

The Pilgrim

A Tennessee Voice for the Fifth Epochal Readership

Rec'd. 8-6-90

Volume 1, Number 2

July, 1990

WORD FROM SNOWMASS

For various reasons, none of the members of our study group were able to make the conference held in Snowmass, CO, this year. We "enviously" awaited a report from the conference. The following is an ^{account} ~~account~~ of the event written by one of our friends who did go. We look forward to being able to attend the next one.

Our friend wrote: "This International Conference was the best yet! Over 1100 people from all over the world, including Estonia, attended. The mountains were beautiful! The altitude and many steps did make my heart labor a bit more. This is no place for a severely handicapped person--it would be hard to get to first base there! But, we did have one blind boy in attendance who got along fine. He touched elbows with a companion. He is a very enthusiastic young man who is devoted to the Urantia Book.

The workshops I attended were well planned, talks excellent, food pretty good, except it took 2 hours to feed that mob. When the conference met at Snowmass 9 years ago there was no common dining room--new buildings have been built since then and it was more fun to be able to sit down and talk to friends. Some of the speech makers told the story of their life which made it quite interesting. John Denver gave a concert one evening. A magician performed for the children one evening; the closing worship service was excellent, a play given on Wednesday evening was well written and performed.

Fifteen people from our town attended the conference. There were interesting activities going on each day. One couple and family from our group "Rode the Rapids" on the Colorado River in a rubber raft and got all wet, much to their delight. Two couples took a Hot-Air Balloon ride, some took Nature Herb walks, horseback rides, hiking trips, etc. There was a Society Conclave on Wednesday afternoon when representatives from the societies met together. It was a memorable week!"

"We celebrated my birthday and our 50th wedding anniversary while there!"

Congratulations, dear friends, and thank you for sharing your experiences with us.

The Pilgrim is published by the group of Urantia Book Readers in Knoxville, TN.

We welcome your response and comments. Please send them to:

Helen and Alvin Smith
9300 Gulf Park Drive

Terry Faulkner
4178 Ridgeway Lane

WORD FROM SNOWMASS

For various reasons, none of the members of our study group were able to make the conference held in Snowmass, CO, this year. We "enviously" awaited a report from the conference. The following is an ^{account} ~~account~~ of the event written by one of our friends who did go. We look forward to being able to attend the next one.

Our friend wrote: "This International Conference was the best yet! Over 1100 people from all over the world, including Estonia, attended. The mountains were beautiful! The altitude and many steps did make my heart labor a bit more. This is no place for a severely handicapped person--it would be hard to get to first base there! But, we did have one blind boy in attendance who got along fine. He touched elbows with a companion. He is a very enthusiastic young man who is devoted to the Urantia Book.

The workshops I attended were well planned, talks excellent, food pretty good, except it took 2 hours to feed that mob. When the conference met at Snowmass 9 years ago there was no common dining room--new buildings have been built since then and it was more fun to be able to sit down and talk to friends. Some of the speech makers told the story of their life which made it quite interesting. John Denver gave a concert one evening. A magician performed for the children one evening; the closing worship service was excellent, a play given on Wednesday evening was well written and performed.

Fifteen people from our town attended the conference. There were interesting activities going on each day. One couple and family from our group "Rode the Rapids" on the Colorado River in a rubber raft and got all wet, much to their delight. Two couples took a Hot-Air Balloon ride, some took Nature Herb walks, horseback rides, hiking trips, etc. There was a Society Conclave on Wednesday afternoon when representatives from the societies met together. It was a memorable week!"

"We celebrated my birthday and our 50th wedding anniversary while there!"

Congratulations, dear friends, and thank you for sharing your experiences with us.

The Pilgrim is published by the group of Urantia Book Readers in Knoxville, TN.

We welcome your response and comments. Please send them to:

<p>Helen and Alvin Smith 9300 Gulf Park Drive Knoxville, TN 37929</p>

<p>Terry Faulkner 4178 Ridgeway Lane Knoxville, TN 37919</p>
--

<p>All quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the URANTIA Book © 1955 and are used by permission. Interpretations and opinions are those of the authors.</p>
--



THIS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

By Bruce McCoy

Most Urantia Book readers have acquired a vivid sense of universe context. We have become oriented to the reality that our local system capital is Jerusem and we live in the constellation of Norlatiadek within the universe of Nebadon. We know that the Milky Way is the nucleus of our Superuniverse and that the whole system is inhabited by an incredibly developed and replete society of widely varying beings who live eternally within an amazing governmental organization. This is the physical structure of the Kingdom of Heaven. We live in it.

Coming to know this is a tremendous ah-ha experience of realness, a settling of ourselves into a contextual niche which feels like home to the soul. It provides us a reference which goes far beyond the temporal and materialistic nationalisms and even internationalisms of earth into an identity root system for which we truly feel we were created.

Early Christians seemed to share such a "cosmic orientation." I was recently shown a fascinating example of writing from the early Christian era in the form of an anonymous letter to Diognetus. Scholars are uncertain about the identity of Diognetus but some hold that he was the emperor Hadrian. The letter was written by perhaps an underling of his who was involved in Roman government in the provinces.

This unknown author writes an extensive letter which creates a rich picture of Christianity as it was practiced by the members of the early Christian community around 125 A.D. First the writer compares the new Christian belief system to its older rivals, Judaism and the Greek religions, finding it much superior. Then he presents an interesting and insightful description of the characteristics of the Christian community as follows:

remarkable, and even surprising. For instance, though they are residents at home in their own countries, their behavior there is more like that of transients. They take their full part as citizens, but they also submit to anything and everything as if they were aliens. For them any foreign country is a motherland, and any motherland is a foreign country . . . Though destiny has placed them here in the flesh, they do not live after the flesh. Their days are passed on earth, but their citizenship is above in the heavens."

