

# The Circles

## Our Friend, Jesus

Vol. XVI, No. 3

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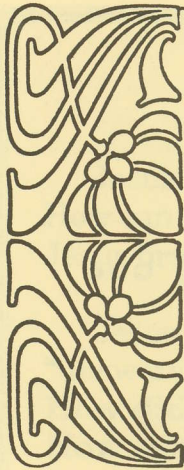
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# A Friend in Need Is a Friend Indeed

By Tom Vasile  
Bakersfield, California

My friendship with Jesus is a most interesting thing. He is like no other friend I have ever had. Sometimes it seems my communication with him is interactive—like talking to a mortal friend: I communicate to him and he to me. At those times it's most like a conversation, and his messages seem clear. We talk, we laugh, and often we are serious. On these occasions it seems to me he comforts me, counsels me, and most of all he teaches me many things about life and the art of living. However, these periods of clear dialogue are infrequent, often short, and always subject to scrutiny. I'm never one hundred percent sure the communication is authentic; I may be just having a good time with my own psyche—but usually during these periods I have a deep impression and assurance that I'm actually fostering a relationship with the creator of my universe.

Then, on many occasions it seems I'm talking to the wall—I communicate but get no response. When this happens, I feel I am left to apply what I have already learned to the problematic situations I find myself in, and I trust that he is communicating with me in my super consciousness. Most of the time it seems I am acutely experiencing the faith adventure of life: with no concrete evidence and no internal assurance, I continue to believe that there

is a God, he is my friend, and he depends upon me. During these times I assure myself that my master Teacher is my constant friend, and he is with me even though I may not be experiencing his presence at the moment.

I sincerely believe he is always with me. Even when I am not aware of him, I'm confident he will never leave me. To me Jesus is an eternal universe tour guide and a living teacher. I believe he is always with me, sometimes clearly communicating, sometimes nudging me, sometimes carrying me, and sometimes leaving me to stand on my own two feet, so my legs can gain strength.

An intriguing thing about Jesus is that he needs me just as I need him. My needs are obvious to me—I desperately need him to be my father-brother, to guide me through my mortal existence. Without my relationship with God, life would be a terribly lonely, scary experience for me. With him, I am confident I need fear no evil.

But I have learned he also needs me. *The Urantia Book* states, "The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit-born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men." And, "Ever bear in mind—God and men need each other. They are mutually necessary to the full and final attainment of eternal personality experience in the

divine destiny of universe finality." **He needs me! The creator of the universe needs me to fulfill his destiny.** God, that's a wonderful feeling—and a heavy responsibility! Without me, without each of us fulfilling the will of God in our lives, the evolution of the human race is stalled. Divided, alone, we collapse and disintegrate. Together, with Jesus' friendship, we stand and evolve.

With each of us doing our best to follow what we perceive to be the will of God in our life, the world is a better place to live in, and it will evolve into an even better tomorrow. God and people need each other, and you and I need each other to do our part in making the world a better place. «

(Quotes from 2084:1 & 3/195.10.1 & 3.)

Jesus is a friend of mine,  
but I don't hear him all the time.  
Sometimes his messages are clear,  
Other times he does not seem so near.

So I follow the Lord  
with perseverance,  
Many times I stumble,  
many times I fall,  
But, alas, I know to always  
pick up my path  
And follow his guiding light;  
cuz I believe—  
The Lord shines forever,  
We listen when we will.

# With the Breath of Kindness

By Mary Huggins  
Round Rock, Texas



*Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person; having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but to pour them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together, knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and then, with the breath of kindness, blow the rest away.*

*George Eliot*

I first found this poem when in my teens and I have since felt that it perfectly expresses my ideal of what a good friend should be like, how he should act towards me and I towards him. I have looked for people to be my friends who I thought were capable of being like this ideal while I myself strived to live up to this same standard. All of us, myself and others, have failed somewhere along the line. I cannot constantly achieve this ideal and neither can my friends and loved ones. We have wounded each other, some more deeply than others, until I have despaired of ever finding anyone to love me and whom I could love so perfectly. The pain of betrayal by others and the guilt I felt because of my own shortcomings at times seemed to overpower my in-born need to love and be loved. And yet...and yet this urge within said to keep looking.

I had first met Jesus when I was 15, a youthful convert in a church camp. While I truly knew and felt his

love for me, he seemed distant still, so much a martyr up on his cross suffering for me—too perfect, too far away from my everyday life. So I lived, half-loved and half searching for something elusive. I drifted.

Then one day one of those imperfect friendships blew up. The force of the explosion blew away my everyday living, my complacency, my fear of a distant God who demanded my perfection before he could forgive me. The explosions threw me off the cliff of experience and I freefell, alone, falling, waiting for the awful crash at the bottom. My silent cry for help was answered with the most gentle arms around me, first slowing my fall, then gathering me up and carrying me back to the top of the cliff. I was held and supported and loved and healed until I was ready to stand alone, then to walk alone.

The recovery was long and slow but during that healing process, I met and truly came to know my now best friend, Jesus, the man, and Michael the divine son. Just as he had caught me in mid-air, he now continued to be loving and gentle and healing. Only he can love me perfectly, unconditionally, no matter how much or how often I falter. He knows my inner heart and my real motives; he knows and forgives my childish pride and immature feelings. He sees me as I am, a child of today; and

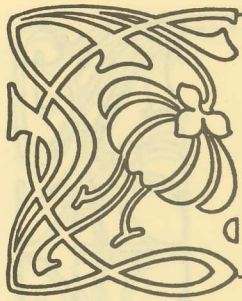
he sees me as I will be someday, a being perfected by experience. And he allows me to love him in my still childish, grasping manner, knowing that someday I will be able to return fully the love he so freely gives me.

Today Jesus is becoming more and more my partner in daily living. He is teaching me to use his spiritual power and energy to live a life that is slowly, little by little, becoming dedicated to doing his will. My best friend finds what is best in my heart and with the breath of kindness blows the rest away.«

Avoid missing issues:  
Send us your  
change of address.

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*All page references to The Urantia Book are as follows: The page number is first, followed by a colon and then the paragraph number. Each indentation on a page is counted as a paragraph, even if it is a single line long, as in numbered lists. Paragraph 0 on the page is the one which began on the previous page. The international citation which follows the slash refers to paper, section, and paragraph within the section.*



# A Walk with Jesus Through the Rose Garden

By Sharon Lanier, Austin, Texas

*My friendship with Jesus has grown over the years as I have become more aware of the manifestation of the Spirit of Truth in my life. Consequently Jesus has become very real and alive to me. Several years ago I began writing and using visualization and imagery as one way to open my mind to enhance my spiritual creativity. And I soon found that the power of the mind to see and realize my spiritual goals was very powerful. "Supreme and self-acting Adjusters are often able to contribute factors of spiritual import to the human mind when it flows freely in the liberated but controlled channels of creative imagination." (1199:2/109.5.1)*

*Here is a visualization I wrote which I hope you will enjoy. I encourage you to share it with your friends or group if you wish. Begin by relaxing your body and placing yourself in a relaxed and soothing frame of mind. And then imagine...*

You have just received a wonderful invitation in the mail. You pick it up and see that your name is engraved on it. You open it to find an invitation from Jesus, to be his guest to a very special occasion. He requests your presence for a visit this afternoon in his garden.

Imagine yourself now walking along a winding country path on a beautiful, sunny day. You are walking toward your destination—the garden.

Just ahead of you is the garden and you enter through the gate. Jesus is waiting for you, sitting on a bench beside a lovely reflecting pool of

water. He eagerly welcomes you, embraces you, and asks, "How are you doing? What is going on in your life? Is there something you would like to talk about or share with me? I am here because I love you and want to be your friend. Perhaps we can talk as I show you through my garden. I have some special gifts for you."

As the two of you walk along, he explains that his garden has many smaller gardens within it. You approach the first garden and are overwhelmed by the abundance of beautiful yellow flowers. You see yellow flowers of all kinds, sizes, shapes and shades of yellow. The fragrance emanating from them is very subtle, yet it seems to fill your senses with a feeling that is both soothing and loving.

Jesus leans over and plucks a beautiful yellow rose for you. "I am giving you faith," he says, "the essence of God which sustains you, holds you, and gives you my peace." You turn the rose around and admire its exquisite beauty as he speaks to you of faith...and you know faith.

Arm in arm you walk to the next garden. You are delighted and amazed to find a gorgeous array of flowers in many shades of red. You admire the lovely combinations and arrangements. He bends down once more and picks for you a flower—your favorite red flower—perfect and mighty in its display of beauty. "This," he says, "is my love. I give my love to you." As you bend over to smell it, you feel his love flow into you and through you...and you

know love.

You walk on together and talk, admiring the different gardens and their beauty, picking the flowers and greenery along the way to add to your growing bouquet. And then, at last, you stand in the midst of the most beautiful display of pure white flowers. You have never seen so many delicate, lovely snow white varieties. For a moment you stand in their midst letting their beauty and intensity permeate your being, soaking up their radiance. Jesus then bends down and picks one more for your bouquet. "I give you with this pure white flower, strength, courage and the power to do the will of your Father in Heaven." And you breathe in these wonderful qualities. You now admire your beautiful bouquet of these gifts of faith, love and now strength.

