

# JOURNAL



URANTIA.

*A News Journal for Readers of The Urantia Book*

## ***IN THIS ISSUE :***

<i>Oklahoma Jury Verdict</i> <i>Washington State Urantia Association Licensed</i>	3
<i>On Education and Training</i> <i>Seppo Kanerva, Helsinki, Finland</i>	4
<i>Jesus as the Master Teacher</i> <i>Carolyn Prentice, Missouri, USA</i>	7
<i>Avoiding the Subtleties of Extremes: "Personal Religious Attitudes" versus Organisational Functions"</i> <i>Trevor Swadling, Sydney, Australia</i>	14
<i>Presentations from the ANZURA Conference 2000</i> <i>Introduction</i> <i>Nigel Nunn, Australia</i>	16
<i>The Lures of the Fifth Epoch</i> <i>William Wentworth, Australia</i>	18

# International Conference

## France 2002

Mark your calendars now for this exciting biennial event. Readers from more areas of the world attend these conferences than any other *Urantia Book* reader gatherings.

The next IUA International Conference will take place in France in August 2002. Tentative dates are set for August 3-7, 2002, with business meetings for IUA and the Foundation on August 1-2. A comfortable site has been found at Dourdan, a small and beautiful medieval village 50 kilometers south of Paris.

The general theme will be “*Vivre le plan divin d’ascension dans l’expérience humaine*” — “Living the Ascension Plan in Human Experience.”

Six secondary themes will be developed and proposed soon and given to each National Association (or at least to each continent). The organizers wish to give an international dimension to this event by allowing each National Association to express and share in its own way. More details will be available later this year.

# Oklahoma Jury Verdict: Foundation Will Appeal Decision

**O**n June 20, 2001, an Oklahoma jury returned a verdict against defendant, Urantia Foundation in the case of *Michael Foundation v. Urantia Foundation* with respect to Harry McMullan III's publication of *Jesus A New Revelation (JANR)* comprising papers 121—196 from *The Urantia Book*. Legal counsel for Urantia Foundation has filed post-trial motions for a "Judgment Notwithstanding Verdict" or for a new trial. In an earlier case involving copyright infringement by Kristen Maaherra, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court ruling, reinstating Urantia Foundation's U.S. renewal copyright

After eight hours of deliberation, the jury returned their verdict that *The Urantia Book* does not qualify as either a voluntary commissioned work or a composite work. Notwithstanding this verdict, we feel that we have strong grounds for requesting reconsideration or appeal.

The Oklahoma decision applies only to the U.S. renewal copyright in the *English* text of *The Urantia Book*. Urantia Foundation will continue to display the copyright notice in the English books in order to protect the international copyrights.

**All of our published translations have separate copyrights that are still valid.**

The Trustees and staff will do everything within their power to ensure the dissemination of the inviolate text. Urantia Foundation will persist in its efforts to publish *The Urantia Book* and quality translations and to expand distribution channels throughout the world, using the Foundation's marks to identify its publications and services.

Urantia Foundation believes that if *The Urantia Book* is not protected by a copyright at this time, the greatest harm will be to future generations and to our non-English-speaking brothers and sisters. The Trustees realize that the jury's decision is a disappointment for supporters of the copyright, but bear in mind that experienced appellate judges in the *Maaherra* case evaluated the circumstances surrounding *The Urantia Book* and found Urantia Foundation's United States copyright renewal to be valid.

No matter what the final outcome may be, Urantia Foundation will continue to carry out the duties entrusted to Urantia Foundation by the Declaration of Trust and will continue to publish, translate, and protect *The Urantia Book*.

## Washington State Urantia Association Licensed June 3, 2001

The meeting was held in Wenatchee, the apple capital of the world located in central Washington. This beautiful, quiet city of 100,000 population is entirely surrounded by rolling green mountains.

IUA members from Oregon and Vancouver, Canada, along with Richard Keeler and Cathy Jones, attended this festive occasion to celebrate with and welcome the 34 new members to this 24th local association of the United States National Urantia Association. Among the honored guests were Lewis and Alice Clark, the first *Urantia Book* leaders of the State.

