

The Retreat Network



Fall 2000

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Lectio Divina -- A Prayer Tradition

By Gard Jameson

There is a tradition of prayer that goes back to the early days of the Christian community, known as Lectio Divina, Divine Reading. It is a tradition, which incorporates all of the functions of the soul in reaching out to the Divine for the experience of the Beloved. There are four essential elements in this tradition:

- 1) *Lectio* – **Listening to God speaking** through the words of revelation with the ears of your heart,
- 2) *Meditatio* – **Pondering God's word** in your heart,
- 3) *Oratio* – **Opening up to God** with the fullness of your heart, and
- 4) *Contemplatio* – **Knowing God in the stillness** of your heart.

This prayer tradition is an approach to reading prayerfully any inspired text. My own experience with this tradition of prayer has been

to take a story or passage from the *Urantia Book* and then to read it four times prayerfully. Take for example, the visit with Martha and Mary on page

1797. I invite you to reread this story for yourself.

The first time, as *Lectio*, I listen deeply to the story and respond to God with one word of response, silently. The word I share with you, my brothers and sisters, is: "anxious." The second reading, as *Meditatio*, involves reflection with the heart with a thought of response, silently. The thought I would share is: "how vital is our time with our Master." The third reading, as *Oratio*, allows for me to speak to God with the fullness of my heart in prayer, silently. The prayer I would share is: "Lord, deliver me from my own anxieties that I might sit at your gracious feet and be transformed by your spirit." And, the fourth reading, *Contemplatio*, allows for a deep experience of God in stillness, as the heart moves to stillness for some time, enough time to experience yourself as the Beloved, that you are!

Lectio Divina is a wonderful experience on retreat, where a story is chosen and then read four times, allowing the retreat participants some time to share: 1) a word, 2) a thought, 3) a prayer, and 4) silence. This approach to reading is powerful in that it touches the senses, the intellect, the feelings and the intuition. It allows for depth in our

reading, a renewed sense of the power of these stories to transform.

We sometimes approach the *Urantia Book* like we approach a body of water. We only touch the surface without exploring the power and depth of the stories that it contains. *Lectio Divina* allows the soul to move from the level of the literal to the deepest spaces of the story, to the soul of the story. I invite you to reintroduce yourself to the *Urantia Book* using an approach of prayerful reading, *Lectio Divina*.

A wonderful Carthusian monk of the 13th century, Guigo II, summarized *Lectio Divina* best when he wrote:

"Seek in reading (*lectio*) and you will find in meditation (*meditatio*); knock by prayer (*oratio*) and it will be opened to you in contemplation (*contemplatio*)."

In other words, as we approach the stories of inspirational texts, as we approach the creation or as we approach one another, we should do so "with all of our hearts, minds and souls". For further information on Lectio Divina e-mail: contoutld@aol.com. God Bless Your Ongoing Journey! ☐

"Seek in reading (*lectio*) and you will find in meditation (*meditatio*); knock by prayer (*oratio*) and it will be opened to you in contemplation (*contemplatio*)."

Our Thought Adjuster -- Eternity Partner and Endless Love

By Jeanette Schafer

There is such a love bond between a mortal creature and their Thought Adjuster. A depth of love that is beyond expression -- a fathomless and timeless connection. This love relationship is the very core of our existence -- it is life itself. It's a devotedness to one another, an interdependence of the will creature with its Adjuster and the Adjuster with its human partner -- it is the romance of the ages.

As the human partner begins to value and grow in appreciation of their divine monitor, and *actively* seeks the divine will, therein ensues and unfolds conscious awareness of divine guidance. Since these Father fragments function in the realm of pre-personal existence prior to the technique of fusion with their human host, they are not personality identi-

able, but are certainly spirit identifiable by the creature of their indwelling.

Co-partnering with our Adjuster culminates in the soul. As we accept divine guidance, as we build and grow our divine counterpart (our soul), we become his will. And within us matures those sublime melodies that produce the splendor of soul symphony, the beautiful synchronicity of spirit -- *harmony expressed*.

Divine communion satisfies our longing to give expression to our love for the heavenly Father. The experience of communion is solely intimate -- a beauty beyond expression by the finite creature to the infinite creator.

In the "cycle of eternity" (the never ending bestowal of divine gifts) the will creature freely receives these divine gifts and in return gives of their most

precious gift -- *the gift of self*. The only true gift of enduring qualities to the eternal Father. This very act of giving of ourself completes us, we experience a wholeness within our inner being and the fruition thereof is heavenly peace. The natural outflow from our receptivity of divine love manifests as loving service for others.