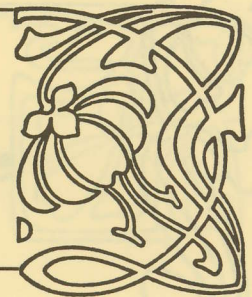
Finally, you come to the end of your journey. As you leave, you both look back and view the beautiful gardens once more. Then, arm in arm the two of you walk toward the bench beside the garden gate. As you approach it, you see a beautiful vase filled with water sitting on the bench. You admire its simplicity and elegance. Jesus hands the vase to you and says, "This is a gift from our Father to you."

You place your flowers of faith, love and strength in the lovely container. You realize that they too are a gift from God. He is the whole, the source and center that these beautiful gifts came from.

As you place the flowers into the

*See WALK on page 5.*

# My Friend Jesus



By Kaye Cooper, Arlington, Texas

*Sometimes Jesus feels like my heavenly parent.* His large hand reaches down for mine and we walk. I am safe and secure. I do not have to know where we are going. I am always safe with Jesus. I love the stories of Jesus with the children. I imagine myself as one of them—the one on his knee, looking up into his warm eyes. Listening to his fascinating voice. Feeling the warmth of his body close to mine.

I can go to Jesus with whatever hurt I have. He does not tell me to be a big girl and take care of it myself. He just gives me that accepting hug that makes it OK again. Because he loves me, I am strong enough to deal with whatever has caused me pain. I am more than I was when I ran to him.

*Sometimes Jesus feels like my friend.* I spend time with him, sharing our common interests. We talk about our work. I tell him how I want to do as he did, to bring my brothers and sisters closer to our Heavenly Father—and to him. He supports my desires and shares his attitudes with me. I ask his advice. I listen to his words of wisdom. I imagine how he would handle situations, and he always seems to help. I come away with more depth and capability.

*WALK from page 4.*

water in the vase, you realize Jesus is the water—the giver of the spirit of life. For a moment you stand in joy and worship, thanking them for their gifts to you.

And in loving farewell Jesus takes you in his arms and embraces

I enjoy simply spending time with my friend Jesus. We enjoy the same things. We love to walk over gentle hills. We love to sit on the hillside and look out over the ocean. We listen to the leaves rustle overhead and watch the squirrels scurry. We breathe in the clean air and rejoice in the sunshine on our shoulders. We delight in the birds' songs and their aerial dances. We tuck away these precious moments in our mental bag of memories.

*Sometimes Jesus feels like the best part of me.* I feel his power inside me giving me the strength to do what is necessary. I come to him because I know that I must change. I need to forgive. His power within me releases those feelings of resentment and erases the pain from my memories. I come to him in confusion and doubt. His power within me clears my mind and replaces my doubt with certainty. I come to him with jangled nerves and indecision. His power within me transforms my fear into peace and shows the way to resolution.

I know that he is within me and flowing through me as I reach out to others. His love blooms in my heart. His sympathy sounds in my voice. His comfort moves through my

you. He tells you that he is with you always and loves you dearly. You can come to him any time and talk. He wants to be your friend and brother. He then kisses you gently on the forehead and says, "Goodbye for now, but my spirit is with you al-

*See WALK on page 18.*

hands. His strength supports my brother's weakness. His ministry lives in mine.

*Sometimes Jesus feels like God's promises.* He is now, filling the needs of our world. Every time I read of one of the tragedies of our world, every time I think of yet another thing wrong with this inept little planet, I can trace the solution back to the spirit. All solutions begin in the heart of individual human beings. All solutions begin with Jesus in their hearts—transforming thinking, being, and acting.

He is also the future. I was so relieved to discover that Jesus will never desert me. Even though I live through eons of time and travel through space beyond our telescopes, Jesus will always be with me—guiding, assuring, living his life in mine. We will be friends throughout eternity.

*He knocked...and I opened wide the door.»*

Your presence is warm  
and close and real.

It shines in my mind  
like the sun  
on a spring morning—  
filled with promise.

Your mind touches mine  
and peace flows down over me  
in waves of reassurance  
and sweet joy.

Your arms surround me  
and I relax into your embrace—  
like a child  
come home at last.



# Journey With a Friend

By Marc Boucher, Kamuela, Hawaii

To begin a long journey alone is difficult for many people. The obstacles can outweigh the motives and fears can multiply beyond proportion. As we are mere infant souls born into a tempestuous world, our fears of an unknown destiny are the result of isolation. We are spiritual latch-key kids that have the keys to the house but cannot find the lock in the dark. We need a friend with a light. The Father has provided such a friend, but we must seek his help.

To know and love someone as a friend is much different than knowing and loving a parent. We choose a friend, but we are the choice of a parent. Michael is our parent. He is a Paradise Son, part and parcel of the Father. As a friend we can know him as Jesus of Nazareth. As a friend we must choose him.

The gracious exercise of freewill choice plays such an important part in the growth of souls, making the attributes of loyalty and devotion so endearing. We give our loyalty and devotion as a gift of will that brings the coordination of love to our relationships. We love our families, often from a sense of duty, but we can diverge from members of our family as we grow in the spirit. One family is temporal, the family of faith is eternal.

"By the time Jesus was prepared to launch forth on his public work, his entire family (except Ruth) had practically deserted him. On only a few occasions did they attempt to

make subsequent contact with him, and then it was to persuade him to return home with them, for they came near to believing that he was beside himself. They simply could not fathom his philosophy nor grasp his teaching; it was all too much for those of his own flesh and blood." (1546:4/138.9.2)

Jesus held the place of a friend in a different light than family. Being a good friend is no easy matter. There is no intrinsic connection, no blood bond. There exists that which only happens through mutual regard and consideration. The love exhibited through friendship is brotherly affection, the type which we will learn to feel for many varied orders of existence as we traverse an immense universe.

With the apostles he endeavored to lead them in directions that would confirm his divinity, thereby winning their loyalty through their well-developed sense of duty to God. But duty was not enough. Duty implies sacrifice if it is devoid of love. Jesus was not interested in sacrifice. Motive is everything in determining righteousness. Of love he gave us a new commandment: to love one another as he loves us. He gave up his life that we may know of the world that lies beyond this short journey in the flesh.

"The cross makes a supreme appeal to the best in man because it discloses one who was willing to lay down his life in the service of his

fellow men. Greater love no man can have than this: that he would be willing to lay down his life for his friends—and Jesus had such a love that he was willing to lay down his life for his enemies, a love greater than any which had hitherto been known on earth." (2018:6/188.5.7)

I remember watching video footage of a plane crash during a fierce snowstorm. The plane ditched into an icy river. While helicopters hovered overhead a man swam to fellow passengers, helping them into harnesses before they froze and drowned. As he lifted the last passenger into a harness he seemed to falter and slip beneath the dark waters, quickly and without panic. He had given his life for strangers. He must have known of the great love of the Master and did not hesitate to demonstrate it. This was not sacrifice, this was courage. Think of the human Jesus in Gethsemane, pondering the tortuous road ahead and gathering the courage through his faith in the Father, knowing at last that such a death would forever in-shrine the concept of divine love in the hearts of mankind. He gave his life for all in bondage to fear.

"Fear not," was his watchword and patient endurance his ideal of strength of character. The teachings of Jesus constitute a religion of valor, courage and heroism." (1582:1/140.8.20)

I sometimes get very possessive of Jesus as special to our world as he came to show the living way to eternity. To realize that our Jesus belongs to every will creature in the universe, that the revelation of his bestowal has brought spiritual succor to a vast host of mortal and celestial origin, brings so much more to the importance of how we perceive ourselves. It would have been very hard to imagine a close and loving relationship with the grand presence of Michael as our universe sover-

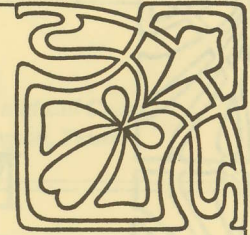
eign. The distance of space and time and the handicap of the isolation of our planet made his influence seem impersonal, especially to the isolated planets. The seventh bestowal of Michael had to portray the divine attributes of friend and brother, bringing his touching closeness—through the life of Jesus—to the immensity of ten million inhabited worlds.

“On millions of inhabited worlds, tens of trillions of evolving will creatures who may have been tempted to give up the mortal struggle and abandon the good fight of faith, have taken one more look at Jesus on the cross and then have forged on ahead, inspired by the sight of God’s laying down his incarnate life in devotion to the unselfish service of man.” (2018:4/188.5.5)

When we face the insurmountable, enduring the trials of a relentless existence, we can know that a tested and trusted friend journeys with us. Jesus’ travails were not only the ordeal of the crucifixion, but also the life he lived on this planet, an intense experience by any standard. He loves us because he knows us. In the person of Michael I find many uplifting connections, as our Creator, our brother, our friend. The fact of our indwelling Thought Adjuster, the Father within us, makes us brethren. A brother who is our close friend is a special blessing. In this respect we walk together on this world. Jesus traveled our planet 2,000 years ago, a man among men; today he walks beside us as we bear his message again to the world—the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

There is great work to be done on our planet. We have the opportunity to partake in one of the greatest transformations of a darkened world in the history of our universe. Through all the tens of thousands of years of development and careful ministry,

## They Never Told Me



*By Kittie Norwood, Dallas, Texas*

Ever since I was a toddler, I always knew I had been “saved.” That was because I was in Sunday school each week, wearing my very nicest dress. We sang, “Jesus Loves Me, This I know,” and it was quite clear to me that he loved me because I attended regularly and always looked nice. Apparently, he came to the First Baptist Church every Sunday. “They” never told me he visited other places. We always thanked his Father for our meals; I thought he would have been angry if we forgot. But it seemed to me that my mother put more effort into the meals than he did.