This interesting quote depicts early Christians as so aware of their citizenship in a heavenly kingdom that it was obvious to an observing bystander. A supernatural aspect, as every individual christian's pursuit, was a practical thing that was basic and within the grasp of each one of them. The Kingdom of Heaven was a solid reality. This living faith in the practical reality of a cosmic context has, however, faded over the years. For regular, present day Christians, ideas about the heavenly kingdom have become somewhat stylized and abstract. Notions about pie in the sky or boring harpistry on the clouds, have grown up as weeds in the garden.

Though the Bible speaks clearly of angels, classical church interpretations tend to see angels as somewhat whimsical beings who float around in white robes looking at the world through rose colored glasses without really much of anything to do. But, for those of us who are familiar with the U Book, this belief in angels and a kingdom in the heavens has come alive again. Knowing more detail about the cosmic system has given us a feeling of being universe citizens.

Yet I have never met a U Book reader who

...in a sense of universe context. We have become oriented to the reality that our local system capital is Jerusem and we live in the constellation of Norlatiadek within the universe of Nebadon. We know that the Milky Way is the nucleus of our Superuniverse and that the whole system is inhabited by an incredibly developed and replete society of widely varying beings who live eternally within an amazing governmental organization. This is the physical structure of the Kingdom of Heaven. We live in it.

Coming to know this is a tremendous ah-ha experience of realness, a settling of ourselves into a contextual niche which feels like home to the soul. It provides us a reference which goes far beyond the temporal and materialistic nationalisms and even internationalisms of earth into an identity root system for which we truly feel we were created.

Early Christians seemed to share such a "cosmic orientation." I was recently shown a fascinating example of writing from the early Christian era in the form of an anonymous letter to Diognetus. Scholars are uncertain about the identity of Diognetus but some hold that he was the emperor Hadrian. The letter was written by perhaps an underling of his who was involved in Roman government in the provinces.

This unknown author writes an extensive letter which creates a rich picture of Christianity as it was practiced by the members of the early Christian community around 125 A.D. First the writer compares the new Christian belief system to its older rivals, Judaism and the Greek religions, finding it much superior. Then he presents an interesting and insightful description of the characteristics of the Christian community as follows:

"Christians do not live apart in separate cities of their own, speak any special dialect, or practice any eccentric way of life . . . They pass their lives in whatever township—Greek or foreign—each man's lot has determined; and conform to ordinary local usage in their clothing, diet, and other habits. Nevertheless, the organization of their community does exhibit some features that are

home in their own countries, their behavior there is more like that of transients. They take their full part as citizens, but they also submit to anything and everything as if they were aliens. For them any foreign country is a motherland, and any motherland is a foreign country . . . Though destiny has placed them here in the flesh, they do not live after the flesh. Their days are passed on earth, but their citizenship is above in the heavens."

This interesting quote depicts early Christians as so aware of their citizenship in a heavenly kingdom that it was obvious to an observing bystander. A supernatural aspect, as every individual christian's pursuit, was a practical thing that was basic and within the grasp of each one of them. The Kingdom of Heaven was a solid reality. This living faith in the practical reality of a cosmic context has, however, faded over the years. For regular, present day Christians, ideas about the heavenly kingdom have become somewhat stylized and abstract. Notions about pie in the sky or boring harpistry on the clouds, have grown up as weeds in the garden.

Though the Bible speaks clearly of angels, classical church interpretations tend to see angels as somewhat whimsical beings who float around in white robes looking at the world through rose colored glasses without really much of anything to do. But, for those of us who are familiar with the U Book, this belief in angels and a kingdom in the heavens has come alive again. Knowing more detail about the cosmic system has given us a feeling of being universe citizens.

Yet I have never met a U Book reader who seriously talks about building a space ship that can take us to Jerusem. Of course, with today's technology that's not possible and no one knows exactly where Jerusem is, but if it were possible, it still would not be considered. Space ships are not the way. It is fairly well understood that out in the universe we will not be indulging our materialistic desires. This knowledge of the physical structure of the universe is unimportant, Jesus would have us know, if our hearts are not tuned to the key notes of love and life eternal.

At this cornerstone point the new revitalized christianity of the Urantia Papers and the conventional christianity of the established church come together. The kingdom of heaven is within us, Jesus taught, and that message has come though clear within the imperfect vessel of the classical church. If someone did suggest building a space ship to Jerusem he/she would be argued down by a huge united crowd made up of all of us.

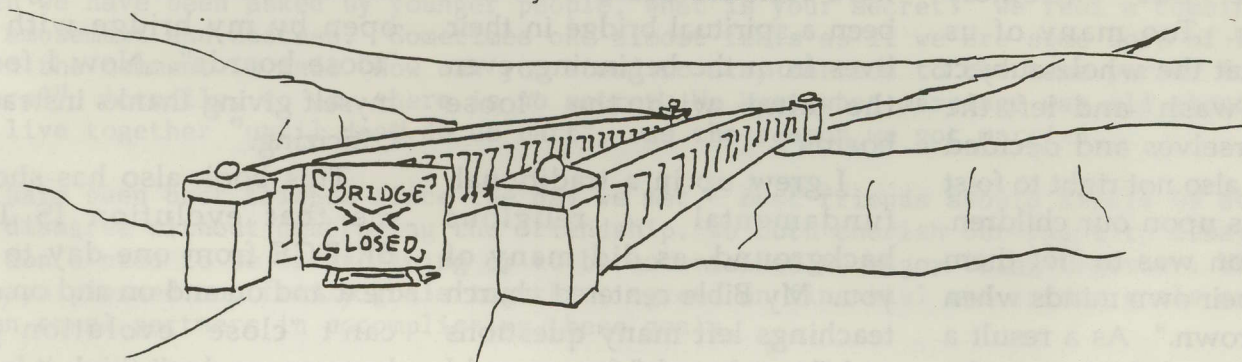
In a paper focusing on the concept of the kingdom of heaven, the Midwayer Commission deals fairly exhaustively with its myriad aspects beginning on p. 1858 in the Urantia book. There were many misconceptions and imperfections associated with this idea in the thought of Jesus' contemporaries but on p. 1861A the simple crux of Jesus' message is presented. Jesus tried to communicate to his followers that the kingdom of heaven is now. We are to begin bringing about the kingdom immediately and that is done by our attitudes and ways of living. It is not determined by the world of our location.

