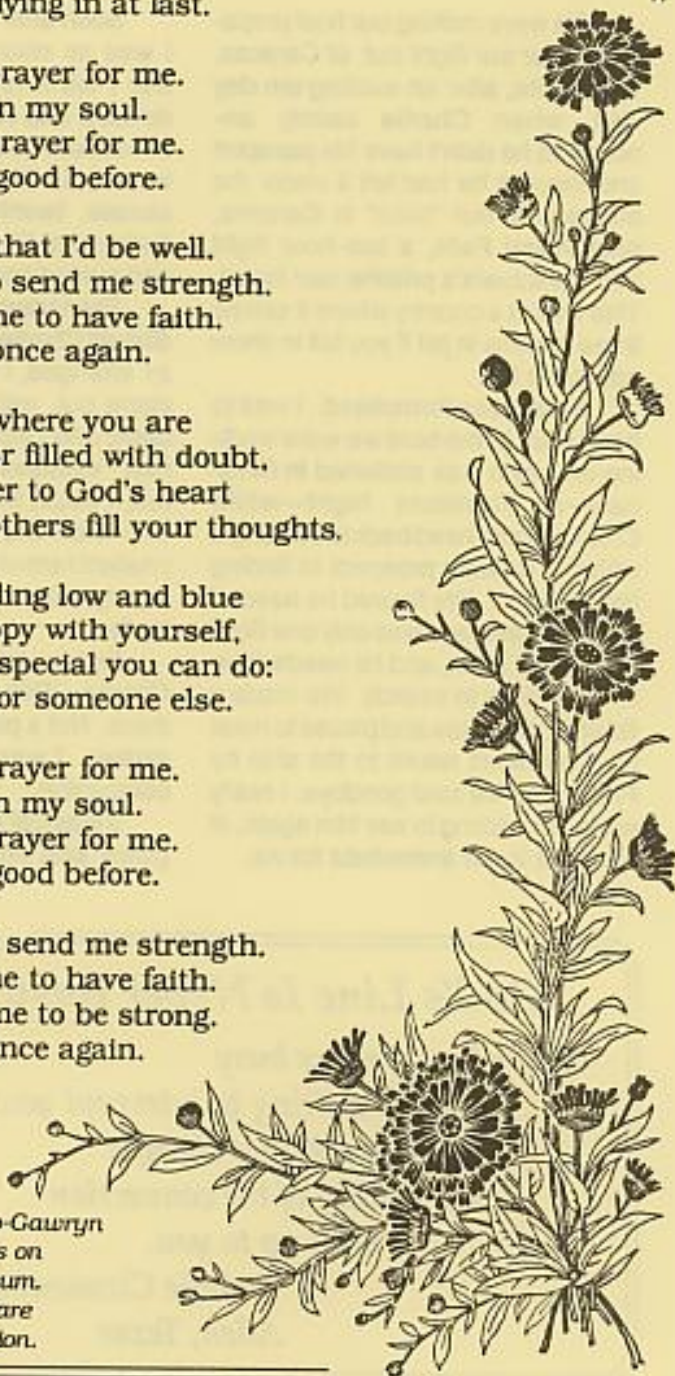
No matter who or where you are
Rich in your soul or filled with doubt,
You're always closer to God's heart
When prayers for others fill your thoughts.

So when you're feeling low and blue
And you're not happy with yourself,
There's something special you can do:
Just say a prayer for someone else.

Somebody said a prayer for me.
I feel a peace within my soul.
Somebody said a prayer for me.
I've never felt this good before.

Somebody cared to send me strength.
Somebody wants me to have faith.
Somebody helped me to be strong.
I'm feeling healed once again.

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This song appears on
Francyl's new album.
See *Things to Share*
for more information.



A Prayer for Charlie

By Russell Good
Auckland, New Zealand



We were making our final preparations for our flight out of Caracas, Venezuela, after an exciting ten-day visit, when Charlie calmly announced he didn't have his passport and thought he had left it under the mattress in our "hotel" in Caraima, near Angel Falls, a two-hour flight into Venezuela's pristine rain forest. This was in a country where it can be three months in jail if you fail to show adequate I.D.

A plan was formulated. I was to head back to the boat we were working on which was stationed in Curaçao—a 30-minute flight—while Charlie would head back to the jungle with the unlikely prospect of finding his passport. We figured he needed five days, as there was only one flight per day, at noon, and he needed two to three days to search. We made a list of times, dates and places to meet up if he didn't return to the ship by Friday. As we said goodbye, I really wasn't expecting to see him again, at least not in the immediate future.

Soon after returning to the boat, I was so concerned about Charlie that I felt a rescue plan should be devised and ready for implementation should he not return by Friday. It was about then that I made a passionate, twenty-minute plea to our Father that Charlie be watched over and guided home safely.

Then I decided on a rescue plan. Should Charlie not be back on Friday as arranged, I would be on the next plane out, with all my hard-earned cash, and I would not return without him. Whatever the time, cost or effort, I would find him. Those of you who know me will be aware of how prudent I am when it comes to spending my hard-earned money unnecessarily.

Friday came around and no Charlie. This was it. I was out of there. Not a pleasant thought but no matter. I was off to find my close companion.

It was just a casual glance out the galley port hole and THERE WAS

CHARLIE! YEA!! In an instant I knew how the father felt when his prodigal son returned. I dropped everything, declared it a national holiday, and raced out to meet him with a warm and loving embrace.

Two things immediately crossed my mind. The first was that at the earliest appropriate moment, I would thank our Father for answering my prayer. To this day I can't be sure if Charlie's return was through the natural course of events (his passport was handed in and was there for him on arrival) or if it was God's will that Charlie return safely. Either way, what I had so solemnly asked for in my prayer I had received, and God would be thanked and given the credit many times for that.

The other thing was, Charlie had borrowed \$100 from me for his plane ticket, and I wasn't about to let him get away without paying his debt. Yet, only a few minutes before, I was prepared to spend my everything to find him!

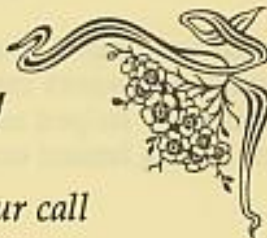
When Charlie and I compared stories, I discovered that he had already found his passport before I made my prayer. Not that I knew anything of what had transpired. Of course, the Father knows what you need even before you ask.

So many times have I reflected on the outcome of this occasion and it never fails to amaze me, how so many *Urantia Book* teachings emerged out of this one five-day period. It overwhelms me to think that this phenomenon of prayer is only a taste of what is available to come. How much better this form of

God's Line Is Never Busy

*God's line is never busy
no call waiting to interrupt your call
no long distance charges
the quality of the connection
is all up to you.*

*Tommie Clendening
Allen, Texas*



spiritualism gets as we ascend ever closer to the Father!

I had two other similar experiences (although not as intense) during the weeks that followed with the outcome equally as satisfying. But not since then (1989) has my heart really yearned for God's help, as it did in these three experiences, and not since then have I put my all at his feet to influence an outcome.

Why only then and not since?
Interesting. »

GOD'S from page 3.


wanted to alleviate my anger with Dr. Wilson's secretary. As I do in such situations, I asked to see her with God's eyes. Immediately my prayer was answered. I realized that she had the best of intentions, but had simply been ignorant of the problems that would result. My resentment of her disappeared.

I still needed to deal with the frustration and confusion which remained. I was doing everything possible in the situation. Why was it not working out? We had a real need for good medical care. In spite of my confusion, I continued to feel sure I would receive not only strength to solve my problem, but help with the problem itself.


I called my friend Ann, intending to leave a message on her recorder since I knew she had planned to be away from home. To my surprise she answered the phone. We discussed the situation. I had already begun to have doubts about the suitability of Dr. McGowen. From some of Ann's comments about him over the several days we had been discussing Dr. McGowen, I had begun to suspect that my father might not get along well with him. As Ann and I talked, I became more sure that things were as they should be—that Dr. McGowen was not the best doctor for Dad and that the best person would become available to us.

Ann and I took a few moments on the phone for prayer. I allowed the poise and calm that had carried me

See GOD'S on page 18.



The Wishing Caterpillar



Here I am in this mulberry tree
Munching and looking and wondering about me...
Lonely, limited, discontented me.

Content to munch leaves for lunch?
Something deep desires much more
Like comprehending my personal life's score.

I sigh... "I want to fly,
to venture beyond the sky,
Even if I need to die!"

"Look...here comes a lucky Butterfly
Flying and darting and owning the sky.
Going, going anywhere and everywhere.

Just doesn't seem fair...not fair
Being stuck in this grounded tree.
Pity, pity, pity me."


"You lucky Butterfly!
To be you, not me,
Could this exchange ever be?"

"Butterfly, you are so beautiful to see.
Happy, light, floating and free.
Destined to fly far. Not my lucky star."


"Well, what's the point in wishing?
Caterpillars are caterpillars.
Yet I wish I could get beyond wishing."

Summer going, day is over.
Put away wishes. Dream and rest
In my cocoon-secure nest.

Sleep is coming.
"Luck Butterfly, luck, luck Butterfly
Oh, how I wish..."