In faithfulness -- our pledge of loyalty and commitment to our Thought Adjuster "it is my will that your will be done," culminates in Adjuster fusion.

The eternal embrace that

identifies the creator and creature as one forevermore in time and eternity -- *the irrevocable union*. □

"The Adjusters are loving leaders, your safe and sure guides through the dark and uncertain mazes of your short earthly career; they are the patient teachers who so constantly urge their subjects forward in the paths of progressive perfection. They are the careful custodians of the sublime values of creature character. I wish you could love them more, cooperate with them more fully and cherish them more affectionately."
(pg. 1203)



Seabeck Retreat Group Picture

"This Moment In Time"

(Seabeck Retreat - Aug. 30th to Sept. 3rd)

Cheryl Zentz, Bill Spaulding



Nancy Bigelow, Carol Erickson



Roger Newton, Bill & Kaye Cooper



Marilyn O'Neill,
Tom Vasile



Carol Erickson



Francyl Gawryn



Janet Cote,
Carol Erickson



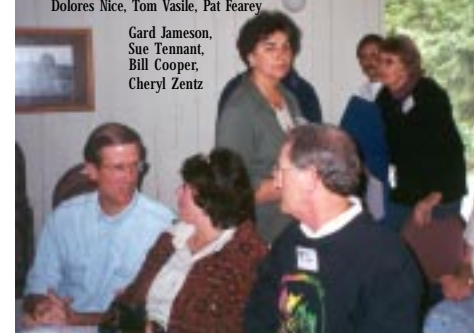
Teresa Doolittle



Kaye Cooper, Teresa & David Doolittle, Carol Weatherford,
Jeanette Schafer, Marvin Gawryn



Kaye Cooper,
Dolores Nice,
Francyl Gawryn,
Carol Weatherford



Dolores Nice, Tom Vasile, Pat Feary



Gard Jameson,
Sue Tennant,
Bill Cooper,
Cheryl Zentz



Tom Vasile,
Denie Schach



Marilyn O'Neill,
Gard Jameson



David & Teresa
Doolittle



Bruce Porter



Marvin Gawryn



Fred Matthews, Tom Choquette, Barbara Hester, Bruce Porter



Skip & Carol Weatherford

Francyl Gawryn,
Jeanette Schafer,
Bill Cooper



Near Olympic National Park

Seabeck -- Their Experience



Bill & Nancy Bigelow

Being what you call a 'non-reader' I came to Seabeck basically to support my wife...the reader! I listened to her tell about Paper after Paper... saw her dedication to other Urantians via e-mail...got exposure to such creatures as Midwayers, Thought Adjusters...and learned about galactic places like Nebadon and planet #606. But by the time we left, after a relatively short exposure to you Urantians, I had a far greater insight into just what the book is all about and what it, and those who feel so strongly about it, can do for me.

That first night's outdoor experience, built around things that were the basis of many American Indians' beliefs, quickly led me to feel that all this may really have some deep meaning for me. When Fred Matthews and his helpers completed that ceremony, I could clearly appreciate just why those early Indians related to the trees, the sun, sky, clouds, rain and the earth as they did. After sitting there, quietly, listening to his description of what those everyday aspects of life meant to those first Americans, it just kind of 'hit me' as to the importance of those common elements of life. I could clearly see the value of earth...dirt, if you will...to the growing of our basic sustenance. The vital importance of the sun and rain to make our crops grow, the trees to provide lumber to build our homes, decorate our land and provide the shade needed to protect us from the sun's direct exposure.

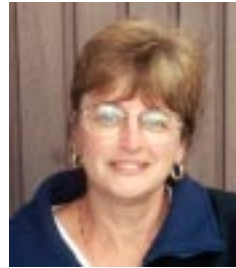
It took Fred's simple calling of attention to an historic Indian ceremony to make me appreciate what I may have forgotten, or considered unimportant, in my daily life.

If these kinds of experiences are a part of what being a Urantia 'reader' is all about, then I figure maybe I should learn more about all of this and what you Urantians actually do and feel.

Since attending the Seabeck conference we have just returned from the Australia/New Zealand conference in Canberra. Wow! What an eye-opener for me. And the best part of that trip is that one of the participants, Bob Reynolds, gave me a *Urantia Book*, with his best wishes and the hope that I would get as much out of it as he and his fellow Urantians have.