It helps, in understanding the source of conventional notions about heaven, to see that these ideas are wish fulfillments; projections by materialistic humans of their own dread of pain and struggle. In these terms true life eternal is not really as easy as it looks. For the materialist who thinks in terms of having rather than attaining, it can be quite scary to think of toiling on and on forever. For someone who must have everything without spending any effort to get it, or without practicing to get ready for it, to need to be courageously loving for eternity could perhaps seem like a hellish burden.

Something that is always helpful to me is to remember what I call the golden understatement. "Reality is Huge." Through the U book we now have an expanded view but it's only enough to show us that reality is much, much, more than our minds can ever grasp. It is best that we keep things simple and focus on the way Jesus taught us; to bring about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man right now wherever we find ourselves. This is the kingdom of heaven.

"BRIDGE CLOSING UPSETS COMMUNITY"

by Helen G. Smith



This headline covered a picture and an article in our local, daily newspaper a few days ago.

The picture depicted a serene, remote little country community, focusing upon a one lane wooden bridge in the

As is often the case when city dwellers view such serene, pastoral scenes in pictures, we don't see "the rest of the story".

This community has just had a visit from an inspector from the state Department of Transportation. It is

They never exceed that load limit. When this bridge was closed it cut off connection with the different areas of the community and also made connection with the world outside very difficult for about

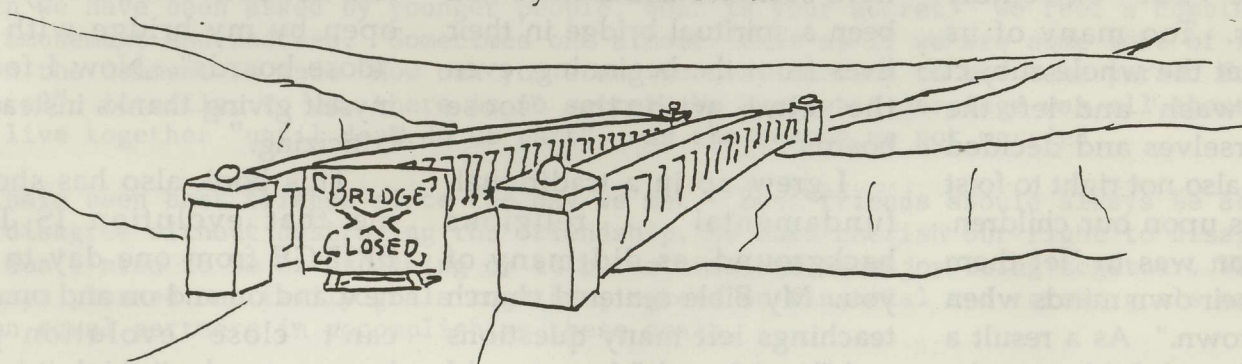
In a paper focusing on the concept of the kingdom of heaven, the Midwayer Commission deals fairly exhaustively with its myriad aspects beginning on p. 1858 in the Urantia book. There were many misconceptions and imperfections associated with this idea in the thought of Jesus' contemporaries but on p. 1861A the simple crux of Jesus' message is presented. Jesus tried to communicate to his followers that the kingdom of heaven is now. We are to begin bringing about the kingdom immediately and that is done by our attitudes and ways of living. It is not determined by the world of our location.

practicing to get ready for it, to need to be courageously loving for eternity could perhaps seem like a hellish burden.

Something that is always helpful to me is to remember what I call the golden understatement. "Reality is Huge." Through the U book we now have an expanded view but it's only enough to show us that reality is much, much, more than our minds can ever grasp. It is best that we keep things simple and focus on the way Jesus taught us; to bring about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man right now wherever we find ourselves. This is the kingdom of heaven.

"BRIDGE CLOSING UPSETS COMMUNITY"

by Helen G. Smith



This headline covered a picture and an article in our local, daily newspaper a few days ago.

The picture depicted a serene, remote little country community, focusing upon a one lane wooden bridge in the foreground. The bridge spanned a busy railroad at the bottom of a wide gorge 25 feet below the road level. On the road just over the bridge stood a typical little white country church and its proud steeple and well kept family cemetery. A short distance from the church could be seen a country general store.

As is often the case when city dwellers view such serene, pastoral scenes in pictures, we don't see "the rest of the story". This community has just had a visit from an inspector from the state Department of Transportation. His inspection has resulted in his decision to close their bridge!

For 60 years this bridge has undergone regular inspections and repairs and been kept safe for their needs, (the last inspection and repair made only a year ago.) The reason for closing is because the inspector said it was not safe for loads over 6000 pounds.

They never exceed that load limit. When this bridge was closed it cut off connection with the different areas of the community and also made connection with the world outside very difficult for about 45% of the community. Fifty five percent of the community lives on the wrong side of the tracks from their church and store.

These people pondered their plight and finally asked that the bridge be left open at least, for pedestrian traffic, so access to the church and store would be possible. Their request was denied. In order

to placate the protests the inspector told them that a new 4-lane concrete bridge would be built at another point over the gorge when funds could be allocated and work scheduled. Their past experience with political promises gave them little hope that they would get relief from their plight any time soon.

Meanwhile, what do they do? A 60 year old bridge with a few loose boards is better than no bridge at all.

What does all this have to do with us and our religion?