When I was older and allowed to attend the church services on Sunday, we sometimes sang, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” and I understood from the Bible stories that Jesus was certainly good to his friends as he often cured them of sickness. By then I had friends at school, and I would have been glad to cure them of whatever sickness they had if I had been given the power Jesus had. Although we called God

“our Father” when we prayed, I understood that he was really only the father of Jesus and that was who he loved the most because he gave him all those magical powers. But I wasn’t supposed to feel badly about that because it would be very dangerous to make God mad. Our entire family had to always sit in the same pew in church services because that was the only place God could find us. It seemed that God came to the regular services, and Jesus attended Sunday school. “They” never told me that either of them ever went anywhere else.

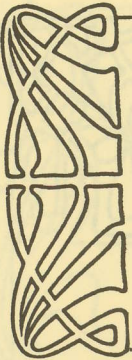
When I was about twelve, I was baptized by immersion. That was the only way it did any good because John the Baptist baptized Jesus that way in the river. I thought it was strange that some of my friends didn’t know that; they were only sprinkled, and apparently that didn’t assure they would be “saved.” It seemed a shame because God would really have liked them if only they knew how to do the baptism thing

*See THEY on page 18.*

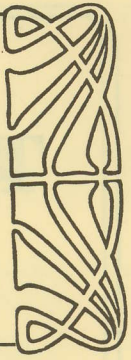
the celestial hosts have worked to bring the light of truth to our world. And through us this work can begin to culminate. Jesus showed us the “living way” by showing us the way to live. We each live a unique existence but we all must grasp and imbibe eternal truth. Michael’s Spirit of Truth is with everyone indwelt by God, guiding us toward the

great adventure of the ages. An adventure that begins here and now with two steps; the choice to find and know God and the will to develop a soul rich in truth, beauty and goodness.

So get your key and stand before the door—a friend with light will help you through to begin a truly enthralling journey to Paradise.«



# Michael, My Friend



By David Glass, Fort Worth, Texas

The Fifth Epochal Revelation to Urantia provides us with a variety of viewpoints from which to observe the nature and actions of Michael of Nebadon. Very early in the revelation, we read: "The nature of God can best be understood by the revelation of the Father which Michael of Nebadon unfolded in his manifold teachings and in his superb mortal life in the flesh." Becoming informed of the nature of Deity is *best* achieved by acquainting ourselves with the teachings and life of Michael of Nebadon. Jesus' teachings and life maximally reveal to man's spiritual comprehension capacity the nature of the Infinite God—the eternal exploration of which is our ultimate and endless goal. We have two superlatives here: God's infinity, and Michael's *insurpassable* revelation of God's personality-nature in his finite life on our material planet.

We are able to know of Michael's origin, as effectively as it can be communicated to us, through revelation; it is presented in Part II of *The Urantia Book*: "When the fullness of absolute spiritual ideation in the Eternal Son encounters the fullness of absolute personality concept in the Universal Father, when such a creative union is finally and fully attained, when such absolute identity of spirit and such infinite oneness of personality concept occur, then, right then and there, without the loss of anything of personality or prerogative by either of the infinite Deities, there flashes into full-

fledged being a new and original Creator Son, the only-begotten Son of the perfect ideal and the powerful idea whose union produces this new creator personality of power and perfection." (234:6/21.1.1)

While this birth took place in an eternal environment, Michael's experiences in the grand universe have revealed in time some of the spirit nature of his and our Father. It is difficult to refer to this even chronologically because it took place outside of time. We can best, perhaps, relate to Michael's origin on Paradise and education in Havona by saying, as the revelators do in a few places, it happened "long, long ago." He studied many, perhaps all, of the one billion worlds of Havona, consorting with some of the most cosmically advanced intellects and some of the most spiritually enlightened personalities in existence.

We know that Michael first came to Nebadon about 400,000,000,000 years ago, when, "Michael of Nebadon, a Creator Son of Paradise, selected this disintegrating nebula as the site of his adventure in universe building." (654:1/57.3.8)

In "very recent history," about one billion years ago, Michael began his sevenfold bestowal program designed to reveal the Universal Father's love for and watchcare over his many cosmic children.

Six bestowals having been completed, the seventh was introduced when, "almost forty thousand years ago [there came] the announcement by Michael that Urantia had been

selected as the world for his final bestowal. (486:5/32.1.6)

These vast ages of time were a prelude to Michael's mission of a mere thirty-six years on Urantia; yet he was able authoritatively to say that he had done "all that could be done" to reveal the loving nature of God and the eternal destiny of each unique mortal personality. In fact, his public career consisted of only about *three* years. Having completed his seventh and mortal bestowal, all power in heaven and earth (within Nebadon) has been made subject to him.

Now how, you might ask, does all this relate to my friendship with Jesus? I must simply say that the revelations of the origins and past doings of Michael contribute a tremendous value to and provide an enriched comprehension of the remembrance of his mortal life. The midwayers write:

"To 'follow Jesus' means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master's life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. *Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.*" (2090:4/196.1.3 emphasis mine)

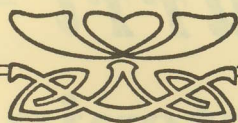
Jesus is my friend when he is able to serve through me in a bold and positive way which transcends and has a higher priority than it ever would have had I not found *The Urantia Book* and not read Part IV, both alone and in groups. The charming and gracious, but truthful, direct and sincere, loving but admonishing personality, teachings, and life of Jesus fulfill the love-hunger of the soul, enliven the mental aggressiveness of the truth seeker,

See MICHAEL on page 19.



# Study Notes

By Kaye and Bill Cooper  
Arlington, Texas



*And so, as the years pass, this young man of Nazareth continues to experience life as it is lived in mortal flesh on the worlds of time and space. He lives a full, representative, and replete life on Urantia. He left this world ripe in the experience which his creatures pass through during the short and strenuous years of their first life, the life in the flesh. And all this human experience is an eternal possession of the Universe Sovereign. He is our understanding brother, sympathetic friend, experienced sovereign, and merciful father. (1405:5/127.6.13)*

A friend needs some basis on which to build his understanding. Jesus understands us because he lived a life such as we must live. I can't ever feel that he doesn't understand the trials I have to face here. He faced them all. I don't ever have to feel alone in my suffering because Jesus suffered too. He did not have an exempt life, safe from those things which arouse the fear in us. He truly understands—and he truly is a sympathetic friend.

*Believing the gospel will not prevent getting into trouble, but it will insure that you shall be unafraid when trouble does overtake you. If*

## **Jesusonian and Good Cheer Press Mailing List Gone!**

Our computers were stolen along with all of our records for our Good Cheer Press mailing list. To be on our new list, please send your name and address to:

Jesusonian Foundation  
P.O. Box 18764  
Boulder, CO 80308

*you dare to believe in me and wholeheartedly proceed to follow after me, you shall most certainly by so doing enter upon the sure pathway to trouble. I do not promise to deliver you from the waters of adversity, but I do promise to go with you through all of them. (1767:1/159.3.13)*

This promise means so much to me. Because Jesus experienced life here, I can believe that he will go through all of life with me—and I am less afraid. There were times in my life when I turned to Jesus in crisis and felt that I got no help, no sense of his presence. That was before I made it a habit to spend time in his presence daily. Jesus may be with us, but it may not be much reassurance unless we experience a sense of his support. That is one of the strongest reasons for us to dig those channels deeper with prayer and communion. The person who regularly senses Jesus presence, shares his or her daily life with him, and seeks his advice often—that is the person who will most likely be able to feel his presence, comfort and strength in a crisis.

*It was their personal association with Jesus during these months of testing that so endeared him to them that they all (save Judas Iscariot) remained loyal and true to him even in the dark hours of the trial and crucifixion. Real men simply could not actually desert a revered teacher who had lived so close to them and had been so devoted to them as had Jesus. Through the dark hours of the Master's death, in the hearts of these apostles all reason, judgment, and logic were set aside in deference to just one extraordinary human emo-*

*tion—the supreme sentiment of friendship-loyalty. These five months of work with Jesus led these apostles, each one of them, to regard him as the best friend he had in all the world. And it was this human sentiment, and not his superb teachings or marvelous doings, that held them together until after the resurrection and the renewal of the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom. (1546:3/138.9.1)*

I have many friends. I value them tremendously. I have found that those friends with whom I have weathered storms are the ones with whom I have the strongest ties. They know my weaknesses and accept them. They know my strengths and love them. And they love me with both weaknesses and strengths. I trust the loyalty between us. It is time and experience that builds that acceptance—and the loyalty which bonds us.

This is another reason for spending time with Jesus, day in and day out, in good times and hard times, when I am at my best and when I am being as small as I am capable. My friend Jesus knows me in all those phases of my life. He knows my weaknesses and my strengths. And he loves me. I find, to my delight, that friendships often spring into being spontaneously—I simply feel drawn to a person. But friendships also mature. And time together is needed.