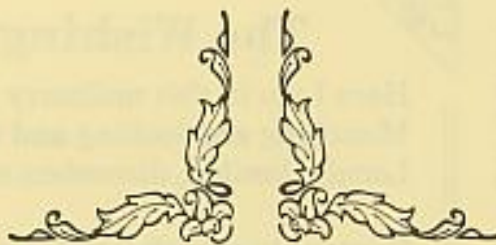
Paul Whitmoyer
Landisburg, Pennsylvania



Prayers Answered

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.]

Even when the air currents are ascending, no bird can soar except by outstretched wings. Prayer elevates man because it is a technique of progressing by the utilization of the ascending spiritual currents of the universe. (1002:1/91.8.9)

Apparently prayer is necessary to our growth and progress. There should then be a real and observable difference over time between the spiritual life of one who prays and one who does not. That may not be a specific answer to a specific prayer, but it certainly constitutes a general and beneficial consequence of prayer.

Prayer...is the most potent spiritual-growth stimulus. (1002:3/91.8.11)

Not only is it necessary to growth, it is the most potent stimulus!

The earnest and longing repetition of any petition, when such a prayer is the sincere expression of a child of God and is uttered in faith, no matter how ill-advised or impossible of direct answer, never fails to expand the soul's capacity for spiritual receptivity. (1621:1/144.4.2)

Prayer probably stimulates growth because it expands the soul's capacity for spiritual receptivity. Just what is "spiritual receptivity"? There is much about spiritual receptivity that is beyond me at this point, but I can imagine some of the possibilities. Spiritual receptivity would certainly include the ability to have one's spiritual impulses reinforced. For example, if it occurs to you to be unselfish, your Thought Adjuster

would immediately reinforce that thought with his influence. The degree to which you receive that reinforcement depends on your spiritual receptivity.

There are certain conditions which enhance the ability of your prayers to increase your spiritual receptivity. Repetition of the prayer helps. An earnest and longing attitude is important. The prayer should be a sincere expression from you in your role as God's child, i.e. asked as you would ask a beloved parent. I suspect that would be a loving request full of assurance and faith. I would not think the well-loved child would beg, demand, or command. The conditions specifically do not include that the prayer be well-advised nor capable of direct answer.

All of these conditions increase the power of your prayer to enlarge your spiritual receptivity. When all of the conditions are met, you are promised that the prayer never fails to enlarge spiritual receptivity.

Avoid praying much for yourself; pray more for the spiritual progress of your brethren. (1639:5/146.2.10)

Has it ever occurred to you that Jesus would not have told his followers to pray for the spiritual progress of their brethren if that sort of prayer would not be answered? You can actually do something for your brothers' and sisters' spiritual lives by praying for them. How might that work? Of course, the first and most obvious possibility is that as you pray for them, you will be more inclined to do something that will be of help to them. The spirit is leading you any time you reach out to another with love. You are more likely to respond to this spirit leading when you are

keeping the person in your prayers.

Have you ever been in need and had a friend call with just the words you needed to hear? Have you ever had a friend drop by and be the answer to your prayer? Maybe these things happen because your friend has been praying for your spiritual progress and the spirit led him or her to fill your need.

Do not be so slothful as to ask God to solve your difficulties, but never hesitate to ask him for wisdom and spiritual strength to guide and sustain you while you yourself resolutely and courageously attack the problems at hand. (999:8/91.6.5)

If you are to ask God for wisdom and spiritual strength as you deal with your problems, you can be pretty safe in assuming that these will be forthcoming—that your prayers for wisdom and spiritual strength will be answered. It is easy to overlook the value of what you are being promised here.

To be given wisdom as an answer to prayer means that you will see how spiritual principles and techniques combine with your human experience to provide solutions to your problems. Many people can recount an instance where they sought God's help on a problem and a way to handle the situation occurred to them within a short time—a wiser and more spiritual solution.

To be given spiritual strength means that you are helped to continue doing good when you thought you had reached the end of your strength. It means that you are empowered to do acts of spiritual courage you thought yourself incapable of—acts such as returning good for evil.

These are powerful answers to prayer!

Prayer is not a technique for curing real and organic diseases, but it has contributed enormously to the enjoyment of abundant health and to the cure of numerous mental, emotional, and nervous ailments. And even in actual bacterial disease, prayer has many times added to the efficacy of other remedial procedures. Prayer has turned many an irritable and complaining invalid into a paragon of patience and made him an inspiration to all other human sufferers. (999:5/91.6.2)

We are discouraged from renouncing all physical remedies in favor of "spiritual" cures for illness. On the other hand, there are so many ways in which prayer may help one's physical health that it would seem foolish to fail to pray for this very important component of a happy life.

No matter how difficult it may be to reconcile the scientific doubtings regarding the efficacy of prayer with the ever-present urge to seek help and guidance from divine sources, never forget that the sincere prayer of faith is a mighty force for the promotion of personal happiness, individual self-control, social harmony, moral progress, and spiritual attainment. (999:6/9.6.3)

In answer to the "sincere prayer of faith" you can count on receiving "personal happiness, individual self-control, social harmony, moral progress, and spiritual attainment." These are powerful and desirable answers to prayer. Who knows how many people are seeking personal happiness by the diverse and ineffective methods of accumulating wealth, competing for power, using various drugs, or experimenting with sexual liaisons. An extraordinary number of people have entered 12-step programs in search of self-control. These promised answers to prayer are of great value.

Remember, even if prayer does not change God, it very often effects great and lasting changes in the one who prays in faith and confident

expectation. Prayer has been the ancestor of much peace of mind, cheerfulness, calmness, courage, self-mastery, and fair-mindedness in the men and women of the evolving races. (998:3/91.4.5)

Here we have a another list of answers to prayer which can confidently be expected: peace of mind, cheerfulness, calmness, courage, self-mastery and fair-mindedness. We know in advance that prayers for these attributes are likely to be answered.

Think for a moment of the circumstances in which you would be elated to be able to have peace of mind...courage...calmness. The possibility that you may ask for and receive these qualities is wonderful news.

The "technique" is to pray in faith and confident expectation. The very fact that you are assured that these qualities are very often the result of prayer can give a boost to your faith and your ability to pray in confident expectation.

God answers man's prayer by giving him an increased revelation of truth, an enhanced appreciation of beauty, and an augmented concept of goodness. (1002.3/91.8.11)

Here are more clues as to what you may expect as answers to your prayers. One of the first things many people begin to notice as their spiritual lives bloom is an enhanced appreciation of beauty. They more frequently notice sunsets, flowers, hills, and clouds, and these experiences of beauty tend to lift them into small moments of worship.

I noticed an increased revelation of truth this morning. I was praying for God to help me calm my distress regarding difficulties in assuring that my father got proper care in the hospital. Basically I was ready to fight my parents' battle for them. The truth that occurred to me as I sat in the hospital cafeteria eating lunch and praying was this: it is not God's way for me to abuse his other children in order to help my parents. This truth led me to search for more appropri-

ate ways to "fight" my parents' battle.

Genuine prayer adds to spiritual growth, modifies attitudes, and yields that satisfaction which comes from communion with divinity. (1002:2/91.8.10)

Here are more answers to prayer which may not be the result of a specific prayer, but we can be sure that they will follow from genuine prayer. Modification of attitudes is a tremendously valuable gift. So much of our distress and emotional pain in this life comes from our attitudes. One particularly oppressive attitude is the desperation that results from assuming that external things must be as we want before we can be happy. Such an attitude causes us to seek to control the people, events and things around us. With our focus on the external we overlook our own inner life, which is the source of true happiness. Genuine prayer changes our attitude of desperate control-seeking. Once we truly understand that our inner relationship with our Father is the true source of happiness, we begin to release the need to control all around us for our own benefit. We begin to offer ourselves in service to those very persons we were striving to control. And when we do, the circuit of love is completed. Love flows to us and through us. The result is a happiness which is a quantum leap beyond anything the self-seeking life has to offer.

"Your persistence, however, is not to win favor with God but to change your earth attitude and to enlarge your soul's capacity for spirit receptivity." (1619:3/144.2.5)

Here is another reference to prayer changing your attitude, and it gives an idea of one of the best methods of cooperating with God's answer to your prayers—persistence. Often when you pray, the only way for your prayer to be answered is for your attitude to change. When you pray for relief from the emotional pain you are suffering in the face of your problems, what you need most is to stop viewing the problems as

See NOTES on page 18.

Channeling, "Teachers" and Revelation

By Kaye and Bill Cooper
Houston, Texas

This article is intended neither to validate nor invalidate channeling. What it is intended to do is to recommend a process by which individuals may deal with phenomenal occurrences such as channeling and make decisions as to their worth.

A process of rational response is both appropriate and imperative because extraordinary psycho-spiritual events should be expected to take place more or less continuously among Urantia Book readers.

People who read *The Urantia Book* will probably always be interested in "channeling" and things of a similar nature. After all, the book itself came into human hands in a manner that is superficially similar to channeling.

ATTITUDES

Our Personal Attitudes

Why is it important to even consider these strange phenomenon? Why can't we simply reject them all out of hand and stay firmly in the traditional camp. That way there's less danger that we will be viewed by society at large as a wierdo cult. It's bad enough to have to overcome the fact that the book claims to be a revelation written by spiritual beings and all the secrecy surrounding its "similar-to-channeling" origins.