As I pondered the plight of these people it seemed to symbolize the way so many modern problems are solved: If there are a few "loose boards" we just close the whole bridge. One very significant area of our lives affected by this attitude is our spiritual life. When we began to get "smart" and discovered that the Bible just could not be as infallible as our our fundamental traditions were proclaiming we sometimes challenged the church and the preachers and our parents. This approach proved to be not only ineffective but extremely unpopular. Too many of us decided that the whole subject was "hog wash" and left the church ourselves and decided that it was also not right to foist these errors upon our children. The solution was to "let them make up their own minds when they are grown." As a result a great number of children in the past 2-3 generations have grown up with no spiritual bridge for themselves, and no bridge to pass on to their children.

I realize that the following statements are simplistic and

young folks on T.V. and some in person as they tell the stories of their broken lives, emotional disturbances, suicidal thoughts and involvement in drugs and crime. Without exception the pain is evident, even in the most hardened of them. Their stories are varied, but one thread ties the stories together predictably. They all feel there is no reason for living; there is no one who cares what they do. Since no one cares why should they be concerned about anything except self. They have no hope.

Occasionally one will appear who has been to the depths, but has managed to turn his life around and is even trying to help others improve their plight. Almost without exception these rare ones have made the change when they have by chance met someone who was successful in introducing them to the idea of a loving God who loved them and was able to convince them of God's love by demonstrating to them that it was possible to be loved. As simplistic as this sounds, I have to wonder how many of these tragedies could have been avoided if there had been a spiritual bridge in their lives from the beginning, even the kind with the "loose boards".

I grew up in a traditional, fundamental religious background, as did many of you. My Bible centered church teachings left many questions and "loose boards" for me and I admit to rebelling at many of them at a young age. But-my parents were not timid in reminding me of all the good strong timbers in the foundation of that bridge, such as: the freedom to believe in

what I sowed; and to love and appreciate ~~for~~ my country and what it stands for. I considered all these things and I concluded early that it made more sense to step over the "loose boards" and lean on the good ones that could take me into adulthood when I could proceed with my quest to find the answers I needed to replace the "loose boards".

As I matured I realized that my church and my parents, at that time, had done the very best they knew, given the evolutionary period, the tools at their disposal, and their understanding of their responsibility as parents. God has always seemed to compensate for the "loose boards" when one's acts are motivated by a sincere desire to do the will of the Father, to the best of one's ability.

When I found the Urantia Book 14 years ago I felt that I had finally found the boards to repair the imperfections in my old bridge, but at the same time I also realized that this planet might not have evolved to the point of being ready to accept this new higher revelation if it had not been for the way kept open by my bridge with the "loose boards". Now I found myself giving thanks instead of criticizing.

This book also has shown me that evolution IS THE BRIDGE from one day to the next and on and on and on...We can't "close" evolution just because we don't think it is fair or because we don't agree with all that is happening along the way. It would seem self-defeating to attempt to cut ourselves off from the process. It would seem smarter to try to recognize the opportunities and

they do? A 60 year old bridge with a few loose boards is better than no bridge at all.

What does all this have to do with us and our religion?

As I pondered the plight of these people it seemed to symbolize the way so many modern problems are solved: If there are a few "loose boards" we just close the whole bridge. One very significant area of our lives affected by this attitude is our spiritual life. When we began to get "smart" and discovered that the Bible just could not be as infallible as our our fundamental traditions were proclaiming we sometimes challenged the church and the preachers and our parents. This approach proved to be not only ineffective but extremely unpopular. Too many of us decided that the whole subject was "hog wash" and left the church ourselves and decided that it was also not right to foist these errors upon our children. The solution was to "let them make up their own minds when they are grown." As a result a great number of children in the past 2-3 generations have grown up with no spiritual bridge for themselves, and no bridge to pass on to their children.

I realize that the following statements are simplistic and must not be construed to apply to every child who has grown up without loving parents and/or religious training. But I am a mother and a grandmother and I am concerned about what is happening to far too many children in the past 2-3 generations. There has to be an answer some place.

I listen to many of these

no one who cares what they do. Since no one cares why should they be concerned about anything except self. They have no hope.

Occasionally one will appear who has been to the depths, but has managed to turn his life around and is even trying to help others improve their plight. Almost without exception these rare ones have made the change when they have by chance met someone who was successful in introducing them to the idea of a loving God who loved them and was able to convince them of God's love by demonstrating to them that it was possible to be loved. As simplistic as this sounds, I have to wonder how many of these tragedies could have been avoided if there had been a spiritual bridge in their lives from the beginning, even the kind with the "loose boards".

I grew up in a traditional, fundamental religious background, as did many of you. My Bible centered church teachings left many questions and "loose boards" for me and I admit to rebelling at many of them at a young age. But--my parents were not timid in reminding me of all the good strong timbers in the foundation of that bridge, such as: the freedom to believe in and worship God--the same God of most of the religions of the world that have bridged the ages; respect for the wisdom that comes with experience; respect for our neighbors; basic honesty; individual responsibility for our own actions; the necessity for work; that my rights ended when they impinged upon someone else's right; that I would surely reap

As I matured I realized that my church and my parents, at that time, had done the very best they knew, given the evolutionary period, the tools at their disposal, and their understanding of their responsibility as parents. God has always seemed to compensate for the "loose boards" when one's acts are motivated by a sincere desire to do the will of the Father, to the best of one's ability.

When I found the Urantia Book 14 years ago I felt that I had finally found the boards to repair the imperfections in my old bridge, but at the same time I also realized that this planet might not have evolved to the point of being ready to accept this new higher revelation if it had not been for the way kept open by my bridge with the "loose boards". Now I found myself giving thanks instead of criticizing.

This book also has shown me that evolution IS THE BRIDGE from one day to the next and on and on and on...We can't "close" evolution just because we don't think it is fair or because we don't agree with all that is happening along the way. It would seem self-defeating to attempt to cut ourselves off from the process. It would seem smarter to try to recognize the opportunities and value the gift of being able to join the positive flow of evolution.