It is an interesting idea that the sense of friendship-loyalty was the glue that held the apostles to Jesus in the confusing and devastating days at the end of his life. But it makes sense. Aside from the parent-child

*See NOTES on page 15.*



# Potpourri

## Active Listening

By Robert Meyer  
Mammoth Lakes, California

Active Listening is a form of listening which involves you, the listener, being in tune with the person you are listening to, in tune to the point that you are truly interested in helping them through their emotional situation.

Active listening is a very powerful tool. Done with love it allows you, the listener, to help the talker deal with any situation that has emotional content. It allows them to express their feelings in a very cathartic way. The talker will end up dealing with the things which are most pressing on his mind, even if he had consciously not wanted to talk about them or had unconsciously suppressed them. Because this is such a powerful tool, you can become frightened when a talker expresses feelings that seem more emotional than you can handle. But remember—you, the listener, don't need to handle it. The person being listened to does all the work. You just need to hang in there until they come to conclusions on their own.

Active listening is more than just getting information, or having a place to air your own feelings. It is a form of loving service to your fellow man.

To listen effectively you need to be present; that is, you need to be willing to focus your attention on listening and not on yourself and your needs. You need to be receptive, able to listen without being judgemental. This is especially difficult if you are listening to a spouse or a loved one where you have a stake in the outcome.

To practice active listening there are a few rules to follow:

1. Do not put yourself into the conversation. If you put yourself into the conversation, you are expressing an opinion or sharing an experience and not listening.

Example: "I've been in the same situation and this is what I did about it." Or, "I've been there, and I understand what you are going through."

These are wonderful statements in their place, but in an active listening situation they take the conversation away from the talker and turn it over to the listener to embellish with his or her wisdom.

2. Don't ask questions. This is a difficult one, because it depends on the question. Questions that are relevant to what the talker is talking about won't cause a problem, but when you, the listener, use the question to satisfy yourself, it can cause the talker to pause to consider the answer to the question and lose emotional momentum. Depending on the question, you may interrupt the train of thought so completely that they can't get back to the emotions, causing them to go away frustrated. Many people do this unconsciously because the intensity is sometimes scary, and they need an escape. If you cannot hold your questions because your curiosity prevents you from listening, you can make statements instead.

Example: Question—"Didn't you want to just throw him out?" Could be restated as—"You wanted to throw him out!" or "You were so

angry you wanted to throw him out."

Statements show you are listening; and, unless they are way out in left field, they will not cause the person to pause. On the other hand, questions show the listener that you are more interested in your need to know, than in their need to resolve their emotional dilemma. A statement can also be a good tool to help bring the talker back to the subject after an interruption.

Example: after a long pause, "You really had a hard time with ...!"

3. Don't give advice. Unless the talker has asked for advice, they don't usually need it. They know what the situation is and all the things they would or would not do. In fact, they have probably thought of your piece of advice and rejected it, even if they are too polite to say so. The talker needs to hear what he or she is saying in order to find the answer to their own emotional dilemma. For some strange reason we don't listen to ourselves unless we have someone to reflect back our words and feeling.

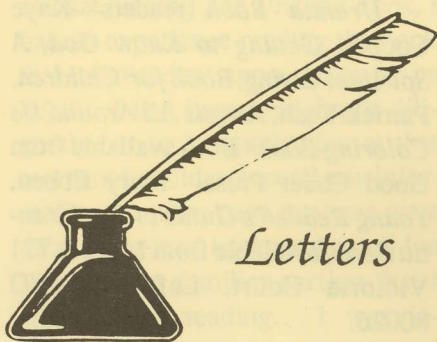
It is very difficult to listen to a person in pain, especially if you care for the person. It seems more important to help him with his pain. Everyone was given the ability to solve his or her own problems. Most people just don't exercise this ability enough to know that it works. Well-meaning friends who don't listen can only keep them from exercising their ability. You may also suffer from an unconscious desire to manipulate friends into solving a problem the way you would. You may tend to

forget that people all are different with different backgrounds and personalities.

Therapeutic Listening is basically the same as Active Listening, but the therapist uses statements to manipulate the client into looking into areas that he or she might not want to deal with. A person in the process of being listened to is in a vulnerable place and statements can easily be used to extract information the talker might not on his or her own divulge. This type of manipulation can be misused, and is best used by a therapist.

The actual process of listening you already know. Just trust your own feelings. Everyone has a different style. Some repeat every word the person says, some paraphrase, and some say nothing at all. If you follow the few simple rules, you should have no problem, but it does take practice to get good at listening. Rules:

1. Do not put yourself into the conversation.
2. Do not ask irrelevant questions.
3. Do not give advice.«



### A LETTER TO THE URANTIA COMMUNITY

If you are like me for the past several years the mail pulled from your box sent by the Fellowship, Foundation, or well-meaning individuals has been somewhat less than uplifting. The events and controversy of

# Spiritual Development Group

By Kaye Cooper  
Arlington, Texas

One Tuesday evening we sat in our living room with friends and discussed optimism—Jesus' brand of optimism, optimism in spite of harsh realities. We explored Jesus optimism in the face of financial declines and reflected on our own vulnerability to discouragement. We shared our methods of boosting our optimism in the face of boring jobs and material burdens. We gained a glimpse of the joy of living with Jesus' optimism. We contrasted that with blind optimism. We brainstormed on ways to encourage those around us to be optimistic.

And then we shared a beautiful prayer time of visualizing better things for friends we knew needed God's help. Together we "saw" life as it should be and could be for them. And when we left, we carried with us a new buoyance. In the days that followed the boring jobs became less so, because we were determined to choose Jesus' brand of optimism. We chose to "be of good cheer."

This group of friends (nine of us

at present) is involved in what we call our "Adventures Group." This spiritual development group meets every two weeks. Our focus is always on topics that will develop our spiritual natures. We are all *Urantia Book* readers, but our group is not simply a study group. When we study written material, it comes from *The Urantia Book*, but we also use a variety of techniques. We pray, study, visualize, write, worship and share our spiritual lives together.

We would like to share our meeting plans and basic resource guide (*The Adventures Group Manual* from *Adventures in Spiritual Living*) with you. If your group is interested, please drop us a note at the address below. Donations to help with printing and postage are very helpful, but not required—we'll be happy to send it to you at no cost.

Kaye and Bill Cooper  
Adventures in Spiritual Living  
P.O. Box 1203  
Arlington, TX 76004-1203  
USA

the past few years have shown us to be all too human. In a way I think it is just part and parcel of our starting out at the very bottom on this wonderful universe adventure. I remember my first study group up in the Ozarks of Arkansas. I would leave that meeting almost giddy with the spiritual high we had been blessed with after studying the teachings in *The Urantia Book*. There is much going on these days to distract us from the spirit within and nurturing spiritual fellowship with our

brothers and sisters. But if you find *The Urantia Book* still has a place in your lap, I think you will also find the depth and majesty in the book that has been there from the start.

"Remember all I have taught you and the life I have lived among you. My love overshadows you, my spirit will dwell with you, and my peace shall abide upon you. Farewell."  
(2057:4/193.5.2)

Sincerely,  
Paul Miller  
Memphis, Tennessee

# The Children's Program

## 1993 International Conference

By Claudia Ayers  
Sacramento, California

and Crystal Harris  
Phoenix, Arizona

We conducted the program for children ages seven to nine years at the 1993 International Conference in Montreal, Quebec. The daily themes of the children's program paralleled those of the adults, including "Who Is God" and "Who Is My Neighbor." Crystal Harris drew from extensive literature on spiritual development and some beautiful booklets prepared by our own authors Kaye Cooper and Patrick Yesh to prepare a diversified program with music, workshops, and free play. Our 16 participants entered into their activities with a sense of purpose and of satisfaction because they too, like their parents, were coming to a special international conference to share experiences related to the awesome *Urantia Book*.

Each day we sang some, played some, and participated in two workshops. The format for the workshops followed a pattern. First, all participants shared their thoughts and knowledge on the topic or theme; then Crystal presented the concept by either reading directly from *The*

*Urantia Book*, reading another book, telling a story, or involving the children in a puppetry pageant. Finally, we had an activity based on the topic, for example, making tissue paper flowers for our "garden" after discussing the Parable of the Sower.

We began our first workshop with Kaye Cooper's booklet titled "Getting to Know God" and later focused another workshop on Patrick Yesh's coloring book, "Angels All Around Us." The children were eager to be engaged in all aspects of our program. We marveled at how willingly and enthusiastically the kids talked about their images of God, their concepts of death and heaven, and many other topics, like suffering, angels, Jesus, dreams, traveling, brothers and sisters, having fun, and helping. One child, Kai, commented that he had attended lots of other conferences and was especially enjoying this one because, "We don't usually do things like this at conferences." Even our teen helpers said they had learned spiritual concepts in our workshops.

Crystal did extensive research, planning and preparing presentations for the program. Julie Dubec master-minded the facilitation of the program, with the especially brilliant idea of involving the teens in the programs of the younger children. Julie also presented a workshop which our kids will long remember: making Harmony Sticks and playing with them. It was incredibly satisfying for us to enjoy the company and experiences of these children. One of the activities we especially enjoyed was the children's letters to God, three of which you will find reproduced here.