I'm getting into it...albeit slowly...and finding myself nodding 'yes, yes' to most everything I read. Admittedly, I've jumped over the Foreword and gotten into more understandable Papers. But, the most important thing is: I am now 'A Reader!' ☐

Nancy has a brief 'reflection' on the gathering and it's manifested in a HUGE thank you to all who organized our meeting. Thank you to ALL for knowing how to share the presence of the Father fragment within each of us. That's what I get from each and all of the gatherings; I begin to actually know the living, growing, souls of my brothers and sisters. If I were called upon to delineate what "actually happened" within Bill's heart-mind, I would say Bill's personality and Adjuster sensed (possibly for the first time of awareness) he was in the presence of other very joyful and blessed Mystery Monitors and personalities who are well on their way toward personality unification in the very manner of the Master. ☐



Carol Matthews

This is my first experience with a Urantia sponsored retreat. I have to say that I'm bowled over by the depth of love and caring acceptance of the people here. This whole conference was about healing. I have had a wonderful experience and I feel a lot of weight lifted off my soul. I just want to say thank you to everybody who accepted me and loves me, and I hope to spend more time with you in the future. Thanks again. ☐



Lyman La Pas

I have met some very beautiful people that I knew would be here although I didn't know who they would be. This retreat means to me a deepening of my relationships with the sons and daughters of God. It's a deepening of my relationship in a friendship that can be formed with almost everyone that is here now. This is probably the nicest thing that I have done in my entire life. It is definitely the most joyous. It's something that will never be forgotten. And, I would be interested in having pictures of the group so that I can look at

the people and remember who was here. Thank you very much for putting on the program. It gave me a chance to be affirmed in some of my thoughts and feelings about God, to be assured by my friends that I am not out in left field somewhere. Thank you very much. ☐



Rose Conley

I have just thoroughly enjoyed this retreat in so many ways; for the spiritual communion that I've had with people here, the connection, the growth, and thoughts about the meanings of the *Urantia Book* and how to put it into practice in my life. I was just blown away by Francyl Gawryn's worship service; in fact, we've had so many good worship services here, the opening ceremony (the Indian ceremony) was so beautiful. The Doolittle's ministry to the children in the school, it's wonderful to hear what they're doing, it's wonderful to hear what other people are doing in their ministries. I've just thoroughly enjoyed it, it's a beautiful setting, so prayerful and worshipful just to look out the window and to see the mountains, Puget Sound, the beautiful sky and trees. Coming from Louisiana, this is scenery that we don't have down there. It's just a wonderful experience all around, the music, the people, the worship, the words, and the creative spirit flowing through everyone. Those that put it on just did a magnificent job. Amen. ☐

Meditation and Mysticism

By Richard S. Omura

The *Urantia Book* has changed forever my understanding of worship and meditation. In my youth, “meditation” and “worship” were mere words and I had a very fuzzy idea of what they meant. I used to think meditation was merely a trance-like state and that worship was the physical act of celebrating God such as when going to a worship service in church. It was only after I had read the UB and had some very profound experiences that I became able to put dynamic meanings and values behind those word symbols. However, I then became confused as to the differences between reflection and the various types of meditation mentioned in the book.

By comparing the UB quotes below, one can see a clear distinction between intellectual reflection, mystical meditation and spiritual meditation:

“One of the great troubles with modern life is that man thinks he is too busy to find time for spiritual meditation and religious devotion.” P.2077 - §3

“This living faith of Jesus was more than an intellectual reflection, and it was not a mystic meditation.” P.2087 - §4

What does the UB mean by intellectual reflection, spiritual meditation and mystic meditation? Defining intellectual reflection is easy, it is merely mental reflection without the added consciousness of God, that is, thinking about one’s problems, one’s life, relationships; etc., outside the context of spirituality.

Differentiating mystic meditation with spiritual meditation is another story. It can be easy to confuse the two but further reading clarifies what the revelators mean.

“The more healthful attitude of spiritual meditation is to be found in reflective worship and in the prayer of thanksgiving. The direct communion with one’s Thought Adjuster, such as occurred in the later years of Jesus’ life in the flesh, should not be confused with these so-called mystical experiences. The factors which contribute to the initiation of mystic communion are indicative of the danger of such psychic states. The mystic status is favored by such things as: physical fatigue, fasting, psychic dissociation, profound aesthetic experiences, vivid sex impulses, fear, anxiety, rage, and wild dancing. Much of the material arising as a result of such preliminary preparation has its origin in the subconscious mind.” P.1100 - §1

So how can we know for sure that the meditation that we practice is spiritual meditation and not mystic meditation? I doubt that the list given above regarding the mystic state is exhaustive. Are there any signs that we can expect when we are meditating correctly?