Both the imperfect Bible and our Urantia Book agree on one formula that is guaranteed to work for everyone alike, who dares to try it. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these other things will be added unto you."

*Alvin and Helen
Smith*



July 12, 1940

July 12, 1990

50th Wedding Anniversary

Fifty years ago when a city boy from Tennessee who had never spent a night on a farm met a farm girl from Virginia who had never spent a night in the city, it was rare that any significant relationship would "come of such meeting."

And when that girl was the oldest child in the family and had been conditioned by necessity to be very independent, adventurous and possessing super energy - and the boy was not the oldest in his family, and by his nature was a gentle, low key, who did not need to have some "project going" all the time and saw no need to rush making non-emergency decisions, the prospects for that alliance was judged, "it won't last as long as a snow ball on a hot stove."

This relationship did result in a marriage of Helen Marie Gosney and Alvin R. Smith, Jr. July 12, 1940 and is still going!

In spite of all the differences there was one very important common thread from both backgrounds. Religious training was important to both families, although different denominations. Both families valued, taught and practiced high morals and ethics and a staunch insistence upon personal responsibility and necessity of work. These values became of prime importance to the new family.

When we have been asked by younger people, "What is your secret?" we feel a combination of amusement and sadness. Sometimes one almost feels as if we are some sort of freak when the comment is made "How can you stand to stay married to the same person for 50 years?" Actually, to us, there is no secret. We knew what marriage was all about and to live together "until death do us part", was the reason we got married.

We have been best friends since the day we met. Best friends should always be able to disagree without destroying the friendship. We both cherish our right to disagree! We don't need to be entertaining or to be entertained to enjoy being together. WE have always planned our family goals together, agreed on financial and career goals and been equal partners in accomplishing these goals.

We realized early on that we each had unique strengths and abilities and we had weaknesses as well. Fortunately our weaknesses were not shared. It made sense to play our strong abilities as a team. He has always been perfectly willing for me to do the planning and organizing in the family (and besides I am a better cook than he is!) I have been happy for him to make the money, make the bank deposits and keep the check book balnaced. (I was no fool to recognize that I needed an accountant in my life) This sharing of responsibility as a team has made it possible for us to raise our 4 children, keep a home going, and study and train for and practice 2 different careers for each of us during this time together. We both know that we could not have done it



50th Wedding Anniversary

Fifty years ago when a city boy from Tennessee who had never spent a night on a farm met a farm girl from Virginia who had never spent a night in the city, it was rare that any significant relationship would "come of such meeting."

And when that girl was the oldest child in the family and had been conditioned by necessity to be very independent, adventurous and possessing super energy - and the boy was not the oldest in his family, and by his nature was a gentle, low key, who did not need to have some "project going" all the time and saw no need to rush making non-emergency decisions, the prospects for that alliance was judged, "it won't last as long as a snow ball on a hot stove."

This relationship did result in a marriage of Helen Marie Gosney and Alvin R. Smith, Jr. July 12, 1940 and is still going!

In spite of all the differences there was one very important common thread from both backgrounds. Religious training was important to both families, although different denominations. Both families valued, taught and practiced high morals and ethics and a staunch insistence upon personal responsibility and necessity of work. These values became of prime importance to the new family.

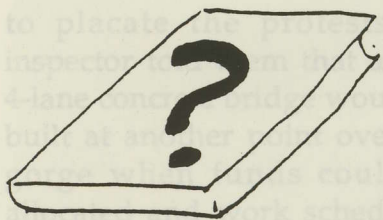
When we have been asked by younger people, "What is your secret?" we feel a combination of amusement and sadness. Sometimes one almost feels as if we are some sort of freak when the comment is made "How can you stand to stay married to the same person for 50 years?" Actually, to us, there is no secret. We knew what marriage was all about and to live together "until death do us part", was the reason we got married.

We have been best friends since the day we met. Best friends should always be able to disagree without destroying the friendship. We both cherish our right to disagree! We don't need to be entertaining or to be entertained to enjoy being together. WE have always planned our family goals together, agreed on financial and career goals and been equal partners in accomplishing these goals.

We realized early on that we each had unique strengths and abilities and we had weaknesses as well. Fortunately our weaknesses were not shared. It made sense to play our strong abilities as a team. He has always been perfectly willing for me to do the planning and organizing in the family (and besides I am a better cook than he is!) I have been happy for him to make the money, make the bank deposits and keep the check book balanced. (I was no fool to recognize that I needed an accountant in my life) This sharing of responsibility as a team has made it possible for us to raise our 4 children, keep a home going, and study and train for and practice 2 different careers for each of us during this time together. We both know that we could not have done it without each other .. and the help of God who was our Source.

Now that we have made it 50 years, "for better or for worse" "for richer or for poorer" and "in sickness and in health" are far more meaningful than when we made the vow 50 years ago. We know that the **worse**, the **poorer** and the **sickness** have been as important in shaping our lives as the positive of those vows. Our beloved Urantia Book makes clear that experience is the most important aspect of our living here on Urantia... experiences of all kinds are necessary.

I read an interview with actors, Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn upon the event of their forty seventh anniversary together. The expression in her summation of the years I could totally share her emotions, but her words were more beautiful than I could have said them: *"You know recently, in the past few years I have been aware of suddenly feeling, wherever we might be, how happy I am. Not for specific reasons. Not because of any great happening. It's just that it is a wonderful day and I feel it. I like my surroundings and I love you and I am happy to greet the day with you. When one is young we take these things for granted. Oh, it is wonderful to be able to feel it NOW"*



THE FUTURE OF THE URANTIA BOOK

by Meredith J. Sprunger

Meredith Sprunger is not a member of the Knoxville group. He lives in Ft. Wayne, IN, but he was a friend of Helen Hutchinson's and continues in friendship with members of our present group.