We are certain that children are interested in spiritual ideas and are capable of discussing and learning more. We'd like more opportunities for their interests and talents to be developed at future conferences. Our kids were thrilled to be part of the entertainment and worship events, and we feel they have more to offer here as well. A few "multi-age" workshops could be planned in the future to open the program up even more for children of this age and older.

Some resources:

*Urantia Book* readers—Kaye Cooper, *Getting to Know God*, *A Spiritual Living Book for Children*. Patrick Yesh, *Angels All Around Us Coloring Book*. Both available from Good Cheer Press. Mary Ebben, *Young Reader's Guide to The Urantia Book*, available from Mary at 771 Victoria Court, Lafayette, CO 80026.

Other spiritual writers—Annette Hollander, *How to Help Your Child Have a Spiritual Life*, 1980. James Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 1981. Dorothy Furnish, *Living the Bible with Children*. Gay Hendricks & Russel Wills, *The Centering Book*. David Heller, *Talking to Your Child About God*. Joanne Taylor, *Innocent Wisdom*. ««

### The Circles Calendar

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

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

## Children's Letters to God 1993 International Conference

Daer god,

can you bring my dogy home  
becuse he ran away. His name is  
Willy he is white with brown spots  
Atell my Daddy I love him and I love  
you to. Tell my Mom not to yell at  
me. Tell my fish and cat I miss them  
and hello.

And, tell my dog Coco hello.  
And please make a jet land in  
Stuart's yard. I can't wait to get to  
heaven, but I want to live a long life  
before.

Diana your doder on erath

GOD

God is Everything!  
God is Sensational!  
God is fabulous!  
God is Beautiful!  
God is forgivng!

Julianna

Dear God, I hope win I am  
10 I know how to pray by my-  
self. I hope I grow up nice!

Nick A

## Uncovering the Paradise Pattern

One afternoon many years ago as I sat reading *The Urantia Book*, I had an experience reading the book that enhanced my appreciation for its depth. I had been studying it diligently, or so I thought, but at that moment I could not recall any information from the page my eyes were on. I skim-read backwards until I at last found a familiar section that I remembered reading. I was intrigued to uncover the mystery of where my mind was during those missing pages.

As an experiment, I retraced my thoughts, trying to re-create the state of mind during those lost minutes. I had not been daydreaming with my thoughts somewhere else; my mind had been focused on the book. Consciously re-reading the words on

By Jim McNelly  
Saint Cloud, Minnesota

the page failed to solve the mystery. I knew that I had been reading on a non-linear, more abstract level.

Inexplicably, my mind shifted again into the different reading style, only this time I was conscious of the shift in mental perspective. While difficult to explain, I was not reading words for their information content. I was perceiving the *pattern* of the sentences, the *arrangement* of the paragraphs, and the underlying *unity* of the book *as a whole*. I was amazed that such a level of mental input was even possible on a conscious level.

Suddenly the book had a profound new meaning for me. It was not a collection of facts like an encyclopedia. It was more than a favorite

novel. It was comprehensible on a level far above a mere source of proverbs, beliefs, and comforting sayings. The book became to me a revelation of a *pattern*, what I believe to be a Paradise pattern. Its teaching was not simply the information contained, but a revelation of the *way* the teachings were organized.

I had to stop and think. All my life I and others have been conditioned to think sequentially, to fill the mind with data and facts. Now I was aware of the mind's ability to comprehend on a holistic level. I was studying pattern, not merely the words contained within the pattern. I began noticing sevenfold sentences, twelvefold paragraphs. The beginning of the book with the Father and

See *Uncovering* on page 18.

# Heart, Mind Both Matter

By David Jacquith  
Newberg, Oregon

People ask columnists, where do you get your ideas?

I tend to answer that question differently each time, if only to avoid boring my Muse. It's no fun being consistently predictable. I prefer living in an open-ended universe, where you learn to leave room for the unexpected.

Today (should you ask) I'll say I get my ideas from the same place you do: from the mind and from the heart. And no sooner do I say this than who should come up the front walk but those very persons, those rascally twins, MIND and HEART. They ring the doorbell and Mary lets them in.

Once seated comfortably on the couch, MIND and HEART immediately began doing what they do best,

which is to both talk at once. It's often difficult to know which of them is saying what. But I suppose you've noticed that.

The twins only stayed an hour, and it was a lively time. HEART was agitated about something, and MIND kept trying to calm her down. I took notes. Here are some impressions of their visit.

"People kick me around a lot," HEART complained. "What am I, a soccer ball? Look at the way people talk about me. Hard-hearted Hanna, eh? Cold, cold, heart! Cheatin' heart! Foolish heart!" She was definitely miffed.

MIND jumped in: "You think you get a raw deal? Look at what people do to me. People are always messing with me, bending me, losing

## Lighten Up



me, analyzing me. I'm subjected to indignities of every sort. And worst of all, they waste me. Don't they know I'm a terrible thing to waste?"

HEART: "Do you mind, MIND? I was speaking. You are *always* interrupting me."

MIND; "Well, you are *always* emoting. You're up one day, down the next. Have a heart, HEART. Level out."

I had to cut in and settle them down. "Look," I said. "You both know you can't get along without the other. So how about showing some mutual respect.?"

Mary poured tea. "Nobody wins the 'You Always' game," she said. "And nobody ever does anything *always*." She kept a straight face. "At least not for long."

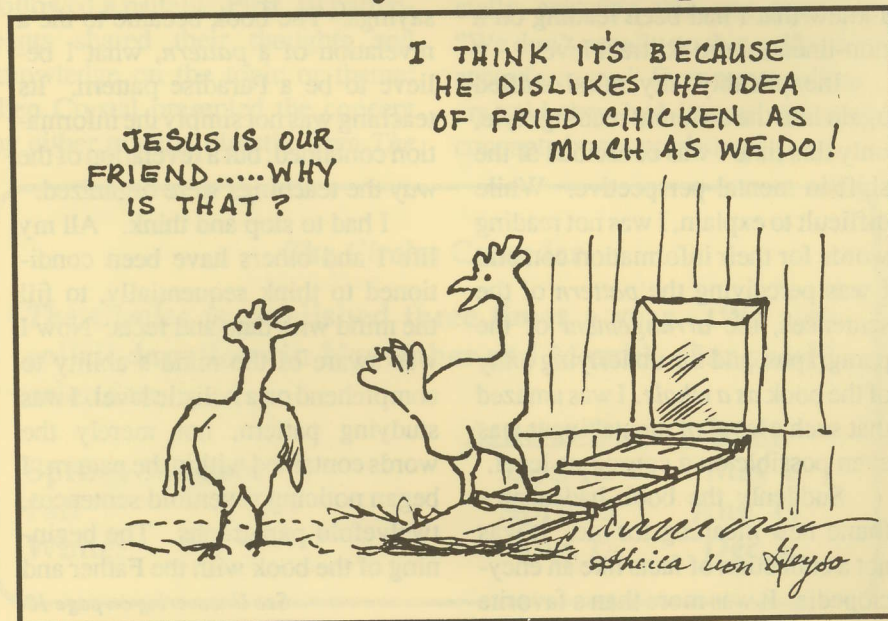
With good humor, tea and hot buttered English muffin strips, the tension broke. After second cups, the twins were quiet.

Then HEART spoke. "I know I get carried away, I gush at times, I must seem to others to be quite mindless."

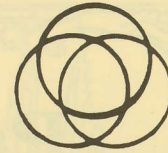
MIND came instantly to her defense. "But you do have a way of knowing intuitively what it takes me weeks to figure out, to find words

See HEART on page 15.

## Poultry Ponderings



# SPHERES of INFLUENCE



## Making All Things New

By Carol Weatherford  
Houston, Texas

*Making All Things New : An Invitation to the Spiritual Life by Henri J.M. Nouwen. ©1981, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 95 pages, hardback.*

In his book, *Making All Things New*, Henri J.M. Nouwen explores what it means to live a spiritual life and how to live it in our restless, hectic and worry-filled world. It is a marvelous little book on helping

people to walk quietly into the presence of God. It is a text that can be read in a few hours that not only explains what the spiritual life is but also creates the desire to live it.

The book is divided into three parts. First, Nouwen discusses "the destructive effects of worrying in our daily lives." Second, he shows how "Jesus responds to our paralyzing worries by offering us a new life, a life in which the Spirit of God can

make all things new for us." Third, Nouwen describes, "some specific disciplines that make us more sensitive to the gentle voice of God which can thus allow the Spirit of God to do His recreating work."

I have read three books by Henri J.M. Nouwen and this is the first book that I really like. I would recommend *Making All Things New* to anyone who wants to have a more personal relationship with God.«

*HEART from page 14.*  
for..."

HEART shot him a glance of appreciation.

Her honesty triggered his. "I know I can be quite thoughtless at times," MIND said. "Especially when it comes to matters of the heart." He paused. "A heart, too, is a terrible thing to waste."

So it went. It's always interesting to see how appreciation opens doors which accusations have slammed shut.

While Mary was pouring tea, she queried our guests, "Would I be getting too personal if I were ask, are you male and female? It's difficult to tell since you look and dress exactly alike."