“The Thought Adjuster has no special mechanism through which to gain self-expression; there is no mystic religious faculty for the reception or expression of religious emotions. These experiences are made available through the naturally ordained mechanism of mortal mind. And therein lies one explanation of the Adjuster’s difficulty in

engaging in direct communication with the material mind of its constant indwelling.” P.1104 - §5

So there really is no outward sign from the Thought Adjuster that contact is being made such as feelings of ecstasy or spectacular experiences of spiritual contact. Then how do we know if our meditation is



facilitating our spiritual growth?

Rodan of Alexandria says:

“Look to your Master. Even now he is out in the hills taking in power while we are here giving out energy. The secret of all this problem is wrapped up in spiritual communion, in worship. From the human standpoint it is a question of combined meditation and relaxation. Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit; relaxation determines the capacity for spiritual receptivity. And this interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship. At least, that is the way the philosopher views it.” P.1777 - §2

Also:

“...In this habit of Jesus’ going off so frequently by himself to commune with the Father in heaven is to be

found the technique, not only of gathering strength and wisdom for the ordinary conflicts of living, but also of appropriating the energy for the solution of the higher problems of a moral and spiritual nature.” P.1774 - §2

The benefits that accrue from spiritual meditation are not necessarily spectacular, that is, in the form of visions and ecstatic feelings, but come in the form of wisdom, inner strength and the ability to do the will of God. That is the proof of effective spiritual meditation.

Does that mean that mystical

meditation is so terrible? Not really:

“Mysticism, as the technique of the cultivation of the consciousness of the presence of God, is altogether praiseworthy, but when such practices lead to social isolation and culminate in religious fanaticism, they are all but reprehensible. Altogether too frequently that which the overwrought mystic evaluates as divine inspiration is the uprisings of his own deep mind.” P.1000 - §2

The bottom line is that we must determine for ourselves how we meditate. One of the things Jesus told Peter was:

“Serve your fellow men even as I have served you; forgive your fellow mortals even as I have forgiven you. Let experience teach you the value of meditation and the power of intelligent reflection.” P.2047 - §6 □

Retreat Schedule

The Golden Gate Circle Society Presents

"Living Faith"

"Men seek for the treasures of the kingdom with yearning hearts and weary feet when they are all within the immediate grasp of living faith."

(Urantia Book p.1766)

DATE: April 6 through April 8, 2001

LOCATION: The Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg, CA

COST: \$130 (includes 5 meals and shared room)

RSVP: Dolores Nice, e-mail: dlnice@worldnet.att.net
or (650) 369-6803



Healdsburg is located in the wine country of Northern California about 80 miles north of San Francisco.

Adventures In Spiritual Living

presents

**ADJUSTER
ATTUNEMENT**

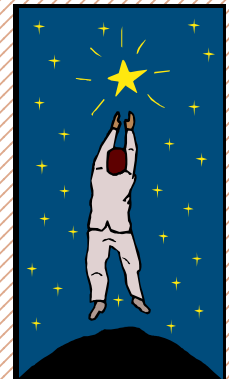
April 13-15, 2001
Camp Buckner
Near Kingsland, Texas

For more information,
contact Carol Weatherford at
(281) 363-1652 or e-mail:
Carol.Weatherford@Williams.com

Men's Retreat

Story, Worship, & Service

Join your brothers as we share through story, our challenges, joys and visions. Enrich our circle with your spirit as we pray and worship. Your love is requested as we explore service, as we serve and are served by our fellows.



DATE: May 4 through May 6, 2001

LOCATION: Namaste Retreat & Conference Center
29500 SW Grahams Ferry Rd.
Wilsonville, OR (near Portland)

COST: \$150 (includes 2 night's lodging, 6 meals and workshops)

RSVP: Doug Parker e-mail: dtone@hotmail.com
or (541) 994-3264

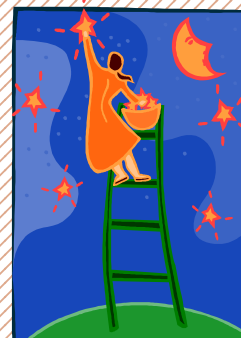
NOTE: Men's retreat will combine with women's retreat for several joint sessions.

Retreat Schedule - continued

Women's Retreat

“Relationships--with God, Self, Partners and Others”

Come for a weekend of special time with your sisters as we celebrate together our Urantia community Womanspirit.”



DATE: May 4 through May 6, 2001

LOCATION: Namaste Retreat & Conference Center
29500 SW Grahams Ferry Rd.
Wilsonville, OR (near Portland)

COST: \$150 (includes 2 night's lodging, 6 meals and workshops)

RSVP: Francyl Gawryn (206) 232-1158 or Nancy Votrain (541) 745-5568

NOTE: Women's retreat will combine with men's retreat for several joint sessions.