What cultural impact might we expect *The Urantia Book* to have in the next fifty years? This is a difficult question to ponder. First of all, *The Urantia Book* is a new revelatory phenomenon; we do not have comparable historical parallels. Former major revelations were brought by personalities. Machiventa Melchizedek's mission lasted ninety-four years and the public ministry of Jesus took place in about three years. Both Machiventa and Jesus could communicate with only a limited number of people at one time. *The Urantia Book* is here continuously and is available to any number of people at the same time. Secondly, each historical period is unique and is governed by its own dynamics.

Mindful of these difficulties, I should like to present two possible scenarios illustrating the two aspects of the evolutionary process: slow growth and sudden change. Starting with the slow development scenario, we observe that the major characteristic of evolution is its slow developmental nature. It took three hundred years for Christianity to become the dominant religion of Western Civilization. Five hundred years were needed to actualize the new vision of the renaissance and the reformation. following this slow development pattern, I can visualize the following events in the Urantia movement in the next fifty years.

First, the Urantia Foundation will pass out of its present legal phase into a service orientation. The Fifth Epochal Fellowship will gradually change its conservative, in-group concerns to an open, facilitating, outreach ministry relating to individuals, study groups, societies, and ancillary organizations.

Second, numerous new leaders and organizations will emerge and pursue various agendas.

Third, readership and study group numbers will gradually increase but remain largely an underground phenomena.

Fourth, an increase of secondary publications will follow the copyright expiration.

Fifth, small groups will start new churches representing new religious organizations.

The first hundred years of any viable new movement is spent establishing grass roots foundations in the society and culture. If, however, a new movement should have its origin synchronized with the "sudden change" aspect of the evolutionary process, and if its purpose is harmonious with the thrust of the evolutionary concretion, a different scenario will be followed.

Let us look at the "sudden change" scenario. Evolution is punctuated periodically by sudden changes. It is generally recognized that we are at a point in our economic, political, and social culture when basic changes are taking place. The growing edge of theological thinking is already harmonious with the *Urantia Book* spiritual outlook. The authors of *The Urantia Book* say we are "quivering on the very brink" of one of our most amazing periods of "social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment." For decades the Most Highs have been preparing our planet for the Fifth Epochal Revelation. We are experiencing a spiritual vacuum longing to be filled. Unquestionably, we are living in one of the pivotal periods of history.

Even though the Urantia movement may be facing sudden changes in the next fifty years, we should also realize that all of the aspects of gradual evolutionary development which we previously enumerated will continue. But superimposed on this evolutionary growth, some or all of the following catalysts of rapid change may burst upon us.

1. A religious leader of national or international stature may espouse *The Urantia Book*. A Billy Graham, Paul Tillich, or Robert Schuler could quickly focus attention on *The Urantia Book*..

difficult question to ponder. First of all, *The Urantia Book* is a new revelatory phenomenon; we do not have comparable historical parallels. Former major revelations were brought by personalities. Machiventa Melchizedek's mission lasted ninety-four years and the public ministry of Jesus took place in about three years. Both Machiventa and Jesus could communicate with only a limited number of people at one time. *The Urantia Book* is here continuously and is available to any number of people at the same time. Secondly, each historical period is unique and is governed by its own dynamics.

Mindful of these difficulties, I should like to present two possible scenarios illustrating the two aspects of the evolutionary process: slow growth and sudden change. Starting with the slow development scenario, we observe that the major characteristic of evolution is its slow developmental nature. It took three hundred years for Christianity to become the dominant religion of Western Civilization. Five hundred years were needed to actualize the new vision of the renaissance and the reformation. Following this slow development pattern, I can visualize the following events in the Urantia movement in the next fifty years.

First, the Urantia Foundation will pass out of its present legal phase into a service orientation. The Fifth Epochal Fellowship will gradually change its conservative, in-group concerns to an open, facilitating, outreach ministry relating to individuals, study groups, societies, and ancillary organizations.

Second, numerous new leaders and organizations will emerge and pursue various agendas.

Third, readership and study group numbers will gradually increase but remain largely an underground phenomena.

Fourth, an increase of secondary publications will follow the copyright expiration.

Fifth, small groups will start new churches representing new religious organizations.

The first hundred years of any viable new movement is spent establishing grass roots foundations in the society and culture. If, however, a new movement should have its origin synchronized with the "sudden change" aspect of the evolutionary process, and if its purpose is harmonious with the thrust of the evolutionary concretion, a different scenario will be followed.

Let us look at the "sudden change" scenario. Evolution is punctuated periodically by sudden changes. It is generally recognized that we are at a point in our economic, political, and social culture when basic changes are taking place. The growing edge of theological thinking is already harmonious with the *Urantia Book* spiritual outlook. The authors of *The Urantia Book* say we are "quivering on the very brink" of one of our most amazing periods of "social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment." For decades the Most Highs have been preparing our planet for the Fifth Epochal Revelation. We are experiencing a spiritual vacuum longing to be filled. Unquestionably, we are living in one of the pivotal periods of history.

Even though the Urantia movement may be facing sudden changes in the next fifty years, we should also realize that all of the aspects of gradual evolutionary development which we previously enumerated will continue. But superimposed on this evolutionary growth, some or all of the following catalysts of rapid change may burst upon us.

1. A religious leader of national or international stature may espouse *The Urantia Book*. A Billy Graham, Paul Tillich, or Robert Schuler could quickly focus attention on *The Urantia Book*.

2. A leading figure in the business, political, creative arts, or entertainment world might champion the Fifth Epochal Revelation and lead a movement to bring its awareness to our society.

3. If the Clergy Network becomes large enough, it could result in a total mainline interface with *The Urantia Book* and involve general public attention.

4. A prominent Evangelical or Fundamentalist religious leader may promote a national attack against *The Urantia Book*. A Jerry Falwell or Jimmy Swaggert could bring about a confrontational atmosphere focused on *The Urantia Book* in the larger religious and educational communities.