The question brought peals of laughter. One of them said: "People imagine that only MIND thinks, and that HEART can only feel. Not so, we assure you. As for gender, well we're both and neither. We're just us. At your service."

I tried another tack, "Do you both function equally in the left and right hemispheres of the brain?" Equally, yes, they explained, but not

with equal force. "We take turns being the dominant influence. We're at our best when we stop competing for attention and work in unison.

The twins had to leave before we could discuss humankind's persistent dilemma: How to know which influence to trust? Logic doesn't always make sense. And the heart, however well intentioned, can deceive.

Blaise Pascal, a thinker of an-

other day observed, "The heart hath reasons which reason knows not of." This hints, does it not, of cosmic answers close enough to reach, and ripe for the plucking. Is it possible that a change of mind invariably follows a change of heart?

If in the Grand Design there is such a thing as accessible wisdom, surely (my heart reasons) there's a way of knowing what's really best the moment it's needed and wanted. Else, what's a moment for?«

*NOTES from page 9.*

bond, there is nothing stronger in human relationships than friendship. Sometimes I think it is the one strong and good value left in our jaded society. Friendship is celebrated—even in secular America!

*In preaching the gospel of the kingdom, you are simply teaching friendship with God. And this fellowship will appeal alike to men and women in that both will find that which most truly satisfies their characteristic longings and ideals. (1766:5/159.3.9)*

Friendship with God and with Jesus satisfies our longings and ide-

als. Humankind is plagued with longings, most of them misunderstood. At the very heart of our longings is the desire for companionship—the desire to be loved and valued by someone important to us. This is the first longing which Jesus fills. He loves us as we are and sees us as we can become. He loves and values us. He points the way to worship of our Father, and worship further fills our longing for companionship. In fact, fraternization with Jesus and our Father satisfies our longing for companionship in a way which enables us then to give and

See NOTES page 20.

# Parenting

By Gene Joyce  
Richardson, Texas

## Teaching Your Child How To Be Friends With Jesus

By Sharon Summers, Dallas, Texas

Introducing God to a pre-schooler or young child can be challenging and confusing. Where and how to start? How do you explain abstract concepts to a child who is still learning basic motor skills and possesses a limited vocabulary?

### GUIDED IMAGERY TO THE RESCUE!

The primary difference in using guided imagery or visualization and other methods of teaching is that with imagery the child becomes a part of the story...goes within and actually experiences the situation in a safe, stimulating, positive way. He or she is no longer watching or hearing about someone else's experience, this is actually happening to them! By asking Jesus or Michael to go along with them, to be there to share their feelings and thoughts, you make a subtle shift in awareness...from objective to subjective...from impersonal to extremely personal.

All children have vivid imaginations. More than ever before in history they are living in a rich visual world, a world filled with colorful pictures, ingenious animation and inspired music. A little forethought and investigation will soon reveal a wide range of material that is readily available to unify and enhance your program.

Keep in mind that what you are

going to do is really very, very simple. Instead of "once upon a time and long ago" you are merely going to shift into "see yourself walking along a path, entering a magical castle, or waking up in a magic land." And remember, all children have vivid imaginations! All the ideas and material you could ever hope for is right there where your child already resides! Spend some time with your pre-schooler watching favorite television programs. Notice which of their storybook friends are especially loved. Incorporate these friends into your journeys, and don't forget grandparents, playmates, siblings, perhaps even a favorite stuffed animal!

"In the absence of wrong teaching, the mind of the normal child moves positively, in the emergence of religious consciousness, toward moral righteousness and social ministry, rather than negatively, away from sin and guilt." (1131:5/103.2.6) Children just naturally respond to love, the very essence of God. Jesus is universally associated with love, gentleness, and compassion for little children. Incorporate and expand upon these attributes and focus on such 'simple' ideas as sharing, being different (tolerance), honesty...issues your child is currently dealing with or ones that you would like them to think about and

understand. "The psychology of a child is naturally positive, not negative. So many mortals are negative because they are so trained." (1131:4/193.2.5) Now you are ready to try your little experiment.

The first step is getting your child's attention! "Possibly one of the most valuable things we can teach our children is how to attend. How to be in attention, how to be aware of the conscious existence of ourselves as human beings. How to be fully present in mind and body each moment."<sup>8</sup>

Teaching children attention to breath and suggesting ways to relax their bodies enables them to quiet or calm their emotions and gain a fuller understanding of who they are. And it is who they are, not what they do, that will determine their life path. For small children, it can be as simple as lying quietly on the floor or bed and listening to their breath. Just asking your child to listen to their breathing and notice their body will produce a quieting effect. Be patient. Gear your time to the attention span of the child and don't expect instant results. But if you are willing to initiate a quiet time on a regular basis, you will begin to see results (for both the child and the adult!).

Once you have the cooperation of the child, you can expand awareness to each muscle group (feet, legs, torso, arms, head) just guiding them along to become aware of, and then relax their muscles (loose and limp like a loose rubber band). Remember to be realistic, depending on the child's age, but you should begin to notice increased awareness and cooperation if you are consistent.

Now that you have established the willingness and interest in quiet time, you can begin to expand by taking the child to an imaginary special place. Be sure to tell them it is a safe and fun place just for chil-



dren, where they can play and learn and grow exactly the way they want. This is where the information you have gathered regarding the child's interests will pay off, as you incorporate his special friends into your journeys.

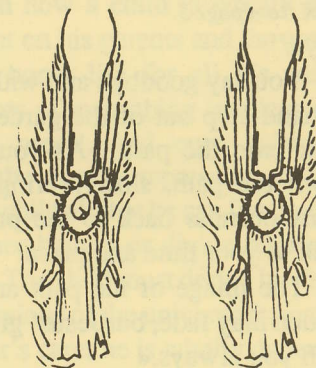
The goal of visualization is to actually "be" there. By relaxing the body and entering a relaxed, receptive state, the individual becomes and experiences as though it were actually happening. This is the most effective way to learn; and although you are gearing this to very basic moral issues, you are, in fact, instilling increased concentration and memory skills and laying the groundwork for improved academic learning and even enhanced sports performance! The use of positive, relaxing images helps reduce stress, and research has proven a direct correlation between imagery and physical healing.

"The evolutionary soil in the mind of man in which the seed of revealed religion germinates is the moral nature that so early gives origin to a social consciousness. The first promptings of a child's moral nature have not to do with sex, guilt, or personal pride, but rather with impulses of justice, fairness, and urges to kindness—helpful ministry to one's fellows. And when such early moral awakenings are nurtured, there occurs a gradual development of the religious life which is comparatively free from conflicts, upheavels, and crises." (1131:2/103.2.2)

Imagery allows us to experience a situation in a controlled setting, allowing us to feel, touch, taste, hear and see. Paint a bright and alive picture for the child to function within. Help the child get in touch with feelings and remember—all feelings are valid. This is a means of looking at and being open about feelings and emotions they might

## 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)**

The following story, as told in his own words, is by Keith Watkins of Austin, Texas.

On Easter Sunday, in 1978, I declined my mother's invitation to come to dinner and instead my pal and I went motorcycle riding. We both owned dirt bikes, and that is where we headed. When I made a wrong turn and became air borne, I hit the other side of the ditch with my head. I was knocked unconscious. When I came to, I couldn't feel anything below my neck, nor could I move anything. In that instant I changed from a strong, healthy, 23 year old man who loved sports into a quadriplegic with a spinal cord injury, paralyzed from the neck down.

Three months later in a rehabilitation hospital, I found myself, still unable to move, with little sensation, and in a total state of depression. I felt as though my life was over. I was contemplating suicide. But how? Medication was readily available. That's what I would do, overdose on valium.

otherwise be afraid of or confused about. By bringing Michael into the story as a friend, to talk to and share with, you encourage your child to relate on a personal and loving level.

After guided imagery exercises some children like to discuss how

As I lay there thinking about my own demise, a nurse working nearby was engaged in idle chat. She told a story about a young woman who attempted suicide by taking an overdose of valium. The woman failed at suicide, but succeeded in putting herself into a life-long coma.

I thought how my family would suffer if that happened to me, and I decided to talk to the nurse more about the girl. I asked various people who that nurse was and described her, but no one knew her. I had never seen her before, nor did I ever see her again.

My guardian angel was in a nurse's uniform. In the days that would follow, there were many times of depression, hopelessness, despair, and frustration; however, I would remember my guardian angel and know there was more to life than the physical.

I am so glad I didn't take an overdose. I would have missed out on the wonderful life I now enjoy. I have been married for nearly ten years to a beautiful woman and own my own computer business.

Keith Watkins  
Austin, Texas

their body felt or what images occurred to them. Others prefer to draw or paint the images that emerged, write about them (older children), or express them in movement. Go slowly at first and respect their tim-

See *TEACHING* on page 19.

*WALK from page 5.*  
ways.”

You say goodbye and with gifts in hand step out of the garden and back onto the path. As you walk down the path, slowly bring your consciousness back to the present, back to your time and place.

The image of the path and the garden may fade, but Jesus' gifts are with you always.«

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*THEY from page 7.*

right. “They” never told me that Jesus didn't bother even to sprinkle most of his friends.