The pro-tem officers are:

President - Janiece Heinberg  
Vice-President - Ron Lawson  
Secretary - Cynthia McCarthy  
Treasurer - Dick Thayer

Many new friendships were made, old ones rekindled. Exciting plans for disseminating *The Urantia Book* were set in motion. The universal spirit of love and brotherhood was in full force in Wenatchee.

# On Education and Training

SEPPO KANERVA, HELSINKI, FINLAND

## I

Anybody who is versed in *The Urantia Book* knows that our eternal career consists of **continuous and ceaseless** training, adventure, charting of the unknown. This is due to our being destined to learn to know the **absolute** God, and the Absolute will; after one goal has been achieved, there always present themselves an endless number of new challenges, new goals to be achieved. The word *training* has 305 occurrences and the word *education* 109 occurrences in the Book. These figures reflect something of the importance and significance of education and training. The instructions that came along with *The Urantia Book* advise us to train teachers and leaders. For what other purpose could the Book have been given if not for us to study and learn. I personally regard education and training as **the** most important form of activity for the Finnish Urantia Association.

Through the teachings of the Book, we however know that **the** most important thing is **faith**; that everything seems to be designed for our spiritisation, spiritualization, perfection attainment. Through the same teachings we likewise know that study and learning belong to the domain of the **mind**, and that mind is inferior to spirit. Why then should we consider a study of the Book to be this important, if faith after all is the most important thing, and if the mind—the prerequisite for learning—is baser than the spirit? Should it not be that the most important obligation of our Urantia organisation is to disseminate faith, to revive men and women spiritually, to exercise spiritual activities and to organize spiritual meetings and gatherings? Shouldn't we create a new religion sooner than train us in the labourious and boring study of the Book? Shouldn't we rather arrange communal worship and other meetings for us to express our unity in faith and to share our spiritual experiences?

*The Urantia Book* gives us a new definition that **religion is a personal experience**; it is not a group action. God the Father has endowed each of us with the **free will** to decide whether we shall be a part of

the reality, and be involved in the outworking of his will, or whether we shall be unreal and refuse to participate in the actualization of his divine will. We have the freedom and the choice of either to believe or to disbelieve. Nobody needs *The Urantia Book* in order to believe or to make use of one's free will, free choice, and along with that choice to be saved for the life everlasting. The Book teaches us that we get other people interested in our religion by our way of living. *'By their fruits you shall know them.'*

Although the mind is above the matter and functioning as an intermediary between the spirit and the matter, this fact does not make it worthless or insignificant. It is in the mind that a man makes the decisions which determine his eternal destiny. Man makes use of his free will in his mind. And even the mind is a gift of the Deities, an endowment that they minister to, and do it in so many ways.

We make our crucial decisions by ourselves, and we do them only in our minds. Every one of us lives the life in according to one's own choosing, and no one else can make that choice for us. Each of us says his prayers in the mind and in the heart. Everyone is worshiping his Father in his spirit and in the mind. Because every individual's religion is a personal experience, it is unique. Everyone is endeavouring to attain a better understanding of the Father's will, so to be able to do that will. Through his personal acts, decisions and choices, everyone is striving towards perfection, everyone is trying to transform oneself and to be more in the likeness of God. Each of us endeavours to realise his sonship with God and his brotherhood with his fellow beings, struggles toward ever greater love and ever more extensive service.

Nowhere in here does one need the Book or the Association. But the Book and the organisation may help one to understand, assist in decision-making and choosing. They may help one to realize one's sonship with God and one's brotherhood with his fellow men. They may help one to understand the **truth**, to find the **beautiful** and to appreciate the **goodness**. They may

help one to understand one's actual imperfection, yet potential perfection. They may help one to disperse fears, and in that manner they can help one to comprehend that the universe is friendly, that God is love, that God is the Father. They help one to correct the wrong ideas of institutionalised evolutionary religions as concerns the existence, the reality, God, deity, Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God. They help one to widen one's horizons, one's viewpoints. They broaden one's philosophy, they expand one's understanding of the existence. They may help one to realise that the faith one has, if it is living faith, will yield the fruits of the spirit. But for all this to take place, we need to study and learn the knowledge revealed to us. None of these revealed facts and truths can be discerned by the mere faith, through the mere spirit; they presuppose the function of the mind. And the very task and obligation of a **Urantia Association** is to foster the study *The Urantia Book*.