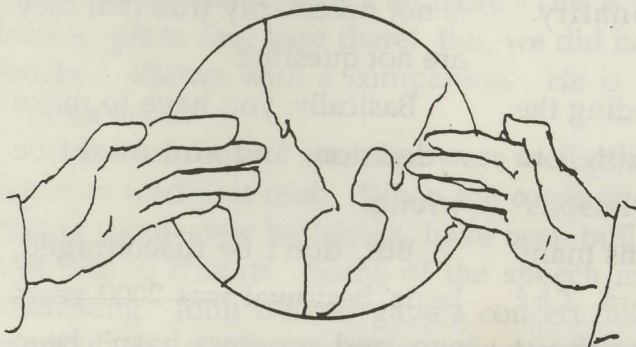
5. An unexpected breakthrough may take place in the physical or social sciences which could change the way we view reality and how we establish human priorities. This, in turn, could direct attention to the compelling relevance of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.

If one or more of these unusual events should take place in the next fifty years, the creative 1% of the world leadership could in a few years be directing their lives out of the spiritual dynamics which they find in the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Such leadership, building on the considerable foundations which have already been established by the Most Highs, could bring rapid change in our society. The United Midwayers, who declared war on atheistic communism some sixty years ago, have already brought about some sudden changes in our world.

What is the statistical probability that one or more of these catalytic events will happen in the next fifty years? I think there is a greater than 50% chance that one or more of these, or some other focusing event, will take place in the next five decades. If this assessment is correct, what can we do to prepare for it? Outside of being mentally and spiritually prepared, I think there is little that we can or should do--other than building solid evolutionary foundations and growth. This we should be doing irrespective of any "sudden change" possibilities. Whatever happens that survives must have solid evolutionary foundations.

Unexpected events have their own dynamics. Outside of developing a stable grass roots presence in our society, we can do little to prepare for unusual events. If and when these sudden changes occur, they will be governed by their own leadership and our ability to respond wisely in the contemporary situation. Our task is to continue traveling the pot-holed, boulder-strewn road of evolutionary development. The sudden changes will shape their own destiny.

Go Ye Therefore



UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT COMMISSION

by David A. Smith

One trait seems to be universal among us, the "enlightened" people who have acquired, read, and finally embraced *The Urantia Book*: we want to share it with others!

Almost as universally experienced among us is the high rate of rejection of THE BOOK by those with whom it was shared. Sometimes this rejection extends beyond the book to the person who shared it--us--breaching a friendship which existed prior to the sharing

suffer repeated rejection, or do we keep silent and feel guilty over our silence?

If these seem to be descriptions of your own evangelistic experiences, read on. There is hope for the gospel, and for our own participation in spreading it.

Whoops! Did I say spread the GOSPEL? Did you automatically equate this with sharing THE BOOK?

There is a difference. While the gospel is certainly in THE BOOK,

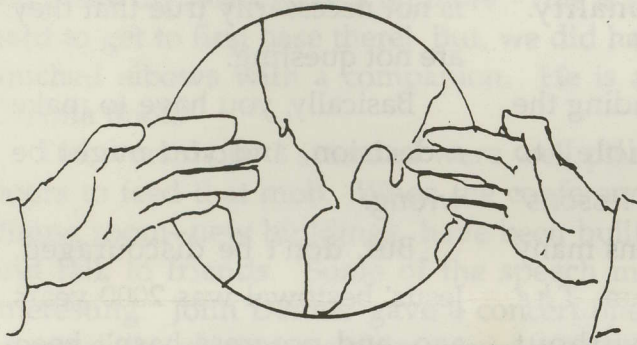
1. *The Urantia Book* contains startling information which challenges the foundation beliefs of most people. If this were not so, there would be no need for a REVELATORY work.

2. Face it. We are spiritual oddballs. In a world where so many people appear inured to spiritual pursuits, we quest. We are a very small number of people, and while our numbers are slowing growing, the global rate of population

be doing irrespective of any sudden change possibilities. Whatever happens that survives must have solid evolutionary foundations.

Unexpected events have their own dynamics. Outside of developing a stable grass roots presence in our society, we can do little to prepare for unusual events. If and when these sudden changes occur, they will be governed by their own leadership and our ability to respond wisely in the contemporary situation. Our task is to continue traveling the pot-holed, boulder-strewn road of evolutionary development. The sudden changes will shape their own destiny.

Go Ye Therefore



UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT COMMISSION

by David A. Smith

One trait seems to be universal among us, the "enlightened" people who have acquired, read, and finally embraced *The Urantia Book*: we want to share it with others!

Almost as universally experienced among us is the high rate of rejection of THE BOOK by those with whom it was shared. Sometimes this rejection extends beyond the book to the person who shared it--us--breaching a friendship which existed prior to the sharing.

Yet, we continue to feel a responsibility to "go into all the world and preach the gospel." This great commission is compelling, and made more so by the greater understanding of the gospel we have from reading THE BOOK. However, our negative experiences with sharing often create a dilemma: do we spread the word and

suffer repeated rejection, or do we keep silent and feel guilty over our silence?

If these seem to be descriptions of your own evangelistic experiences, read on. There is hope for the gospel, and for our own participation in spreading it.

Whoops! Did I say spread the GOSPEL? Did you automatically equate this with sharing THE BOOK?

There is a difference. While the gospel is certainly in THE BOOK, the volume contains much, much more. The injunction given us by Jesus is to "go into all the world and preach the gospel." The entities who brought us *The Urantia Book* took a number of specific steps to control, and even limit, the rate of dissemination of the book itself.

Consider these facts:

1. *The Urantia Book* contains startling information which challenges the foundation beliefs of most people. If this were not so, there would be no need for a REVELATORY work.