Women's Retreat in Retrospect

By Francyl Gawryn

I'd like to give you a report on our “Women in Transformation” retreat that took place at Namaste Retreat Center in Wilsonville, Oregon last May. I felt that it was a huge success in every way!

Our program leader was Marilyn (Nelson) O'Neill. For those of you who do not know Marilyn, let me tell you what a WONDERFUL resource we have in her ability to lead group work in a retreat setting! Marilyn's early background was in recreation, and she later studied and became licensed as a Counseling

Therapist and now has a private practice in Port Angeles. In addition to her graduate work as a therapist, she has also graduated from the Leadership Institute of Seattle (LIOS) where she received training in leading small and large groups. Her insights for delving into the spiritual essence in a group setting, and her ability to lead through moments of intense emotion, spiritual reflection, and for fun and play are really delightful!

We all had a most memorable time because of her fine work.

At the retreat, we combined singing, praying, personal sharing, storytelling, creative expression, Yoga, Tai Chi Cha, worship, Native American ritual, and myth through large and small group settings. This wonderful mix of ingredients will stay with me for a good long while!

The Namaste Retreat and Conference Center is an excellent location for retreats. The accommodations were comfortable, the food was great and the grounds have extensive walking paths for silent personal, or companion strolling with excellent artistic renderings of

religious figures from many of the world's religious traditions (some wonderful statues) and a large swimming pool and exercise area.

I hope you all get a chance to experience Marilyn's wonderful gifts, and get to spend some time at Namaste when we hold our next Women's Retreat in May of 2001. In addition to the Women's Retreat, there will be a jointly sponsored Men's Retreat which will be held at the same time and location. Holding these retreats simultaneously will afford participants the opportunity to come together for several joint sessions. □

Retreat Schedule - continued

Silver Springs is a Culinary Retreat with conference facilities located north of Toronto, Canada. Urantia retreats are non-profit and facilitators are volunteers. Rates are quoted in US\$ and include program, accommodations and meals. For more details re: program, accommodations, facilities, registration and reviews, please visit www.silverspringsretreat.com or call Sue Tennant toll free 1-800-546-5601.



2001 Silver Springs' Retreat Odyssey

1. Friday, July 20 - Monday, July 23 **CAMP NEBADON** Ontario readers' annual retreat to explore universe relationships.
2. Friday, July 27 - Friday, August 3 (New!) **FAMILY CAMP** affordable vacation for parents/grandparents and their children/grandchildren. Quality time together in a Urantia camping community. Arts and nature crafts, sports, fishing, kayaking, swimming, biking, music, campfires, volleyball, card and board games rest time, and short hikes are just part of the fun. Adult discussions in the gazebo during afternoon rest time. Children of all ages, toddlers to teenagers will enjoy the experience. Cost: \$150/family (maximum 40 participants)
3. Wednesday, August 8 - Tuesday, August 14 (New!) **RELIGION OF JESUS: HOW TO LIVE IT** - led by Adventures in Spiritual Living*. *"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 women."* (2084.1) An exciting focus on that knowledge which is of "greatest value"- the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. How would the essence of Jesus' religious life look expressed in our own lives? Envisioning, role-playing, exploring teaching methods, and praying and worshipping together to experience that "startling affection" of those who have been with Jesus. Cost \$245/person/double occupancy. (12 participants)
4. Thursday, August 16 - Wednesday, August 22 **RETREAT LEADERSHIP SEMINAR** led by Adventures in Spiritual Living*. This extraordinary seminar, launched last August to great reviews, will be repeated. Using tried and true techniques for deepening spiritual experience, this gentle and loving hands-on training sets a high standard for spiritual retreats. Personally rewarding and community building. Cost: \$245/person/double occupancy. (12 participants)
5. Thursday, August 23 - Sunday, August 26 **RETREAT NETWORK ANNUAL RETREAT** (business meeting August 26-27) coordinated to bring retreat hosts and facilitators together to strengthen the network and its mission.
6. Thursday, August 30 - Monday, September 3 **YOUNG ADULT READERS RETREAT: "Am I Spiritual?"** coordinated by Guy Perron (guyperon@home.com). For English-speaking UB readers between the ages of 16-35 to explore the authentic and practical sides of spirituality and what is needed to enlighten our world with "startling affection." Cost \$75/person (maximum 40 participants)

* Adventures in Spiritual Living leaders: Bill and Kaye Cooper, Ted and Sharon Lanier, Skip and Carol Weatherford

Letters

By Dolores L. Nice

Did you ever have the experience of having a book jump out of a bookcase at you? Well it happened to me. Actually it didn't really jump, just sort of fell at my feet.