## II

When it comes to selection of teachers, study group leaders and association officers or committee members, most of our people explain that they are not yet ready for such assignments, that they themselves need to be taught, they themselves need to study and learn. Yet *The Urantia Book* teaches us that we are imperfect, and that we shall be perfect only after perhaps billions and billions of years, anyway, far in the future. We must not feel shame for our imperfection. Hence, no one can be a perfect teacher, a perfect study group or organisational leader. The very same Book likewise reveals to us the way we are going to make our studies in the future life: One acts as a teacher immediately after one has learnt something, and teaches those who are just one step behind. So, nobody should try to escape from these tasks in thinking of himself as not yet ready or good enough. **No one** is ready or good enough. Neither must we forget that to share one's experiences, expertise, skills, and endowments is godlike—divine. *Sharing is godlike—divine* [1221:2].

To say the same in a more close-to-man way: to teach, to act as a group leader, to place one's skills and endowments at the disposal of the organisation is above everything else an opportunity for one to render a service, to *serve* one's fellows. In my mind it is unwise and impermissible to hold a view on someone who volunteers for any post or who at least does not refuse to take one when so offered—be it with any study group or in the leadership of the association—that that

person is thinking of himself as being in some way better than others, or at least one step ahead of them. We might instead look upon him as a person who has understood his duties and responsibilities, and whose sole motive is that of serving his fellows and who is ready to do his best, even all, for the benefit of others. *"...the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few"* [1681:8].

## III

An individual reader of *The Urantia Book* of course reads the book the way he likes and the way that satisfies him. But even there the association could be of service by producing and offering various explanatory and derived works, secondary literature, study aids, comparative works about human knowledge on a given subject and the information provided in the Book.

The actual training and education given by the association is targeted to members and to other friends of *The Urantia Book*, to study groups; to actual or potential study group leaders, and to those actually or potentially serving in the leadership of the association. One should always remember that we are not perfect. No training programme is perfect. But this fact must not scare us from forcefully and confidently attacking even this task. Training programmes may always be improved, bettered, changed, altered, complemented...

**New members.** It is—even though they must by and large be familiar with the organization they have so recently joined—not out of place to offer new members oral, even better if written, information on the activities of the association, about the importance of the service motivation, on Urantia Foundation, on IUA, on the newsletter or journal of the organisation, on the gained organisational experiences, on the translation efforts, etc.

**Association members and friends of the Book.** Education to them is given in study groups, separate educational meetings, at summer and winter conferences. The study groups are of course independent and decide independently on the ways they conduct their studies, on their programmes, etc. But the association must at request sponsor the study groups by giving them a channel of communication and information, by paying their reasonable expenses and, as far as possible, by sending, upon a request, a speaker, a teacher, or a lecturer to the group, as well as by providing suitable secondary works, articles, etc.,

which the groups may obtain at request. The association may also disseminate information on the many different ways that group studies can be performed: paper by paper, by subjects, by reading the translated text aloud, by reading and discussing, by reading only, by making comparisons with other sources, in teams seeking answers for particular questions, by discussing upon a presentation by a lecturer or speaker, by question and answer hours, by combining various methods, etc. And we must not forget that our summer and winter conferences are in a way study groups as well.

**Study group leaders and teachers.** Training of group leaders and teachers must be separately organised, and I think it must be a continuous process. No one can be a fully learned leader or teacher. The purpose and aim of this type of training is to endow an active teacher, or someone preparing himself for this assignment of great responsibility, with constantly deeper knowledge of *The Urantia Book*. But apart from that, there should likewise be training in techniques of group activities, in public performing, in methods of preparing a presentation, in audio-visual aids, etc. And one should not forget to make the teachers familiar with the Urantia organizations, the use of the word Urantia and the concentric circles symbol, as well as with the Finnish Urantia Association's statement on the dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and its teachings.