2. Face it. We are spiritual oddballs. In a world where so many people appear inured to spiritual pursuits, we quest. We are a very small number of people, and while our numbers are slowly growing, the global rate of population increase is staggering. Even in the United States, where population growth has leveled out, there are three million new births annually! (Before you become discouraged, pause to remember that when Jesus was engaged in his work here, the number of spiritual conversions was also a fraction of the population increase.)

3. Given the "track record" of reader "conversions" vs "rejections," every reader would have to see hundreds of people annually to convert a few, and this is simply not a realistic ambition for ALL readers.

4. *The Urantia Book* itself is not sacred, nor is it a revelation. It is the CONTENTS--the ideas and expressions--that provide the spiritual insight.

5. Urantia is an evolutionary world, governed by evolutionary experiences occasionally infused by revelation (which is then incorporated into the evolutionary experience of the planet.) Revelation never replaces evolution, it only infuses it with growth potential.

Must reading for Urantia evangelists is U1765B, Instruction For Teachers and Believers. Too long a passage for quotation here, this reference is where Jesus taught basic principles for spreading the gospel. In summary, Jesus taught HOW TO AVOID OFFENDING PEOPLE while preaching/teaching the gospel.

Jesus also points out, "In preaching the gospel of the kingdom, you are simply teaching friendship with God." (U1766C) We cannot offend people or scare them

"...there is but one gospel of the kingdom--the good news of the gift of eternal life which men receive by faith." (u2041D)

"The Master...placed emphasis on the following five points as representing the cardinal features of the gospel of the kingdom:

1. "The pre-eminence of the individual.

2. "The will as the determining factor in man's experience.

3. "Spiritual fellowship with God the Father.

4. "The supreme satisfaction of the loving service of man.

5. "The transcendency of the spiritual over the material in human personality." (U1863B)

In addition to spreading the gospel it is possible to incorporate into our "lessons" and in our conversations many other teachings from *The Urantia Book* without introducing THE BOOK itself. Our world literally cries out for common sense of eugenics, the values of changing social relationships, the need for strong families, better approaches to education and government, the notion that evolution is creation--and so on. Apart from the strange world of academia (where the standard "proof" of a valid idea is based on other "reputable" published sources) the real

the ideas without disclosing the source), you will find a person you think is ready for THE BOOK.

Before introducing THE BOOK, recognize this distinction: readers of *The Urantia Book* are questing for TRUTH and are generally not locked-in to a specific belief pattern because people who quest intuitively recognize the unfolding, evolutionary nature of TRUTH. Just because a person appears to have some "new age" beliefs or intellectually discusses religion, it does not necessarily follow that the person quests. And just because a person appears traditional in belief, it is not necessarily true that they are not questing.

Basically, you have to make a decision, and you might be wrong.

But, don't be discouraged. Jesus' bestowal was 2000 years ago, and progress hasn't been lightning fast. We have time.

"This world has never seriously or sincerely or honestly tried out these dynamic ideas and divine ideas of Jesus' doctrine of the kingdom of heaven. But you should not be discouraged by the apparently slow progress of the kingdom idea on Urantia. Remember that the order of progressive evolution is subjected to sudden and unexpected periodical changes

not sacred, nor is it a revelation. It is the CONTENTS--the ideas and expressions--that provide the spiritual insight.

5. Urantia is an evolutionary world, governed by evolutionary experiences occasionally infused by revelation (which is then incorporated into the evolutionary experience of the planet.) Revelation never replaces evolution, it only infuses it with growth potential.

Must reading for Urantia evangelists is U1765B, Instruction For Teachers and Believers. Too long a passage for quotation here, this reference is where Jesus taught basic principles for spreading the gospel. In summary, Jesus taught HOW TO AVOID OFFENDING PEOPLE while preaching/teaching the gospel.

Jesus also points out, "In preaching the gospel of the kingdom, you are simply teaching friendship with God." (U1766C) We cannot offend people or scare them spiritually and expect them to equate our teachings with God's friendship. Read--and heed--these important teachings.

If our task is to spread the gospel, we must know what it is. Do you? Before reading one more line, say it to yourself. Now continue.

1. "The pre-eminence of the individual.

2. "The will as the determining factor in man's experience.

3. "Spiritual fellowship with God the Father.

4. "The supreme satisfaction of the loving service of man.

5. "The transcendency of the spiritual over the material in human personality." (U1863B)

In addition to spreading the gospel it is possible to incorporate into our "lessons" and in our conversations many other teachings from *The Urantia Book* without introducing THE BOOK itself. Our world literally cries out for common sense of eugenics, the values of changing social relationships, the need for strong families, better approaches to education and government, the notion that evolution is creation--and so on. Apart from the strange world of academia (where the standard "proof" of a valid idea is based on other "reputable" published sources) the real world tends to accept well-explained common sense ideas without questioning the source. And when this happens, evolution in cultural belief systems occurs.

Once in a while when "bootlegging" the gospel and other concepts from *The Urantia book* (meaning, selling

specific belief pattern because people who quest intuitively recognize the unfolding, evolutionary nature of TRUTH. Just because a person appears to have some "new age" beliefs or intellectually discusses religion, it does not necessarily follow that the person quests. And just because a person appears traditional in belief, it is not necessarily true that they are not questing.

Basically, you have to make a decision, and you might be wrong.

But, don't be discouraged. Jesus' bestowal was 2000 years ago, and progress hasn't been lightning fast. We have time.

"This world has never seriously or sincerely or honestly tried out these dynamic ideas and divine ideas of Jesus' doctrine of the kingdom of heaven. But you should not be discouraged by the apparently slow progress of the kingdom idea on Urantia. Remember that the order of progressive evolution is subjected to sudden and unexpected periodical changes in both the material and the spiritual worlds." (U1863D)

What is critical is that we are relentless in our own faith, that we spread the gospel as effectively as we are able, and that we leave the rest to Our Father.