I was on a retreat at St. Dorothy's Rest, an Episcopal Retreat House near the Russian River in Northern California. I was perusing the bookshelves in the main meeting room, when a book landed by my feet. I picked it up and was immediately intrigued by the title, "Letters to the Scattered Brotherhood." What a strange title; why brotherhood and not sisterhood and why were they scattered? My first impulse was to put it back

where the mystery of life will be simplified for you if you will obey these promptings from within."

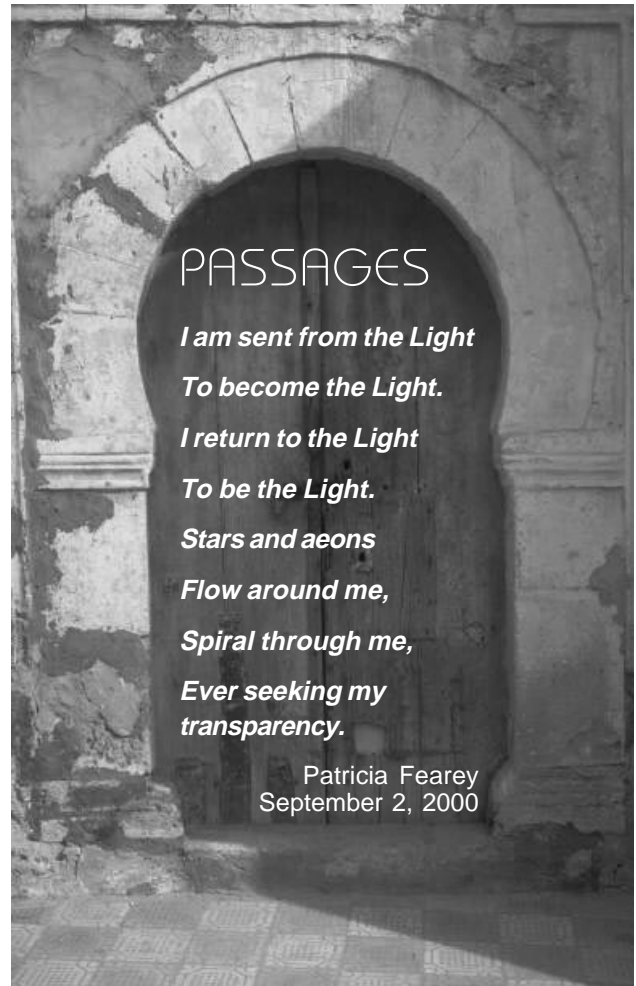


That did it, I was hooked! I took it back to my room

and began to read it cover to cover, which is not the best way to read this book. As soon as I returned home, I went to my local bookstore and bought my own copy. "Letters" is a collection of articles published and edited by Mary Strong in 1948. It also contains quotations from St. Augustine, John Donne, Thomas A. Kempis, Emerson and others. As stated in the preface; "The quotations have been included as evidence of the timelessness of the idea of inner spiritual illumination and the great company scattered the world over without regard to space, time, age or creed, who have found faith to walk in immortality now." "Letters to the Scattered Brotherhood is very readable and contains much food for spiritual thought and meditation. I highly recommend it. □

"You who have started on this strange beautiful journey, who have sensed immortality and touched it, have opened a door into a place where the mystery of life will be simplified for you if you will obey these promptings from within."

on the shelf. I really was not interested in reading a sexist book! But, my curiosity got the best of me, so I started to leaf through the pages. On the very first page, the following paragraph grabbed my full attention. "You who have started on this strange beautiful journey, who have sensed immortality and touched it, have opened a door into a place



PASSAGES

I am sent from the Light

To become the Light.

I return to the Light

To be the Light.

Stars and aeons

Flow around me,

Spiral through me,

*Ever seeking my
transparency.*

Patricia Fearey
September 2, 2000

(Written during Bill Cooper's exercise at the Seabeck Retreat, as part of his presentation, "Rendezvous with the Great Spirit," in response to the grandmother story he read.)

The Motivation of Spirit

By Tom Vasile

For those of you who did not attend the Seabeck Retreat, I want to share with you a song we sang together:

*I see trees of green,
Red Roses too,
I see them bloom from in you,
And I think to myself,
What a wonderful world!
I see skies of blue. . .*

I listen to Louie Armstrong sing that song often -- it now takes on a whole new

meaning for me. Now, when I hear it I will be reminded of the profound experience we shared at Seabeck on August 30 to Sept. 3, 2000. My life will never be the same again.