When I went away to college, I tried to go to church on Sundays as I had always done at home. But that was during the Great Depression, and all the preacher talked about was how badly God and Jesus needed money, just like everyone else. I wasn't sure exactly what they did with it, and my books and food cost more than I had. It was pretty clear to me that I wasn't really welcome at church unless I gave them a tenth of my income, so there was little I could do except stop attending, even though it made God mad. I hoped I was still “saved,” but I wasn't sure about that. “They” never told me that God and Jesus understood my predicament.

Later, after I was married, I tried hard to make it up to them. I took my children to Sunday school regularly, and I taught adult class. By teaching, I learned a great deal about the Bible, but even then it seemed strange that God talked only to the Jews before Jesus came and after that, he stopped talking altogether. But apparently he promised to let the Gentiles in on salvation if the Jews would kill Jesus on a cross. I tried to explain all of it to the students in my class, never letting them know that I wondered about the strange ways of a father who couldn't love us unless we killed his son. “They” never told me

that he didn't really want it that way, that he felt just as I did about sacrifices.

In retrospect, it seems that I must have been a very slow learner. But I truly was a “believer.” And through the years, I had learned a great deal about the truth of the Golden Rule; I tried to treat others as I wanted to be treated. And I was blessed with good friends who taught me how to love people who shared my beliefs, enjoyed the things I did, had common interests with me. Friends were important to me. And I knew the meaning of love. I enjoyed the joys of loving my children, my parents as they grew older, and my friends. I even came to understand that it was easy to love everyone, especially when I got to really know and understand them. But “they” never told me that I could enjoy all that love and friendship wrapped up in one enormous bundle of joy, just by letting Jesus share life with me.

When I discovered *The Urantia Book*, I was fascinated at finding answers to all those questions that had nagged at me for so long. I learned about the complexity as well as the simplicity of God. I learned the purpose of all those stars in the sky. That Adam and Eve didn't interfere at all with the truth of evolution. That Guardian Angels were real and not at all the same as Fairy Godmothers. That the Spirit of Truth didn't descend only on the apostles and then leave again. And that the spark of understanding and faith I sensed at times was really a bit of God that had been inside my mind all along. I learned that Jesus didn't come here only to perform magic tricks and then die to make us all feel bad about being sinners. Apparently, some people can feel comfortable about God without having all those answers. Maybe their faith was greater than mine. But I seemed to need the logical explanations before I was

ready to really meet Jesus. And “they” never knew how to explain it.

Even after I had read the entire book, come to believe it as a true revelation, and shared my discoveries with other readers, “they” didn't tell me how to become friends with Jesus. It was only after I read it for the second time, after I had absorbed the facts I needed, that I truly understood that he wanted to share life with me. It was as though I had never read it before. “He left this world ripe in the experience which his creatures pass through during the short and strenuous years of their first life, the life in the flesh. And all this human experience is an eternal possession of the Universe Sovereign. He is our understanding brother, sympathetic friend, experienced sovereign, and merciful father.” (1405:5/127.6.13) Even then, “they” never told me that first I had to listen. Jesus himself was the only one who knew how to tell me.«

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*UNCOVERING from page 13.*

the revelation of Paradise at the center of all reality made perfect sense to me. I was aware of my mind absorbing the book *as a whole*. A sense of excitement came over me as I felt I had deciphered a hidden code within its pages.

I read the section describing the Trinity Teacher Sons on page 217 which encouraged the reader to read the book from the beginning to the end in order to understand cosmology from the infinite to the finite. There were other admonitions to look at universe reality from a “simultaneous” perspective, rather than from how it related just to the life span of a single individual. We are admonished to try to understand God from the Paradise center, rather than from the human viewpoint.

It is apparent to me that the revelation of the nature of the Trinity and God the Sevenfold can only be

understood as a pattern, or as a non-verbal unity of experience. The living God becomes increasingly experiential as *The Urantia Book* is read and its underlying pattern is translated into living protoplasmatic memory material. The pattern then creates a new mind, a new world view, a new technique of thinking, a more spiritual reflex and habit pattern and gradually a new spiritualized identity emerges.

If you are a new reader, do not be discouraged by the fact that you don't understand what you are reading. Some answers come as you read on or not until the second or tenth time through. The discipline is to read the book. Read it out loud, read it in a study group, read it again, read it in the bathroom, read it to the family on long drives. At some point in your life, make sure that you have read the book at least once from beginning to end so that the words are completely copied into the high memory of your mental storage files.

For those who have read it and are wondering, "What next," I suggest contemplating the pattern and totality of its message. Let your mind's eye try to read behind the words and uncover the pattern, arrangement, and sequence of the presentation. The revelation is more than three pounds of ink on paper, filled with the billion perfect Havona worlds. It is the living experience of those who read the papers and consent with their Adjusters to allow its patterns to realign their identity along the lines of the paradise pattern of eternal reality.

After downloading the words of the book into our mind, the underlying pattern begins grafting itself onto our other patterns of thinking, gradually spiritualizing our lives and thoughts. The words are not spiritual. The pattern is. Perhaps this is why some facts or ideas taken out of the book's context do not have the

impact or value that they have within the text as a whole. These reflections may give new meaning to this quote from page 435: "Even the *work* of this world, paramount though it is, is not nearly so important as the *way* in which you do this work." (435:6/39.4.13)«

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*TEACHING from page 17.*

ing. Children are much closer to their inner images than we adults. Allow them their own time to reveal their experiences to you. You can't force a flower to bloom; you can, however, delight in the process of unfolding.

If all this sounds a little complicated or new to you, let me assure you that children are accepting, caring, creative and forgiving! The only one with any hang-ups will be you, and you will be surprised at how much fun you can have with this. I have geared my comments to three to five year olds, but imagery is an excellent tool for children of any age.

The important thing to remember is that this is a fun experience, and there is no right or wrong way to do it. Spending time with your child, sharing ideas, answering questions, are all important aspects of growth. By helping your child experience positive, loving experiences in their imagination, you are building a base of self acceptance and self confidence. The child has the opportunity to feel good about himself, which just naturally carries over into his daily routine. And by participating with your child in this way, you will become more aware of what your child is really thinking, wondering, and worrying about, and can then ask Jesus to be there for them, perhaps providing courage, wisdom, love, patience. Helping your child bond spiritually at an early age is undoubtedly the greatest gift you could hope to give.

"The Master went on to explain

to John how a child is wholly dependent on his parents and the associated home life for all his early concepts of everything intellectual, social, moral, and even spiritual since the family represents to the young child all that he can first know of either human or divine relationships. The child must derive his first impressions of the universe from the mother's care; he is wholly dependent on the earthly father for his first ideas of the heavenly Father. The child's subsequent life is made happy or unhappy, easy or difficult, in accordance with his early mental and emotional life conditioned by these social and spiritual relationships of the home. A human being's entire afterlife is enormously influenced by what happens during the first few years of existence." (1922:3/177.2.5)«

Suggested Reading:

§*Spinning Inward*, Maureen Murdock

*Starbright*, Maureen Garth  
*Meditation for Children*, Deborah Rozman

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*MICHAEL from page 8.*

and motivate the entire personality for unending service which is the unselfish key to self-development and personality-actualization.

I know that Jesus is my friend when he whispers to me a helpful idea, an enlightening perception or a word of encouragement, just as he must have imparted insights to the apostles on Pentecost and throughout the remainders of their careers. Jesus removes all unloving thoughts. He reveals a love strong enough to deflect the wayward soul back toward celestial accomplishments and to render unrememberable any past transgressions—for indeed where does the past exist? The past is being continuously replaced by the present: NOW is the only time there is.

See *MICHAEL* on page 10.

MICHAEL from page 19.

And all of the configurations, personalities, or circumstances which might have composed the background and setting of a less than commendable action or word no longer exist in the mind of God nor in the observable universe. Such events have no reality (beyond the wisdom they engendered) and have no further negative effect upon those who have begun their ascension to the Isle of Light and the Father, the Source of all Light. Indeed, unloving words or misdeeds never registered in the mind of God in the first place. God never needs to "forgive and forget," because he "remembers"—recognizes the actuality of—only those experiences, words and deeds which have survival value—have relevance to each mortal's individual cosmic ascension career and his ultimate finding of his God on Central Paradise.

I do not prevaricate when I say that these cosmic perspectives of the personality of Jesus are relevant to my relationship with him. Usually, and in an average day, I think of Jesus and his relationship with me NOW, at this cosmic moment. And Jesus is able to minister to us NOW even more effectively than he served and taught the apostles up to the day of Pentecost and the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth. This Spirit of the Son is Michael's spirit, this facilitator of the extension of the spirit of Michael to the individual mortals of Urantia and on every other post-bestowal son age mortal planet in Nebadon. Jesus' simple acts of kindness, his dramatic oratory, his self-alignment with truth and his attunement to the Father's will, his courage and fearlessness, his logic and ideational clarity, his service to the humblest citizens of his "kingdom"—these are among the many qualities and attitudes of Jesus that make me humbly proud to be his friend.

He is my friend of many dimensions: as Jesus—he is my elder brother, Christ Michael of Nebadon—my Planetary Prince, sovereign of the local universe of Nebadon, mortal achiever of Orvonton, graduate of Havona, and created son of Paradise. And he shall eternally be my friend and your friend as he continues to reveal to us "all truth," and as he will one day lead us into the absonite adventures of the outer space universes, and as he will be our guide beyond absonity and into the unrevealed and undiscovered Cosmos Illimitable.«

NOTES from page 15.

receive companionship with our fellow mortals in a most satisfying way.