It is my view that nobody can presume to select people who are to be given training in study group leadership or teaching. Participation in this form of education and training has to be open to all volunteers. The education committee of the association may of course specially invite those persons the committee would like to be involved in this training.

**Leaders.** The training programme for leaders must be targeted to persons who wish to be thus trained. It would be ideal if those members who hold assignments in the association leadership had gone through the entire training programme, i.e., had been study group members, study group leaders and teachers. As it is with the other programmes the training of leaders is a process without end.

The stress in the leader training should lie on organizational aspects: the *raison d'être* of the existing Urantia organizations, their guiding principles, policies, constitutions, agreements, their history, their past problems, international activities of the Urantia movement and those of the association, international responsibilities, chairing and attending of meetings,

readiness for public discourses, writing skills, etc.

Those who teach the prospective teachers and leaders need work on their own, develop and acquire through their own ingenuity, the knowledge and skills that they then pass on to the prospective teachers and leaders. To solve this problem, the governing board acted upon a motion by the education committee and arranged an experimental seminar for teachers and leaders in October 1990. The seminar was well attended, was a great success, and all its deliberations and discussions were carried in a spirit of love and brotherly and sisterly affection and caring.

We, who are readers of *The Urantia Book*, know that this fifth epochal revelation has been given to the entire world, not just to the Finns. Our embarrassment and handicap is the language barrier; it prevents us from freely sharing our experiences with the brothers and sisters in other countries. And while we are thus hampered, we easily keep silent and tell nobody anything. Yet, I consider it as our **obligation** to inform all Book readers throughout the world about our experiences. I may tell you that international activities are going to occupy an ever more central place within our association. Maintenance of international contacts requires mastery of foreign languages, that of English in any case. And I just invite you to give a thought also to this issue: Could our association be of any service in helping members to improve their command of the English tongue. I guess, it can. One way to accomplish this would be that of fostering an English-speaking study group.

No matter how small or apparently insignificant the achievements, we have an obligation to share them with others—and to learn from them. I remind you of the poor widow, scantily attired, who cast two mites into the receiving box trumpet at the Jerusalem temple, and in so doing, gave all that she had.

*You will work your way through the ascending levels of this vast experiential university by imparting to those just below you the new-found knowledge of your advancing career. In the universal regime you are not reckoned as having possessed yourself of knowledge and truth until you have demonstrated your ability and your willingness to impart this knowledge and truth to others. [279:13]*

# Jesus as the Master Teacher

CAROLYN PRENTICE, CHAMOIS, MISSOURI, USA

Presented at the USUA conference, Leavenworth, Kansas, July 22, 2001

## Why Teach?

**T**he *Urantia Book* tells us: *The universe is one vast school* [412:2]. When I contemplate an artist's depiction of the master universe, I think to myself, "What a great campus! I can't wait to go to that school!"

But of course we are already enrolled in that school and attending regularly. We look forward to a long career of being a student in that school. What we forget sometimes, however, is that we also have a long career of being the **faculty** in that school. The universe plan, God's will for us, is to learn and then to turn around and teach what we have learned (279:13). We have a long universe career of being teachers as well as students. I think we need to begin to train for that career in this lifetime.

I know that some of you are anxious to take on the mantle of teacher, that you are ready to begin, but others are sitting there, gripping the armrests of the chair, thinking, "Who me? I'm not a teacher and I'd rather wait to begin that career. After all, this is the only existence where I can use time as a means of avoidance (551:3)!"

But all of us have many opportunities to teach, even if we are not formal classroom teachers. Most of us are or will be parents—and we know that that is very much a teaching—and learning—experience! Most of us have other opportunities with friends, co-workers, employees, etc., where we may be asked to teach something. We can begin to train for our universe career of teaching right here in this life.

But I know some people will object. They will claim that their universe career will be about teaching **spiritual** truths—and that is something entirely different from teaching a child to tie his shoe or teaching a co-worker to use a computer program.