I sensed an outpouring of the Spirit of Truth, the likes of which I never experienced in my life. In my personal experience, I think I got a

glimpse of what the followers of Jesus experienced on Pentecost. I am overwhelmed with a new sense of my spiritual mission, joy and excitement to "be about my Father's business." I want to think and do nothing else, but reflect on my experience at Seabeck and get busy going about my Fathers business. I believe

(continued on page 12)

Retreat Leadership Training -- The Leaders' Perspective

By Bill and Kaye Cooper & Skip and Carol Weatherford

There is a growing desire in many *Urantia Book* readers to combine the material in the book and the technique of retreats to nurture spiritual growth in themselves and others. Adventures in Spiritual Living was delighted to assist in that process by leading a seminar to equip readers to lead retreats. The Spiritual Retreat Leadership Seminar at Silver Springs last August was the first time we know of that anyone has done this sort of thing for *Urantia Book* readers.

Retreats, in contrast with the lecture, workshop and discussion approach of conferences, strive for an experience of spiritual presence. We wanted to be sure that the seminar at

and a common retreat experience to refer back to. Next came our presentations on leading retreats. We also provided an extensive resource manual, including many exercises which can be used for retreats. Then we set up opportunities for participants to practice leading retreat exercises so that the last two days essentially constituted another retreat, lead by the participants. Each exercise was followed by positive feedback from the whole group.

The resulting experience was far better than we had expected. The food, lodging, weather and leisure activities were superlative. The participants were a delight--enthusiastic, interested, and cooperative. The practice exercises created by the participants were educational, creative, spirit-filled and spiritually exciting.

The 13 participants were an international group, coming from the US (Florida, California, Oklahoma), Canada (Manitoba), Belgium, and Sweden. Some came specifically to learn how to lead retreats. Others came out of a more general desire to discover how they could serve. Still others came

because of an even more unfocused feeling that they wanted to be there. Everyone participated enthusiastically and left believing in the power of retreats and able to plan and lead one.

There was an extraordinary sense of God's presence--of spiritual blooming, of answers being given, memories being healed, directions being revealed. And underlying

it all was the joy of being in a group of spiritually-motivated people.

Silver Springs is a wonderful resource for the Urantia movement. It is an extraordinary place. Meeting facilities, guest rooms, food, and physical setting are all super. It is

hard to imagine a better environment for small gatherings and retreats. Sue Tennant with the loving support of her husband Derek has envisioned and carried out an excellent combination of a retreat facility financed by a successful commercial venture.

We were delighted with the seminar. It was a worthwhile expenditure of time and energy for us and for the participants. Concrete consequences are already beginning to flow. Before the end of the seminar, three groups of participants had begun planning retreats for their local areas.

A second Spiritual Retreat Leadership Seminar is scheduled for next August. We are looking forward to leading it with anticipation of another wonderful week and the blossoming of more events where readers come together to nurture and support their spiritual growth. □

"Believers must increasingly learn to step aside from the rush of life while they refresh the soul, inspire the mind, and renew the spirit by worshipful communion."
(1739:7)

Silver Springs reflected that emphasis. Our objective was to do as little presenting of information as possible (consistent with achieving our goal) and to enable as much experiencing as possible. We kept our presentations to 1 1/2 days, leaving 3 1/2 days for experiencing.

First we led a 24-hour retreat typical of the type which Adventures in Spiritual Living conducts. This served as an example

"The more complex society becomes, and the more the lures of civilization multiply, the more urgent will become the necessity for God-knowing individuals to form such protective habitual practices designed to conserve and augment their spiritual energies."
(1777:3)



Retreat Leadership Training -- A Participant's Perspective

By Victoria L. Clark

From the moment I arrived at Silver Springs it became a journey of love. The facilitators, Coopers, Laniers, and Weatherfords worked in harmony with each other and each gave a different inspiration to the personalities present. These retreat leaders have been offering the retreat experience to the Urantia community in addition to church groups since 1989. The focus of our retreat was to feel the divine presence, create a safe environment for all participants, and to develop leadership techniques. What I was most impressed with was the simplicity of the exercises. They were not designed in any way to evoke overly emotional responses to the participant, although true that emotions and feelings did emerge. Nor were the exercises designed to be overly intellectual, and yet intellectual curiosity was sufficiently satisfied. The focus was on each individual. The exercises seemed to be designed for any faith. The recitations of stories and personal experiences of our facilitators blessed us all.