The second longing which Jesus fills is our desire for a meaningful life. He leads the way toward a life of service—giving ourselves away. Paradoxically, we find that in giving we are fulfilled and completed in ways far beyond our imagination. Giving ourselves away shapes a life of meaning and purpose. And our painful longings fade to a healthy, motivating desire to continue life in this rich and rewarding style!

*Tell my children that I am not only tender of their feelings and patient with their frailties, but that I am also ruthless with sin and intolerant of iniquity. (1766:5/159.3.9)*

Sometimes Jesus' love and mercy is portrayed to the neglect of his strength and courage. He was

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courageous, and he did not passively tolerate evil doing. Those who deliberately choose selfish, unloving ways of life do *not* find in Jesus a milquetoast who excuses and fellowships unrepentant rebels against his values. Somehow this strength is a comfort to me. Jesus may aggressively reached out to save the sinner, but he does not accept sinful behavior passively. I trust him more because of this.

*Never be guilty of such unworthy tactics as endeavoring to frighten men and women into the kingdom. A loving father does not frighten his children into yielding obedience to his just requirements. (1766:1/159.3.5)*

Many of Jesus' characteristic attitudes and behavior endear him to me as a friend. He advised his teachers not to frighten men and women into the kingdom. How common this method is in our world! Intimidation is the rule, from children dealing with each other to the highest levels of political action. How I hate intimidation! My respect goes up when I see someone refuse to succumb to the temptation to intimidate when they have the power.

Of course, Jesus was very wise to eschew intimidation. A friend once shared a wise saying with me: "A man convinced against his will...is of the same opinion still." Intimidation does not work—not down deep inside where we live.

*Jesus possessed that matchless grace of personality which enabled him so to live among them that they were not dismayed by his divinity. They found it really easy to be "friends with God," God incarnate in the likeness of mortal flesh. (1534:1/137.7.2)*

I am amazed that Jesus was able to attenuate his divinity so successfully that mere mortals found it comfortable to be his friend. The very intelligent often manage to

impress and overpower the rest of us to the point that we are uncomfortable in their presence. Many people who are great philanthropists, or committed servers, or who champion great causes find it difficult to be "just folks."

Yet Jesus, the creator of our universe, spends time with me—without making me aware of his exalted status. We are friends, you see.

*He [Philip] was also greatly lacking in spiritual insight. He would not hesitate to interrupt Jesus in the midst of one of the Master's most profound discourses to ask an apparently foolish question. But Jesus never reprimanded him for such thoughtlessness; he was patient with him and considerate of his inability to grasp the deeper meanings of the teaching. Jesus well knew that, if he once rebuked Philip for asking these annoying questions, he would not only wound this honest soul, but such a reprimand would so hurt Philip that he would never again feel free to ask questions. Jesus knew that on his worlds of space there were untold billions of similar slow-thinking mortals, and he wanted to encourage them all to look to him always to feel free to come to him with their questions and problems. After all, Jesus was really more interested in Philip's foolish questions than in the sermon he might be preaching. Jesus was supremely interested in men, all kinds of men. (1557:11139.5.7)*

I am astonished at this passage. Jesus never once in four years of living with these men 24 hours a day, coping with their inability to understand the most rudimentary of concepts of love and trust, and rephrasing his teachings continuously—through all that Jesus never once snapped back at Philip.

I am overwhelmed at the difficulty of such a feat. I have some

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

friends who are more sensitive than others. I habitually soften my replies in recognition of these differences. Yet, I can vividly recall a recent failure when I shouted, not in anger, but in exasperation. Only once and the damage is done. Nothing takes that moment back. And Jesus never once lost his patience.

And then there is that last statement: "After all, Jesus was really more interested in Philip's foolish questions than in the sermon he might be preaching." I am shamed at my own self-importance. And I more fully realize why it is that I trust this man.

*The disciples early learned that the Master had a profound respect and sympathetic regard for every human being he met, and they were tremendously impressed by this uniform and unvarying consideration which he so consistently gave to all sorts of men, women, and children. He would pause in the midst of a profound discourse that he might go out in the road to speak good cheer to a passing woman laden with her burden of body and soul. He would interrupt a serious conference with his apostles to fraternize with an intruding child. Nothing ever seemed so important to Jesus as the individual human who chanced to be in his immediate presence. He was master and teacher, but he was more—he was also a friend and neighbor, an understanding comrade. (1545:10/138.8.9)*

Philip was an apostle, an intimate of Jesus for four years, one of

his friends. But lest we think that his consideration for Philip had anything to do with Philip's status as a special friend of Jesus, we are also told that he was willing to interrupt his teaching to minister to a passing woman or a small child.

This is another thing which makes me love him so. He does not have special friends for whom he reserves his best demonstrations of love. He loves me, who never saw him in the flesh, as much as he loves Philip, as much as he loves the greatest of his servers.

*The Master looked upon men as the sons of God and foresaw a magnificent and eternal future for those who chose survival. He was not a moral skeptic; he viewed man positively, not negatively. He saw most men as weak rather than wicked, more distraught than depraved. But no matter what their status, they were all God's children and his brethren. (2093:3/196.2.9)*

*He taught men to place a high value upon themselves in time and in eternity. (2093:4/196.2.10)*

Our family has a very dear friend. Mary was Bill's debate coach, Kaye's English teacher, and Jason's Godmother. She is a wonderful bundle of energy and a giving person. One of her most endearing traits is her unswerving confidence in the worth and value of those she is with. Everyone thinks Mary is his or her fan club of one. In addition to teaching the gifted, she spent many years teaching the students whom no one else wanted. She frequently produced miracles in their lives—because she believed in them and she liked them!

When a person thinks highly of you, you can tell. It just seeps through somehow. And as a result, you feel more capable, stronger, more ready to take on the world. I suspect that one of the most amazing

See NOTES on page 22.

NOTES from page 21.

factors in the personal influence of Jesus was and is this high regard he has for each of us. It makes us become more than we were when we entered his presence. It continues to lure us on to growth and development all the days of our lives.

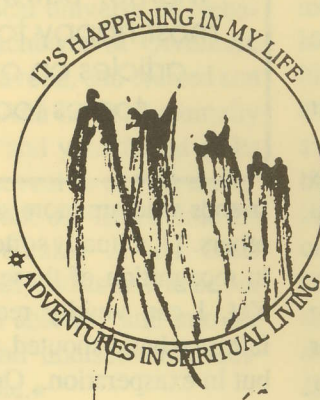
*"And you are my friends; you will continue to be my friends if you are but willing to do what I have taught you... If you will only love one another as I am loving you, you shall be my friends, and I will ever speak to you of that which the Father reveals to me." (1944:6/180.1.3)*

*Keep in mind: It is loyalty, not sacrifice, that Jesus demands. The consciousness of sacrifice implies the absence of that wholehearted affection which would have made such a loving service a supreme joy. The idea of duty signifies that you are servant-minded and hence are missing the mighty thrill of doing your service as a friend and for a friend. (1945:3/180.1.6)*

Jesus is my friend; but I am also Jesus' friend. How do I show that I am his friend? Well, of course, I love him back. That's tremendously easy to do. But I also love my fellows. I love my friends, and I try to support and encourage them in their life challenges. I love my fellow believers. I do my best to find common points of faith and love with all I meet. I take special joy in finding others who are led by the spirit, whose lives and shining faces reflect that fact. I try to understand those whose actions are offensive. I do my best to see erring men and women as weak rather than wicked. I serve as a friend, for a friend. I try to love as Jesus loved—because he is my friend.

But I try to love as Jesus loved for another reason. It is the single great source of joy in my life. My friend Jesus knows how to live abundantly!«

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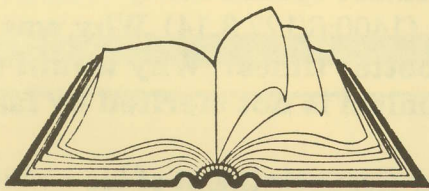
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# Be of Good Cheer

Jesus' byword was "Be of good cheer." This was an admonition, an instruction. How can we be of good cheer? The Circles Spring-Summer 1994 issue will explore Jesus brand of optimism—being of good cheer. Starters:

Jesus was not a blind and unreasoning optimist. His optimism was based on "unswerving trust in God and...unshakable confidence in man." (1102:6/100.7.8) **How did Jesus' trust in God and confidence in man make him an optimist? How can we gain optimism from these same sources?**

Jesus taught his earth family to anticipate the future optimistically even though financial matters appeared to get worse each year. (1400:6/127.3.14) **Why was it good for the family to live in anticipation of better times? Why would we be wise to be optimistic—even when our optimism is not merited by facts?**

Jesus said, "Much of man's sorrow is born of the disappointment of his ambitions and the wounding of his pride." (1674:5-6/149.5.3-4) **How can this insight help us to be of good cheer?**

Jesus said about man's happiness, "Much, very much, depends upon the willingness of man to be led and directed by the Father's spirit which lives within him." (1674:4/149.5.2) **How can our willingness to be led and directed by the Father's spirit contribute to our ability to be of good cheer?**

Send your articles, poems, and artwork by December 15, 1993 to:

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