But there is an expensive price for this closed attitude. It is important not to reject unusual religious experiences, because Jesus' religion is one of personal religious experience—and I think that can involve some very unusual events. It is described as "faith voyages of daring adventure out upon the high seas of unexplored truth." (1729) This is not a religion for the faint of heart nor for

those who reject spiritual phenomena doctrinairely. Jesus was considered by large segments of his listeners to be "beside himself." If we follow him in the path of spiritual adventure, we may be judged the same way. That is an inherent risk of this religion of personally validated religious experience.

On the last page of the book we are told that the greatest adventure in this mortal life is to attempt to achieve better communication with the spark of God that indwells our minds. Communicating with your Thought Adjuster is not your everyday, ordinary traditional religion, and it will not conform itself to anyone's expectations, dogmas, or doctrines. It doesn't come to one who stays safely within the boundaries of reading, thinking, analyzing, and following logic. Trying to communicate with your Thought Adjuster puts you in danger of discovering new truths that no one has heard before! "The religion of the spirit leaves you forever free to follow the truth wherever the leadings of the spirit may take you. And who can judge—perhaps this spirit may have something to impart to this generation which other generations have refused to hear?" (1731:3/155.6.5)

The Costs of Being Wrong

On the other hand, those of us who were in the movement ten years ago know from experience the grief that can come from listening to someone who is getting messages from beyond the material world. The movement was suddenly and dramatically split between those who believed in Vern Grimsley's messages and those who did not. It did not require very many months to be

able to prove the inaccuracy of his predictions. When the time came for the predicted war, there was only the silence of peace—and the pain of wounded faith.

But something else happened during those months that is very relevant to the current conflict and to future exploration into strange religious experiences. The believers in Vern's messages found themselves attacked publicly by old and dear friends. Some were shorn of all authority in an organization they had served loyally for many years. Most of his followers were suddenly outcasts in the group they considered to be family. To the cost of being wrong was added the devastating destruction of close friendships and the difficulty of attempting to return to the group or remaining in isolated rejection. *But friendships did not have to be destroyed. Deep wounds did not have to be inflicted.*

Since our religion is one of spiritual exploration, freedom and personal experience, being wrong sometimes is an inevitable aspect of it. So what our religion needs is an attitude which tolerates efforts to have closer contact with God—even if they seem unusual—and even if they are misguided.

What I propose is that we seek the understanding and the inspiration to make the costs of being "wrong" less devastating. In the current conflict either the channeling is being initiated by beings connected to our spiritual planetary government—or it isn't. If channeling groups such as the Woods Cross group are actually in contact with Melchizedek, Abraham or other non-materia—but real—persons, then

those of us who did not ask for a "teacher" will be "wrong." If these groups are in error and the information coming through the human channels is coming from the fertile unconscious mind of the channeler, then those who were involved may one day be proved "wrong."

Our Group Attitude

I suggest that we find a way to continue being unified, allowing each person to decide whether channeling is of value to him or her without being cut off from friends who have not made the same choice. Then when one group or the other is proven "wrong," there will be no obstacles to continued friendship and association, no painful memories. Those who were proven "wrong" can say, "Well, I was wrong. I wish I hadn't made that error, but these things happen. Fortunately I learned a lot from the experience. Let's get on with the business at hand." And those who were proven "right" can graciously welcome their brothers and sisters into continued service with them.

The way to nurture unity (without uniformity) among ourselves involves establishing an atmosphere free of pressures so that individuals may judge for themselves whether they choose to participate in channeling. "Pressure...never stimulates growth....Spiritual growth is greatest where all external pressures are at a minimum." (1135:1/103.5.11)

I am not suggesting that the Urantia movement as a whole should rush off in pursuit of every unusual religious practice that comes along, or that it should take such a flexible attitude that the world is unable to perceive what it believes in. Jesus admonished the apostles not to offer their individual and conflicting interpretations of parables as a part of their public teaching. (1691:2/151.2.7) In a similar vein believers in the book should refrain from representing disputed ideas as being basic to the Urantia movement. For years I assumed that reincarnation was a basic tenant of Unity—be-

cause of statements by a member of a Unity church on a television show. Only recently did I discover that to be inaccurate. Unity is simply extremely tolerant of any beliefs held by its members. I would not want the world to be as unsure about what *The Urantia Book* teaches.

The leadership of the Urantia movement has every right to withhold sponsorship of a controversial movement, such as channeling, so long as they allow the individual the freedom to investigate on his own. Study groups have every right to require that those who are involved in channeling not impose their interest on the group. Individuals have every right to express their individual choices not to be involved in channeling, firmly and definitely. What I suggest is that they do so without denouncing (overtly or by implication) the character, loyalty or mental acumen of someone who has chosen differently.

I think Jesus set the example for such freedom from pressure. *The Urantia Book* describes two instances in which Jesus was faced with the preaching of someone he had not trained. One of these was simply a person who had heard of his teachings and was attempting to teach the new religion. Jesus warned his apostles at that time, "In the generations to come many who are not wholly worthy will do many strange things in my name, but I will not forbid them." (1764:3/159.2.1)

The second situation was even further afield from what the apostles wanted to be happening. Kirmeth, a trance prophet, was causing trouble in camp with his visions and his teaching. Jesus insisted that he be allowed entire freedom for a few days. People recognized that his teaching was not compatible with the gospel. After a few days Kirmeth left taking a handful of "unstable and erratic souls." (1666:2/148.8.3) I think these examples encourage us not to rush to pass judgement and punish, but to allow personal choice to function.

Personal Choice

I would like to share with you from research and experience things I think are helpful in evaluating the worth of channeling and other extraordinary religious experiences. My own approach in evaluating such phenomena is three-fold: (1) research relevant information in the book, (2) depend on the Spirit of Truth to guide me in my decision whether to try it for myself, and (3) if I do decide to try it, use the test of living truth.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

Personal revelation is a commonplace phenomenon. Yes, it happens frequently. People may not always recognize what it is, but it happens all the time—especially to people who are deeply interested in things spiritual. God speaks to us constantly. Sometimes we get the message, and that is personal revelation. So, having contact with the spiritual world is not an unusual event. Even mysticism, "as a technique of the cultivation of the consciousness of the presence of God" is described as "altogether praiseworthy" so long as it avoids social isolation and religious fanaticism. (1000:2/91.7.1)

On the other hand, having apparent contact with the spirit world while in a trance state is *not* a part of ongoing personal revelation. The book states unequivocally, "Under no circumstances should the trancelike state of visionary consciousness be cultivated as a religious experience." This state is described as, a "diffusion of consciousness with vivid islands of focal attention operating on a comparatively passive intellect." "The mystic status is favored by such things as: physical fatigue, fasting, psychic dissociation, profound aesthetic experiences, vivid sex impulses, fear, anxiety, rage, and wild dancing." (1099-1100/100.5) Any unusual religious experience proceeding from such a trance state should be highly suspect.

See *CHANNELING* on page 20.

I Won't Run, Don't Ask Me

By David Jaquith
Newberg, Oregon

I do not seek, nor will I accept nomination to the presidency of the United States of America.

There. It's finally out.

Sorry to be so long in letting you know. I realize my reluctance to declare my non-candidacy has made it difficult for all you presidential hopefuls to know whether to toss your hat, a towel, or your cookies.

I'm not all that political, but it's clear to me that politicians are necessary, if only to assure that editorial cartoonists will always have a job.

And what a job they do. President Bush's chin, lip and brow must ache day and night from all that stretching. His own face is fairly forgettable, but not his graven image. There's talk going around the lunch crowd at J's that President Bush had trouble getting a check cashed at Nap's until he pulled a cartoonist's sketch of himself out of his wallet.

"Criticism is easy; art is hard,"

goes a saying. For today's politician, the cartoonist's art is hard, all right. Hard on the ego. The pen is sometimes dipped in battery acid. Look what the Oregonian's Jack Ohman does to our Guv.

We hear: "Art is values expressed through beauty." Can a cartoon be beautiful? Despite the tortured contours, the bubble gum faces and highwater trousers—or perhaps because of them—I find a splendid artistry in the editorial cartoon. As a onetime dabbler in the craft, I appreciate our own newspaper's making room on the op/ed page each week for talking silly putty.

History should be taught in schools using textbooks filled with cartoons from newspapers around the world. You'd get the pros and cons of issues, the romp, pomp and pathos of the moments of our lives.

Who better than "Cathy" can

Lighten Up



teach us the subtleties and hysterias of low self-esteem. Here politicians can take lessons in the refinements of indecision.

U.S. presidents are to love and to hate, to praise and deplore. What on earth would we do without a president to blame for all the ills of man, beast and single-cell amoeba?

It's an impossible, complex job, second-guessing faulty intelligence, and knowing which economic adviser to fire and which to invite for lunch. I figure that if while in office, presidents somehow manage to do as much good as damage, we-the-people should count ourselves fortunate.