After experiencing our retreat first hand, the retreat "masters" covered the practical aspects of planning, financing, facility acquirement, supplies, schedules, refreshments, music, and prayer. We also learned about the spiritual aspects of leading a retreat, such as, personal ministry, facilitating worship, prayer, and group sharing. Every

evening in the large gathering room of the stone house we would join in an activity. Sometimes our short programs were "prayer and thanksgiving," guided by Bill Cooper with accompanied music, or the enchanting guitar and vocals of Mark George. Evenings would erupt into laughter and giddiness. Our hosts, Sue and Derek Tennant would join us throughout the evening festivities until we would all reluctantly go to bed. I

was quite incredible then that every one came up with an original idea from the spiritual leading within. Everyone was encouraged because our facilitators made it such a safe place to be, that we all overcame our stage fright and felt comfortable enough to bare our souls.

I think the most memorable effect of the retreat was the development of true community throughout the week. By the retreat's

tion of the seventy, we were commissioned as workers in service to others.

A small bit of paradise on earth, Silver Springs is the vision of Sue Tennant. Those who have experienced Silver Springs would heartily agree. Sue saw a need for a retreat center when she was program chair of the Urantia Conference in Ste. Hiacythe, Quebec, in 1993. Realizing that many local Canadians were not able to attend a conference because of financial circumstances, and additionally that many people were uncomfortable with large conferences, she set about to create a sanctuary for all readers. Her vision was the creation of a retreat center in the comfort of a home setting for *Urantia Book* readers. Silver

Springs is a Urantia venue to train teachers and leaders in the art of community building. There are two important elements of her vision. Every spiritual worker is a volunteer. Secondly, all retreats are affordable so that every person has the opportunity for spiritual rest and community life. Sue and Derek Tennant's ability to make themselves a channel of God's love and create an environment to benefit the Urantia community is a blessing to us all. At Silver Springs love was the guiding rule, and our hosts made us feel as if we had come home, our spiritual home. □



Leadership Training Group Picture

wanted every day to last a lifetime.

On the next day we took a break and headed for the spectacular scenery of Bruce Trail, a 15-minute excursion from Silver Springs Retreat Center. Sue led us down trails of the Niagara Escarpment with tiered limestone, flowering meadows, lush green forests, and deep cool caverns. It was a refreshing mid-program break in our schedule. During the last two days it was the participants' turn to practice what we had learned. Our facilitators offered us a wealth of material to choose from if we did not have anything prepared. It

end I knew that I had felt the presence of God in others as I had never felt before. A Divine Counselor wrote in Paper 5,

"The religion of Jesus is salvation from self, deliverance from the evils of creature isolation in time and in eternity."

Throughout my life I always felt on the outside looking in. My experience with these extraordinary people in this beautiful setting had truly transformed my isolation and I felt the joy of being a part of a truly loving community. On the last day, in the presence of our loving facilitators and hosts, reminiscent of the ordina-



A look into a future *Urantia Book* community retirement home!

(left to right: Bruce Porter, Pat Fearey, Cheryl Zentz, Dolores Nice and Marvin Gawryn)

The Motivation of Spirit

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I see my spiritual mission with more clarity. This is a bit scary for me, because I have felt a spiritual calling since I was about 10 years old. The scary part is I'm about to go into uncharted "waters."

"And now that he has personally left the world, he sends in his place his Spirit of Truth, who is designed to live in man and, for each new generation, to restate the Jesus message so that every new group of mortals to appear upon the face of the earth shall have a new and

up-to-date version of the gospel, just such personal enlightenment and group guidance as will prove to be an effective solvent for man's ever-new and varied spiritual difficulties." (2060:6)

I feel a sense of "group guidance" and "personal enlightenment." In sharing with others my

personal religious experience and hearing what others have been feeling and thinking about, I have become convinced that the Spirit is urging us on to a more profound public service. A service which will enable the teachings of *The Urantia Book* to more thoroughly spiritually transform us, and those our life touches.

I believe the Fifth Epochal Revelation is a dynamic happening. *The Urantia Book* is the "seed" which when planted and cultivated in our minds and souls will bear much fruit. The big blue book we have come to love is really powerless and motionless -- it can do nothing on its own -- it is a book with 2097 pages of inspiring words. *The Urantia Book* can only be the catalyst for the spiritual transformation of our world when the students of the book are spiritually transformed and through bearing the fruits of the spirit they spark a spiritual transformation in the lives of the people they interact with.

A soulful thanks to all who put on, and participated in, the Seabeck retreat. And thanks to those who were not with us physically, but were with us in spirit.

Moving with you towards the age of Light and Life. □

The Retreat Network

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