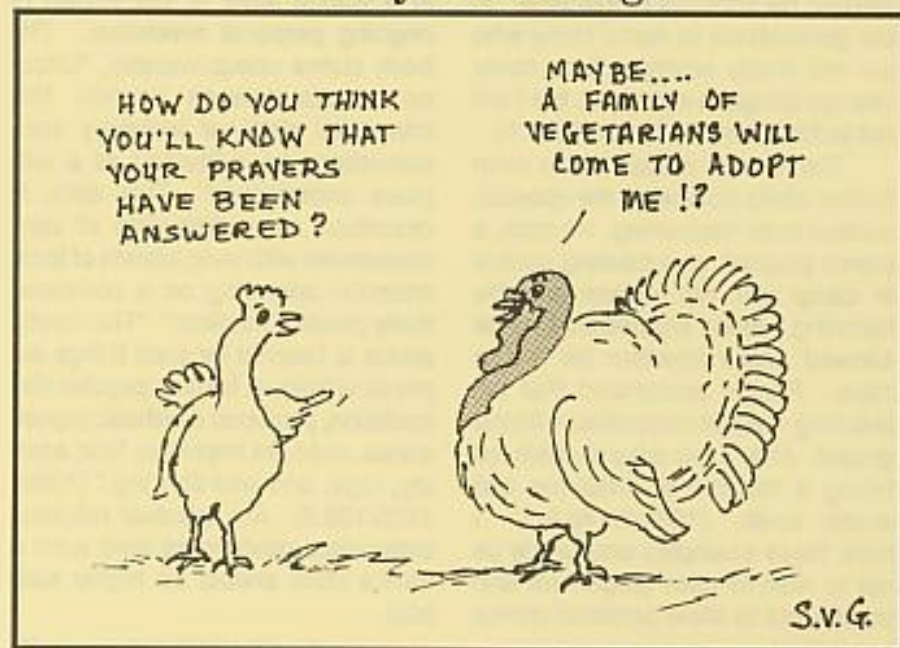
My wifely spousemate Mary is not one to hang on a politician's every word. I try as best I can to help her grasp the subtle nuances of partisan politics. Today I was explaining to her how campaign issues develop. "It's a matter of progression," I told her. "There's A-velop, B-velop, C-velop, D-velop..."

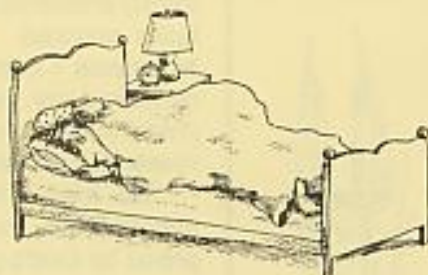
She gave me one of her looks and came back with, "Yeah, and when you get to N-velop, you can fold that joke and mail it somewhere."

Her retort got my stamp of approval. This shameless political pundit punned it once too often.

Mary has this quaint idea that people should get along together and

Poultry Ponderings





Give It Up!

Paula Thompson
Golden, Colorado

When the ride of life gets bumpy,
filled with sorrow, fear, and doubt.
Why stand on so sad and grumpy?
Stop, get off, and sit it out!

You don't have to keep on swingin'
just because the crowd is scowlin'
Why wait until the bell is ringin'
Quit, give up, and throw the towel in!

It's true no one promised a gentle breeze,
but hey, come on, get real here!
If you had seen the choppy seas
you wouldn't have left the pier.

So stay at the bottom if you take a notion
that the climb before you seems too steep.
Heaven may await you across the ocean,
but why go in if it seems too deep?

No one will blame you if you don't keep drinking
from that bitter, too full cup.
Why keep rowing when the ship is sinking?
Relax, kick back, and give it up!

And those who run, who keep on trying
at this most hectic, grueling pace,
though weary from their second mulling,
they will win the human race.

Reprinted from the Spring 1992 Issue of *Uranian Sojourn*.

treat each other with respect, most especially when they disagree. If you don't have harmony in your own heart, she says, you don't have the answer for your family, your community or your country. How politically naive can you get?

We've just received an invitation to an international conference in Caux, Switzerland, held each summer since 1938. It's the one Mary attended a few years back. She is still talking about it. The theme this summer is "Democracy starts with me." Intriguing theme. Especially as so many nations around the world—the U.S. included—are struggling to learn the magic formula that makes democracy work.

The conference, sponsored by Moral Re-Armament, seeks to provide an atmosphere of trust, wherein people of all backgrounds can discuss their problems freely, whether the problems are political, social or personal.

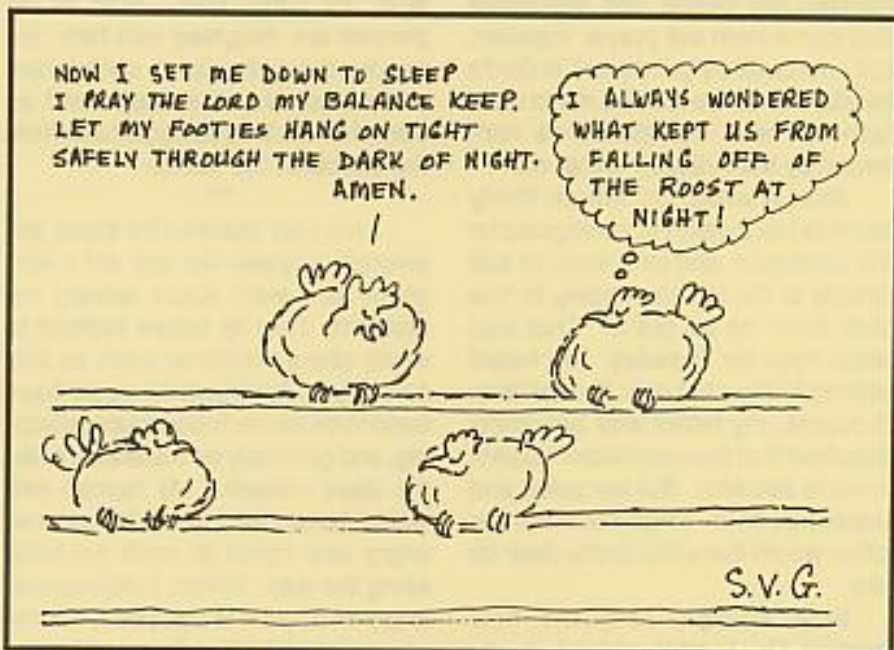
The well-designed invitation speaks of the need to build—and rebuild—"the moral and spiritual foundations of democracy." For

democracies old and new, it says, the challenge of the decade is fourfold: "To create stability without stagnation, freedom without anarchy, economic development without ecological disaster, and a global society without losing our individual, national

or regional identities."

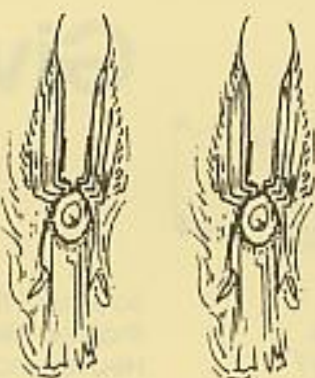
Are you listening, frontrunners, dark horses, lame ducks, shoo-ins, write-ins, encumbered and incompetent incumbents? Am I listening? This is nitty gritty, grass roots, high class middle class stuff."

Poultry Ponderings



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)

"He shall give his angels charge over thee
to keep thee in all thy ways.
They shall bear thee up in their hands,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Psalms 91: 11-12

One evening in 1981 my friend, Sandy Garrick, was driving to Duane Faw's house in Malibu from Los Angeles. The road was often strewn with fallen boulders after a rain, and such was the case this night. Sandy

GODS from page 11.

through so far to return. I could have resisted the peace and assurance that came from our prayer together, but I deliberately put myself in God's hands. I knew he wanted me to have faith—to have my assurance reinforced by the Adjuster within me.

After a while, Dr. Wilson finally came to talk to me. He apologized for the confusion and promised to talk directly to Dr. Hunter—going in "the back door" as he put it. That was about noon on Tuesday. We heard nothing further that day. By that time, of course, my father was becoming disturbed that the new doctor had not come to see him. But my poise and assurance held. I was sure that my father would have the doctor *best for him*.

Sure enough, early the next morning Dr. Hunter arrived in my

was used to working his way around and through them. Suddenly he rounded a sharp curve on Stunt Road (so named because it was often used for movie stunts) and was confronted by ten to 20 large boulders lined up down the hill and across the road. Unable to stop in time, he was forced to try and steer between them. Somehow he cleared them, stopped the car, and got out because, as he put it, "I was a bit shook up."

He looked at the boulders littering the road and realized there was no way the car could have slipped through them. He stood still for a moment, murmured, "Thank you, Father," and continued on his way to Duane's house.♦

father's room. Like Dr. McGowen, he is an excellent doctor, but his manner suits my father well. Both of my parents are delighted with him. He exudes the enthusiasm, confidence, and friendliness that they need as they start the long struggle back from the effects of the stroke.

I am very thankful for these answered prayers—for the aid I was given as I went about solving my problem. I am by nature inclined to worry about problems such as this one. My human reaction would have been to be tense, have trouble sleeping, and generally be miserable while the days passed. My human self would have been likely to become angry and upset at each set-back along the way. In fact, I did become angry and upset at one point, but my prayer for understanding was imme-

diately answered and my poise eventually restored. I believe that the assurance I continued to feel as I consulted my inner self at various points in the process was faith—the reassuring influence of the Adjuster.

No matter how many times I experience it, I continue to be surprised by God's generous gifts. My prayer was answered with increased faith, with inner peace ... and with the best doctor for my dad, as well.♦

NOTES from page 13.

great tribulations which must be taken away from you. You need to view your problem as a challenge which not only calls forth your ingenuity in making human adjustments, but also spurs you to discover new ways to function in partnership with God.

The way to get this new attitude is to be persistent in your prayers. I do not know just how it works, but I suspect that your renewed commitment to the prayer goal each time you pray about it enables the spirit to work with you to make the necessary changes.

I went through a period a couple of years ago in which I was seeking a release from the emotional pain of my challenges. The answer came slowly, over months. (There's nothing like continuing pain to motivate you to be persistent in prayer!) I began to have small insights, all of which seemed to point in the same direction: you must think of the problems as challenges from which you learn—*necessary* challenges, which you must come to expect and accept.

Once I realized that my attitude needed to change in order for my prayer to be answered and my pain to cease, I started praying for the new and more accurate goal. Because I was more accurately focused, the insights came more easily and more frequently. And my answer has come gradually. Many of the challenges in my life are less painful to me. So much of what had been painful, more or less faded away.

See NOTES on page 24.

PARENTING

By Gene Joyce
Richardson, Texas

Music, Maestro, Please

By Jeannie George
Richardson, Texas

During the twenty months with my grandson, Daniel, music has opened up many avenues of communication. These facts emerged just by contemplating and rehashing the fun I have had with Daniel. Many of Daniel's accomplishments had a connection to music.

Being a grandparent, I wanted to enjoy Daniel, so naturally I noticed what made him happy. I soon realized what held his attention and what would get a reaction. I discovered these important clues about how music led to communication, learning and enjoyment all because I took the time to be interested in Daniel.

I cuddled and rocked Daniel many times before I remembered that grandmothers should sing to their grandchildren. My first rendition was the musical scales. Never mind how boring that may be to you or me, Daniel loved it. His dark eyes popped open and searched my face while he listened. This encouraged me to brush up on some lullabies and nursery rhymes.

It became a regular routine for me to sing to him, and when he was three months old, a surprising thing happened. After I had sung a medley of nursery rhymes to Daniel, he grunted out his own song. Imagine my surprise and glee when he sang his song to me. Of course, Daniel wouldn't do it when his parents were around. They just laughed and said,

"Now Grandma, you're just imagining things."

So to prove to myself that this wasn't just a proud grandmother hallucinating, I put Daniel to a test. I made two sounds and waited to see if he would respond. Sure enough, he made two grunting sounds. I was elated. When I made a high or low sound, he would raise or lower his sounds too. Daniel wanted to communicate. Eventually, he did respond in his parents' presence. But it remained Daniel's and my game because his parents were busy just taking care of his physical needs. (This is not a put-down, but a reality.)

When Daniel was nine months old, I put a tape of lullabies on the stereo, but he showed his disinterest by crawling off. So I played Handel's "Messiah" for myself—and there was Daniel pulling up to the speaker. Amazed that he would show interest in this music, I tested him again some weeks later. I turned on the "Messiah" and Daniel came straight to the speaker to listen. Gradually he increased his listening time to three of the pieces on the CD, and then away he would go to his toys. His attention span was increasing. By pure accident again, I discovered that at the age of nine months Daniel had his own preference in music.

As Daniel became more agile and active, he exerted his first show of independence by not cooperating

when his mother was dressing or diapering him. She would have to chase him around the crib to get each piece of clothing on him. I suggested singing to him. Music worked its magic spell again. Daniel sat still.

Daniel, of his own volition, eagerly trots into the bedroom at bedtime or to the bathroom at bath time, all because Amy, his mother, sings to him. I asked to fetch a stuffed dog, Daniel retrieves it; and I sing a ditty, "Bow wow wow, I am little Daniel's dog, bow wow wow." This helps him identify objects, while getting a reward when he brings it back. This evolved naturally.

We now have a large repertoire of songs with sounds and hand movements. Daniel babbles his versions of the songs. The funniest is at the end of "Old McDonald had a Farm" when Daniel puts his head back and sings "ei-ei-oh-oooh." (the "oooh" goes up.) Daniel loves this. His parents taught him that version, and they both enthusiastically interact with Daniel musically because it's so much fun. His father has composed a baby rap song.

Daniel can say "ABC" because of singing. He is keenly alerted to letters and numbers. The counting rhythm lures him and he nods his head, keeping time. Dancing is Daniel's specialty as it is with all babies, a universal ability. He bends his knees, lowers his head while moving his head, rear end, and arms in time to the music—down and dirty.

Music gets Daniel's attention, keeps him entertained, has encouraged him to develop cooperative habits, helped him develop movements, increased his attention span, uses up some of that excess toddler energy, calms and quiets him, and supplies a natural teaching lure. Music communicates.

And remember, I discovered all of this and much more by reflecting on my observations, but most importantly by just having a grand time with Daniel.

Music parents, please. "

CHANNELING from page 15.

Assuming that an incident of channeling can be distinguished from the trance state, what else sets it apart from the more-or-less constant insights that arise in our daily lives? One thing that is unusual about channeling is that it is so overt. The *coincidences* of life which we suspect may be angelic guidance leave a lot of room for interpretation. Impressions which we think may be spirit leading are also quite vague. But in the case of channeling someone is speaking words which are purported to come directly from a spiritual being. Here there is less comfort zone for equivocation.

So what are the possibilities given in *The Urantia Book*? Do such things happen? Do spiritual beings contact human beings? I was surprised to find more support for the possibility than I had remembered.

At one point the book categorizes revelation into two groups: "Truth is always a revelation: auto-revelation when it emerges as a result of the work of the indwelling Adjuster; epochal revelation when it is presented by the function of some other celestial agency, group, or personality." (1109:4/101.4.3)

I'll deal with autorevelation and the Adjuster later. First let's look at some of the possible sources of epochal revelation.

Epochal Revelation

Guardian Angels. Mortals in this first life are not usually aware of their guardian seraphim. Their teaching is indirect, achieved through the social, ethical and moral environment of their subjects. They do not make contact with human beings except in emergencies and such occurrences are described as "very unusual." (1245-6/113.4-5)

On the other hand the guardian angels "have functioned as the spiritual helpers of mortal man in all the great events of the past and the present. In many a revelation 'the word was spoken by angels', many of the mandates of heaven have been 'received by the ministry of angels.'"

(1241:1/113.0.1) One recipient of an angelic message may have been Joseph, the father of Jesus, who was spoken to in a dream by a brilliant celestial messenger. (1347:3/122.4.1)

Master Seraphim of Planetary Supervision. These angels to whom the reserve corps of destiny are attached "so manipulate planetary conditions and so associate circumstances as favorably to influence the spheres of human activity to which they are attached....They function as ideational clearing-houses, mind focalizers, and project promoters. While unable to inject new and higher conceptions into human minds, they often act to intensify some higher ideal which has already appeared within a human intellect....the master seraphim insure planetary progress against vital jeopardy through the mobilization, training, and maintenance of the reserve corps of destiny." This reserve corps of destiny numbered 962 at the time of the book's writing and less than 20 contact personalities were conscious of their connection to this corps. These mortal reservists are described as being "little known to their fellows except in those rare social emergencies and spiritual exigencies wherein these reserve personalities function for the prevention of the breakdown of evolutionary culture or the extinction of the light of living truth." (1254-1258/114.6-7)

Cosmic reserve corps. This group of human beings may be in contact with the planetary government, but there is so little said about them that it is hard to tell. The book's total comment on this group follows: "The cosmic reserve corps of universe-conscious citizens on Urantia now numbers over one thousand mortals whose insight of cosmic citizenship far transcends the sphere of their terrestrial abode, but I am forbidden to reveal the real nature of the function of this unique group of living human beings." (1258:5/114.7.13)

Seraphic Evangelists. Seraphic evangelists function primarily on the

Mansion Worlds, but even on Urantia they "counsel the human teachers of truth and righteousness." The example given was the "Twenty-third Psalm" which the book describes as being "whispered in the night season to the shepherd boy." (553:1/48.6.10)

Social Architects. "Social architects do everything within their province and power to bring together suitable individuals that they may constitute efficient and agreeable working groups on earth; and sometimes such groups have found themselves reassociated on the mansion worlds for continued fruitful service." (432:6/39.3.5) Unfortunately nothing specific is said about how these seraphim might influence individuals to come together.

Heavenly Reproducers. One type of Celestial Artisan called heavenly reproducers is able to contact certain mortals on earth. "So versatile are these artisans that, when they function en masse, they are able to re-enact an age, and in collaboration with the seraphic ministers they can actually portray the eternal values of the spirit world to the mortal seers of time." (501:10/44.2.11)

Prophets. Then there is that category of mortals called "prophets." Although very little is said about the process of prophecy, we are assured that it is real. "But true prophetic vision is a superpsychologic presentiment. Such visitations are not pseudo hallucinations, neither are they trancelike ecstasies." (1000:4/91.7.3) One example is, however, described. While he was in prison, a group of John's disciples visited him and criticized Jesus for not attempting to gain John's release. John replied with great power regarding the divinity of Jesus. Afterward he was "much agitated for he perceived that he had uttered a prophecy." (1507:2/135.11.3)

Melchizedek. Machiventa Melchizedek was in contact in some unspecified way with certain prophets and seers at least for the period of time between his own incarnation

and the bestowal of Michael. "This same Melchizedek continued to collaborate throughout the nineteen succeeding centuries with the many prophets and seers, thus endeavoring to keep alive the truths of Salem until the fullness of the time for Michael's appearance on earth." (1024:6/93.10.4)

The Contacts of One World With Another. "Certain wise men of earth knew of Michael's impending arrival. Through the contacts of one world with another, these wise men of spiritual insight learned of the forthcoming bestowal of Michael on Urantia. And the seraphim did, through the midway creatures, make announcement to a group of Chaldean priests whose leader was Ardnon. These men of God visited the newborn child. The only supernatural event associated with the birth of Jesus was this announcement to Ardnon and his associates by the seraphim of former attachment to Adam and Eve in the first garden." (1317:3/119.7.6) This contact may have been made through a dream, because the event is later described this way: "These priests from Mesopotamia had been told sometime before by a strange religious teacher of their country that he had had a dream in which he was informed that 'the light of life' was about to appear on earth as a babe and among the Jews." (1352:2/122.8.6)

These quotes do not clarify whether Ardnon was the strange teacher or not. The strange teacher may have been a midwayer who assisted the angels in making the announcement—or perhaps the angel herself. Nor is it clear whether the seraphic announcement to Ardnon's priests was an example of "the contacts of one world with another" or an additional event.

Gabriel. And, of course there were the two announcements by Gabriel to Elizabeth and Mary. (1345-1347/122.2-3)

Apparently contacts by all of these celestial beings with various mortals on Urantia are considered

"epochal" not autorevelation. This enlarges the concept of epochal revelation from my previous concepts. The contacts of Melchizedek throughout the period of time between his incarnation and the bestowal of Michael would, according to the quote on autorevelation vs. epochal revelation, be considered epochal revelation. "Epochal" revelation appears to be much more ongoing than I had thought!

This also changes the expectations as to the quality of epochal revelation. Because of the care with which *The Urantia Book* was transmitted, we can be fairly sure that there was very little human distortion of it by the mind of the human being through whom it was transmitted. One might, from that experience, expect epochal revelation to be of a higher quality than auto-revelation, i.e. less distorted by human interpretation. However, assuming Melchizedek's collaboration with various prophets and seers was epochal revelation, I would have to say that the various Old Testament prophets certainly varied in their ability to interpret the messages and even added their own distortions. So the talent and involvement of the human mind receiving the revelation affects the purity or contamination of revelation, even epochal revelation.

Autorevelation

Autorevelation is described as originating with the individual's Thought Adjuster. It is extremely difficult for us to distinguish between input from the Adjuster and that which originates in our own minds. The primary reason for this is that the Adjuster has no distinguishable way of communicating with our minds. He uses the same mental mechanisms that we use. Therefore the sound of our own thoughts is exactly like the sound of the Adjuster communicating through our conscious minds.

The truth that comes to us through our own minds is termed "spiritual insight." This spiritual insight results from "the impress made upon the mind of man by the com-

bined operations of the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth as they function amid and upon the ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings of the evolving sons of God." (1105:0/101.1.3)

The Adjuster apparently uses at least two methods of communication: voice and picturization. (1199:3/109.5.2 and 1209:5/110.6.5) The most common opportunities for communication are during worship, while asleep, and in flights of liberated but controlled creative imagination. (1203:3/110.1.1 and 1199:2/109.5.1) And the greatest interference with this communication arises from our "unsteady and rapidly shifting mental attitudes" and our own "preconceived opinions, settled ideas, and long-standing prejudices." (1199:4/109.5.3)

By far most of the ideas which seem to pop into our heads come from our unconscious processes. Our unconscious mind can function in much the same way as our conscious minds. It is capable of coordinating information and drawing conclusions, which it presents to us in final form. It is also capable of a great deal of creative imagination.

All of this is so complicated and the distinction so treacherous that we are advised that, "a human being would do better to err in rejecting an Adjuster's expression through believing it to be a purely human experience than to blunder into exalting a reaction of the mortal mind to the sphere of divine dignity. Remember, the influence of a Thought Adjuster is for the most part, though not wholly, a superconscious experience." (1208:4/110.5.5)

Now we're getting somewhere! We can just ignore all those insights that come to us and any suspicious leadings, voices, or visions. They're just the product of our fertile imaginations. Better to stay on safe ground and let well enough alone, right? Sorry, I can't recommend that.

I cannot ignore the "great challenge to modern man." Remember

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the last page of the book, the place where the author always reiterates the thing he most wants you to get from his book? The last page of *The Urantia Book* says, "Man's greatest adventure in the flesh consists in the well-balanced and sane effort to advance the borders of self-consciousness out through the dim realms of embryonic soul-consciousness in a wholehearted effort to reach the borderland of spirit-consciousness—contact with the divine presence." (2097:2/196.3.34) And if that were not enough to spur me on to seek this communication with my Adjuster, this next quote would do it. Jesus' religion is described as a "religion based on personal spiritual relations with the Universal Father and wholly validated by the supreme authority of genuine personal experience." (2087:4/106.0.4) *Spiritual progress on this planet can and should lead to our hearing the Adjuster's voice and seeing his picturizations. So how do we deal with this warning that it would be better to think that God's voice was only our own than to think that our own voice was God's?*

What I do, is to assume that insights I receive are either from my own unconscious or are adequately distorted by my own mind, so that I cannot simply accept them as a revelation from God. But that doesn't mean that I ignore these insights. It means that I keep in mind that they *might* be genuine inspirations and test the nature and quality of their content.

Epochal Revelation, Autorevelation and Channeling

So how does what the book says about autorevelation relate to epochal revelation and channeling? Channeling may be any of these:

- ...the uprising of the channeler's subconscious.
- ...autorevelation, more or less distorted by the mind of the channeler.
- ...epochal revelation, more or less distorted by the mind of

the channeler.

Jesus warned, "Mark you well my words, Nathaniel, nothing which human nature has touched can be regarded as infallible. Through the mind of man divine truth may indeed shine forth, but always of relative purity and partial divinity." (1768:4/159.4.8) Because of this warning, I can't accept unquestioningly the product of any channeler—just as I do not accept unquestioningly the insights of my own mind (which may or may not be autorevelation).

The most reliable approach I can think of is to treat channeling as I do personal insights: Keep in mind that the material *might* be coming from a source beyond the channeler and test the nature and quality of its content.

TESTING CONTENT LETTING THE SPIRIT LEAD

Over the years I have run across many instances of channeling and other things vaguely similar. Because it is my policy to remain open to the possibility that such things may have value, I try to get a chance to hear or read some of the material. I depend upon the Spirit of Truth to confirm truth for me wherever I find it. Jesus said, "Those who are born of the spirit of God shall henceforth discern the word of God regardless of whence it appears to take origin. Divine truth must not be discounted because the channel of its bestowal is apparently human." (1732:5/155.6.12)

The Truth Response

When I read the material, I feel for a truth response within me. My mind is asking such questions as:

Is this material consistent with my highest values and my understanding of God's way and God's attitudes?

Is it consistent with the truths of The Urantia Book?

Does it meet Jesus' test: "What does it do for the human soul? does it bring God to man? does it bring man to God?" (1388:5/126.2.5)

When I read *The Urantia Book*, my truth responses hum. I don't have

to do much sorting out there. With other material I find some of it rings true and some does not, so I keep what I can use and throw the rest away. This aid from the Spirit of Truth is a long-standing aspect of my life that I can count on. The truth response is described this way in the book: "Intellectual self-consciousness can discover the beauty of truth, its spiritual quality, not only by the philosophic consistency of its concepts, but more certainly and surely by the unerring response of the ever-present Spirit of Truth." (42:7/2.7.6)

Each of us has this great source of guidance in our lives. The Spirit of Truth is perceivable to us. The believers gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost felt a "strange presence in the room." They "became conscious of a new and profound sense of spiritual joy, security, and confidence." (2059:1/194.0.1)

We are capable, with the aid of the Spirit of Truth, to recognize truth in any material. However, it is extremely important to maintain a strong determination to perceive the truth. We are strongly inclined to hear what we *want* to hear and to believe what we *want* to believe. The costs of fooling ourselves can be among the most painful events of our lives and can detrimentally affect those around us.

There are several ways to decrease the danger of fooling yourself: (1) be sincere in your desire for truth, (2) be willing to look honestly at your own desires and motives, (3) want God's will more than your own, (4) take seriously the tests mentioned above (comparison to your values, consistency with *The Urantia Book*, and "Jesus's test"), and (5) get plenty of practice in perceiving the truth response by making truth seeking an ongoing part of your daily life.

Ability to recognize the truth content in channeling does not, however, necessarily make us able to determine the *facts* in the situation. Because a channeling contains much truth does not automatically prove that the channeler is really in

contact with the supermortal planetary government. Just as one "can be technically right as to fact and everlastingly wrong in the truth," so one cannot necessarily judge the factual accuracy of something by its truth content. Jesus commented on this relationship between fact and truth when he said about the Scriptures: "Many of these books were not written by the persons whose names they bear, but that in no way detracts from the value of the truths which they contain. If the story of Jonah should not be a fact, even if Jonah had never lived, still would the profound truth of this narrative, the love of God for Nineveh and the so-called heathen, be none the less precious in the eyes of all those who love their fellow men." (555:1/48.6.23; 1767:6/159.4.4)

Intermediaries

In the case of channeling there is an additional and important question I would ask: *am I allowing this channeler to become an intermediary between myself and God?*

There has always been a tendency for human beings to seek someone worthy of their respect to look up to and follow. If we had a Planetary Prince in residence or an Adam and Eve, that need for heroes would be filled with appropriate leaders. We have no such beings to depend upon for guidance and leadership. Our very lack of contact with superhuman leadership on this planet makes us vulnerable to the charm and appeal of those who claim to be more enlightened, to have higher sources of information, or to be especially gifted with psychic ability. We must take care that we do not place our trust too blindly in someone who claims to have better connections to spirit than we have.

The coming of the Spirit of Truth liberated our world from the authority of "special priesthoods." (2065:3/194.3.15) We have no need for intermediaries. We have not only the right, but the responsibility to establish our own relationship with God and be guided by the inner and spiri-

tual sources of wisdom in all things.

Revelatory Instructions

When looking at channeling which claims to be intimately connected with the Fifth Epochal Revelation, I would also ask: *just what instructions are being given?* Then I would compare the nature and tenor of those instructions to what I know from past revelations.

The experience of John the Baptist seems relevant. John had very little direct instructions on which to base his part in the Fourth Epochal Revelation. He and Jesus had one visit as young men of approximately 18 years of age. John had about decided to launch his public work, but Jesus advised him to await the "coming of the Father's hour"—whatever that meant! He was left alone to sort out what his mission was to be and when to begin. (1400:4/127.3.12)

And when his mission was essentially complete at the Baptism of Jesus, he was left to ponder what he should do next. He had no instructions; he simply "felt that his work was almost finished." The time in prison was even worse. "And this experience was a great test of his faith in, and loyalty to, Jesus. Indeed, this whole experience was a great test of John's faith even in God. Many times was he tempted to doubt even the genuineness of his own mission and experience." (1506:3/135.10.1 and 1507:0/135.11.1)

Jesus himself faced years of confusion as he tried to understand what his mission should be. At age 12 when he went to Jerusalem for the celebration of his first Passover, he experienced "flood tides of spiritual illumination" and during the night "there appeared to him an assigned messenger from Salvington, commissioned by Immanuel, who said: 'The hour has come. It is time that you began to be about your Father's business.'" (1376:1/124.6.15)

During this time in Jerusalem he "lingered long into the night, vainly endeavoring to think out some defi-

nite plan of approach to the problem of his lifework....But the clear light did not come to the truth-seeking lad." (1383:3/125.5.10) Only two years later Jesus found himself the head of his earthly family and sole support of his mother and eight brothers and sisters. What must he have thought, to be told that he must be about his Father's business and then to be saddled with years of responsibility for his earthly family?

We do know how he handled the situation. "But he did not falter; he was not discouraged. He lived on, day by day, doing well the present duty and faithfully discharging the *immediate* responsibilities of his station in life. Jesus' life is the everlasting comfort of all disappointed idealists." (1393:1/126.5.4)

Even after Jesus was in direct communication with his Thought Adjuster, his guidance about his mission was not always direct. At the transfiguration Jesus "noted that his Father did not indicate that the Urania bestowal was finished." Later he "sought to know his Father's will and decided to pursue the mortal bestowal to its natural end." (1755:4-5/158.3.4-5)

My conclusion from these examples from the Fourth Epochal Revelation are that the Father's will is *rarely* given in specific instructions. It is a messy, uncertain business requiring ever greater expenditures of faith and involving risk that you will make plenty of mistakes along the way.

And what does that say about channeling or other insights and possible messages? It says to me that explicit information is not very common—not impossible, but improbable.

Eventually by the combined processes of mental comparisons and truth reaction, I would either be drawn to participate in the channeling or not. If I did participate in the channeling, I would have yet another way to evaluate the quality and truth of the experience.

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LIVING TRUTH

Truth can be lived. And living is a test for the truth content of an experience. This process is described this way: "Happiness ensues from the recognition of truth because it can be acted out; it can be lived. Disappointment and sorrow attend upon error because, not being a reality, it cannot be realized in experience." (42:7/2.7.6)

It is amazing just how well living works as a test for truth. I have many times tried on an idea for size and discovered right away that it did not *live well*—it was not truth for me. How do I tell that it is not *living well*? There are various signs, such as: my inner peace is disturbed; there are conflicts with the real and important things of my life; people are hurt; I recognize an increase of selfishness in my life.

There are two very handy sets of criteria in the book which I use for judging how well an idea lives. The first is a practical test for strange religious experiences of mysticism, ecstasy, and inspiration: "...observe whether these phenomena cause an individual:

1. To enjoy better and more complete physical health.
2. To function more efficiently and practically in his mental life.
3. More fully and joyfully to socialize his religious experience.
4. More completely to spiritualize his day-by-day living while faithfully discharging the commonplace duties of routine mortal existence.
5. To enhance his love for, and appreciation of, truth, beauty, and goodness.
6. To conserve currently recognized social, moral, ethical, and spiritual values.
7. To increase his spiritual insight—God consciousness." (1000:6-10 and 1001:1-3/91.7.5-12)

The second set of criteria are these which Jesus set out: "An experience is good when it heightens the appreciation of beauty, augments the moral will, enhances the discern-

ment of truth, enlarges the capacity to love and serve one's fellows, exalts the spiritual ideals, and unifies the supreme human motives of time with the eternal plans of the indwelling Adjuster, all of which lead directly to an increased desire to do the Father's will, thereby fostering the divine passion to find God and to be more like him." (1458:2/132.2.5)

These criteria are invaluable for assessing the truth of any new and unusual religious experience, because the living of truth has effects such as these in one's life.

The Triumph of Truth

If channeling passes your logical and truth-coordinated tests, try it. If when you try living with it for a while, you eventually see the results of truth in your life and become strongly convinced of the value of channeling for you, at that point the fact of its source will not be very important anymore. But always keep your balance by remembering Jesus warning, "Mark my words...nothing which human nature has touched can be regarded as infallible." (1768:4/159.4.8) *The Urantia Book* will continue to be the best basis for comparison factually. And the Spirit of Truth is your constant truth resource. If you eventually become disillusioned with channeling, then gain all the insight you can from the experience and put it behind you. Mistakes can be the best teacher.

If, on the other hand, channeling does not pass your logical and truth-coordinated tests, then channeling does not hold value for you and you will not participate. Having honestly and sincerely sought the confirmation of the Spirit of Truth, you will be able to make that choice in full confidence that you are doing the Father's will for you.

The process I have suggested here is not limited to the issue of channeling. It is a process that will serve for any unusual religious experience. These difficult decisions are not confined to today. These kinds of issues will arise 100 years from now,

and 500 years from now, too. There will be conflict any time new spiritual experience arises which seems phenomenal compared to current common experience.

If the followers of Jesus' religion are not at least open to considering these new experiences, they may miss out on *truths intended for their generation*. A few of the strange religious practices which arise today will become commonplace religious practices of the future. Keep in mind that Jesus' "having a little talk with his Father" instead of saying set prayers was an extraordinary religious practice for his generation.

The religion of Jesus, which we aspire to follow, is a bold, robust, adventurous exploration of truth, hand-in-hand with God himself. This is sufficiently radical to provide new and therefore strange religious practices for untold future generations.

If we use the information in *The Urantia Book* as our foundation and the aid of the Spirit of Truth to explore the possibilities, we will be able to learn which new and unusual experiences are real and which are chaff. And we will be following Jesus whose "faith was personal, living, original, spontaneous, and purely spiritual." (2087:5/196.0.5)«

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Much of the emotional pain had been the result of my apprehension and resistance.

The psychic and spiritual concomitants of the prayer of faith are immediate, personal, and experiential. (1000:1/91.6.7)

This suggests to me that spiritual and psychic (ie. mental) answers to prayer may at times be immediately forthcoming. An earlier quote mentioned that genuine prayer modifies attitudes. Attitude modification may occur slowly over a long time, but it is one of those answers to prayer that *can occur immediately*.

How effective the prayer is and how quickly the attitude changes depend on the willingness of the one praying to be changed. Many times

when people pray about problems, they have in mind for God to solve their problem, to change their situation, or to "fix" someone else. What is most often needed is an attitude change in the person praying. Prayer can elevate your attitude, but as a friend says, "You gotta wanna."

Prayer has been an indispensable factor in the progress and preservation of religious civilization, and it still has mighty contributions to make to the further enhancement and spiritualization of society if those who pray will only do so in the light of scientific facts, philosophic wisdom, intellectual sincerity, and spiritual faith. Pray as Jesus taught his disciples—honestly, unselfishly, with fairness, and without doubting. (999:9/91.6.6)

This statement says to me that we are assured in advance of answers to our prayer for "further enhancement and spiritualization of society." I ask everyone to join me in long-term, persistent prayer for the enhancement and spiritualization of society.

We who pray must do so in light of scientific facts. For example, I don't think we can expect a bunch of aliens to arrive on our planet to take over its leadership. We must also pray in light of philosophic wisdom. I think it is philosophically unwise to expect large portions of society to be spiritually transformed by magic rather than by the human/divine methods of the loving contact of one human being with another. Our prayers must be intellectually sincere. For example, we cannot desire to feed the hungry without realizing that someone must supply the effort and resources to do the job. And we must pray with spiritual faith. Our society has experienced a rise in "humanistic faith." People have faith in the rightness and effectiveness of brotherhood and friendship. What is needed now is to add God to the picture—to have faith in our Heavenly Father to guide us and supply our needs as we strive to serve our brothers and sisters.

All true prayers are addressed to spiritual beings, and all such petitions must be answered in spiritual terms, and all such answers must consist in spiritual realities. Spirit beings cannot bestow material answers to the spirit petitions of even material beings. (1848:9/168.4.9)

This passage would seem to suggest that our prayers for material things or events are never answered literally. It does say that spiritual beings cannot give material answers. Yet there are mechanisms in place that result in material answers to our prayers for material assistance.

Prayer, even as a purely human practice, a dialogue with one's alter ego, constitutes a technique of the most efficient approach to the realization of those reserve powers of human nature which are stored and conserved in the unconscious realms of the human mind. (999:7/91.6.4)

Sometimes people belittle prayer answers which they think arise strictly out of human capacity. I'm happy to have those too! After all, God gave us those "reserve powers of human nature" so we could cope with life here. I reason those answers come from God too, just more indirectly.

At one point I had considered the possibility that there might be other techniques whereby to reach these powers. Then I noticed the statement that prayer "constitutes a technique of the most efficient approach" to these powers of human nature. I decided not to spend much time looking for other techniques, but rather to concentrate on prayer, since it is the most efficient approach.

Just what might be these powers of human nature? I know several examples of spiritual power—those powers with which we are endowed by the Spirit of Truth (the ability to forgive, to return good for evil, to have faith in truth, etc.). Powers of human nature must be different from these spiritual powers. One possibility is the power of observation and an

associated power of recall. Many problems in this life can be resolved by observing or calling to memory what we observe. We base our assessment of people's motives on observation. We recognize their needs in order to minister to them by observing.

Another possible power of human nature is the ability to reflect on experience. Some people get so much more growth from their experience because they reflect on it—think about it and make connections with principles and other experiences. It is easy to see how prayer might help us to realize these reserve powers of human nature.

Prayer induces the human ego to look both ways for help: for material aid to the subconscious reservoir of mortal experience, for inspiration and guidance to the superconscious borders of the contact of the material with the spiritual, with the Mystery Monitor. (997:3/91.3.5)

We have been told that we have "reserve powers of human nature" and now we find a reference to the "subconscious reservoir of mortal experience." These constitute two aids to coping with life. While they are human, as opposed to spiritual, nevertheless, they are tremendously valuable resources.

Just what material aid might come forth from this subconscious reservoir? For one thing, we have an enormous store of information from observation and experience. Experimentation with hypnosis has demonstrated that a person has an internal record of virtually everything in his presence, whether he noticed the item consciously or not. We may not be able to recall this information, but it is there.

An illustration of this comes from the personal experience of an acquaintance of mine who was a police detective. She was involved in solving a kidnapping case. The crucial clue to locating the kidnapper was obtained by hypnotizing the victim and asking her to remember the

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items in the room where she was held. The woman had no conscious memory of the unusual brand of camera present in the room, but under hypnosis was able to recall the information.

Material answers to prayer might result from bringing to the conscious level information ordinarily buried in our human subconscious.

And then Jesus said: "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)

I have always assumed that "common needs" referred to those very human needs for food, clothing, shelter—things which occupy a great deal of our thought and time here. Jesus discouraged us from being overanxious about these things. Apparently, praying about such needs is acceptable. In fact, he instructed us in the manner to use: "with the spirit of sincere thanksgiving."

"Avoid materialistic praying; pray in the spirit and for the abundance of the gifts of the spirit." (1639:5/146.2.10)

Generally then, we can say that spiritual beings do not answer our prayers with material answers, but that material answers may result from the mechanisms which God has provided for our use. In fact, prayer is described as the most efficient approach to one of these mechanisms. And we are to lay our common needs before our Father with the spirit of sincere thanksgiving.

How then do we reconcile these ideas with the statement above? I think we need to define "materialistic praying." Apparently, giving thanks for the Father's provision for our material needs is acceptable. I suggest that praying for the luxuries of material life would be materialistic. It

might be appropriate to pray for the money to provide a genuine service to our fellows, but not appropriate to ask for a bigger house, a more expensive car or a vacation—unless for some reason there were a real need for those things. I would also think that praying about something material and then doing nothing ourselves to attempt to get the material item would be an exercise in futility. A better approach to prayer for such needs might be: "Help me to do what is necessary to get the money for this project. Charge up my energy; inspire my creativity; give me the strength and wisdom I will need."

The childhood of an individual or a race is characterized by primitive, selfish, and materialistic praying. And, to a certain extent, all such petitions are efficacious in that they unvaryingly lead to those efforts and exertions which are contributory to achieving the answers to such prayers. The real prayer of faith always contributes to the augmentation of the technique of living, even if such petitions are not worthy of spiritual recognition. But the spiritually advanced person should exercise great caution in attempting to discourage the primitive or immature mind regarding such prayers. (998:2/91.4.4)

While we may be capable of understanding the primacy of spiritual prayers over materialistic ones, not everyone we come in contact with will be. It is wise to keep in mind that Jesus urged his apostles to take nothing away from people, only to add appropriate truth.

As for those of us who can understand the principle that prayer is primarily a spiritual technique, we would be misdirecting our precious time and efforts to spend all of our prayer time on material needs. By far the more important and productive domain of prayer is the spiritual. We are wise to pray for the abundance of the gifts of the spirit, for it is just such prayers that will be answered by our spiritual friends. It is those prayers that will, in time, transform our world.

The few real material needs we have pale in comparison to the world of spiritual possibilities that await our prayer requests.

Do not hesitate to pray the prayers of spirit longing; doubt not that you shall receive the answer to your petitions. These answers will be on deposit, awaiting your achievement of those future spiritual levels of actual cosmic attainment, on this world or on others, whereon it will become possible for you to recognize and appropriate the long-waiting answers to your earlier but ill-timed petitions. (1849:3/168.4.12)

I call these "bold prayers." And I love to pray bold prayers. I see nothing wrong at all with laying up answers to prayer in your future. I can recall a prayer of several years ago that seemed to me to be a prayer I might not receive the answer to before a long time had passed. I had become very interested in *Urantia Book* comments on returning good for evil. It seemed to me that Jesus had seriously intended for us to do just that. In this day and age it is not acceptable to return good when one has been wronged. This is the age of learning assertiveness (at least for women it is!). Every minority is fighting for its rights. Virtually every "action" movie—of which there are plenty—spends the first half of its script demonstrating how bad the bad guys are so as to justify the appalling violence perpetrated by the good guy in the second half of the plot. No, no, this is not an age of overcoming evil with good.

I tried to talk to other *Urantia Book* readers about this concept. It appeared to be invisible. No one wanted to talk about it. I looked for personal examples around me of people behaving in this fashion. Little evidence to be found. So I prayed a bold prayer. I asked to understand the concept, to be able to come up with concrete examples of what returning good for evil would involve. I asked to find others who were interested in exploring the idea and to

See NOTES on page 28.

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GOD AT WORK

"Never forget that, when you are a faith son of God, all upright work of the realm is sacred. Nothing which a son of God does can be common. Do your work, therefore, from this time on, as for God." Jesus to the Alpheus twins in a Morontia appearance. (2049:4/192.2.13)

The Circles theme for the Spring/Summer 1993 issue will be "God at Work." So much of our time is spent at work. For many of us it is truly a challenge to live the spiritual life as we try to fit into the world of work. Please share your thoughts and experiences.

1. How can you do your work as if for God?
2. How can you be in partnership with God at work?
3. It is very tempting to have two standards: a worldly behavior that work demands and a more spiritual behavior or the rest of life. How can you have one standard—Jesus' standard—for both? How would Jesus have you treat your co-workers? What ethics would he have you exhibit?
4. It has been said that non-believers are most impressed when a believer exhibits a distinctively spiritual reaction even at work. How can you witness for the kingdom by the life you lead—at work?
5. How would things be different if you used the spiritual weapons at work? (the spiritual weapons of unfailing forgiveness, matchless good will, abounding love, overcoming evil with good, keeping sweet in the midst of injustice, being unmoved in danger, challenging hate and anger by acts of love and forbearance—2064:3&4/194.3.11 & 12)

Please send your article, poem or artwork by December 15, 1992 to: The Dallas Fellowship, Inc., P.O. Box 1203, Arlington, Texas 76004-1203.

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experience for myself returning good for evil.

To be honest I thought it would take God longer than my lifetime to achieve the answers to my prayers, but it didn't. That prayer occurred only about eight years ago, but already it has been answered. I find more and more people express an aspiration to live this way. I increas-

ingly see friends overcoming their selfishness and self-centeredness to reach out with love in the face of malice, selfishness or carelessness. And I have found ways to do this myself.

So, I suggest that everyone make it a practice to pray bold prayers, the ones they think will take a long time to answer. It's great to be surprised!«

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