But we learn in *The Urantia Book* that there is no sudden divide between the spiritual and the

mundane world. One of the purposes of education, as indicated on page 806:1, is the acquirement of skill—the skill necessary to navigate the world in the form one possesses, whether it is physical, morontial, or spiritual.

People often think of Jesus as the master **religious** teacher—and certainly he was that. But *The Urantia Book* reveals that Jesus' teaching career was not limited to religious/spiritual matters. He was, in fact, a master teacher in general. He spent his entire life teaching—not just the last 3 years. He taught his brothers and sisters how to read and write; he taught his brothers carpentry and how to run a household; he taught Ganid many things on the road to Rome, including some facts about the natural world; he apparently taught his apostles how to fish better; and he taught Zebedee how to build better boats.

Sometimes we as religionists want to divide the world into two parts: the spiritual and the mundane or practical. As religionists we somehow value the spiritual above the practical. Most of us have probably thought about Jesus as the master Religious teacher—but in actuality there is no dividing point between the two. Education is about learning how to navigate as the being you are. We exist in a physical world that needs to be explored and mastered; we also have a spiritual side that needs to be recognized and nurtured. They are both parts of being human. As we read *The Urantia Book* we can learn how to teach **anything**—because all knowledge is one.

I have been a teacher for 18 years, mostly teaching college students how to write, but also teaching public speaking, business, and remedial math. About halfway through my teaching career I began to read *The Urantia Book*, and in it, I discovered much good advice about teaching, advice that I had already struggled to figure out from my own experience. I have come to see through my experience with teaching an underlying principle of teaching that is affirmed by Jesus in *The Urantia*

*Book.* It is a principle that seems sometimes to be lost in the politics, economics, and industry of teaching.

The underlying principle is this: **Teaching is about something that happens between persons. At the heart of teaching is a relationship between teacher and student; it is a meeting of minds.**

Now I want to be clear that teaching and learning are two different things. People learn in all situations; they learn without teachers, and they sometimes learn in spite of the teacher. Sometimes what they learn has nothing to do with what the teacher is attempting to teach. But teaching introduces another person into the learning process. And that relationship is important. According to *The Urantia Book*, relationships are ends in themselves (1228:3). The ascension career involves not only an infinite number of learning experiences, but also an infinite number of teaching relationships.

And so we can look to Jesus as the master teacher to show us how to implement this concept of relationship in teaching.

What makes Jesus the master teacher? Well, he was God—that has to help. But we too have God within us, a God who wants to teach us, to be in relationship with us, and to teach through us—and we can call on that God to help us.

With the theme of teaching as a relationship between student and teacher—and with the guidance of the God Within and the Spirit of Truth, let us examine Jesus' life. We can glean seven teaching techniques from Jesus as the Master Teacher.

### 1. Prepare Thoroughly

Teachers need to prepare for their career in two ways. First they need to be sure that they can really do what they are attempting to teach, that they really know the material. Most teachers of practical matters are usually competent in their skills, but I sometimes wonder about people who undertake spiritual teaching. I have met some people who have read two papers in *The Urantia Book* and then they attempt to go out and teach it.

I think we should all be sure we have a thorough understanding before we try to teach something.

The second way all teachers need to prepare is to find out about human beings. We are told on page 1363:1 that Jesus' real education was learning how people lived. He had a real interest in complete strangers—and he learned about human beings from all over the planet. And this knowledge prepared him to deal with all different kinds of beings. On page 1431:1, Jesus tells Ganid: "*To become acquainted with one's brothers and sisters, to know their problems and to learn to love them, is the supreme experience of living.*" And this is a key to his success as a teacher.

I recently read a book about college teachers. For the most part, college teachers don't get any training in teaching—they just study their field. One of the biggest problems that they experience is that they simply don't understand why their students don't understand. Usually teachers are people who found school fairly easy—they understood it—but they have never stopped to question why their fellow students struggled. Traditionally, teachers teach the way that they were taught—and they never consider how a person might genuinely not understand their supposedly brilliant lectures. A math teacher may give what he considers a brilliant explanation of the quadratic equation, only to turn around and see a sea of confused faces. The math teacher simply can't understand what went wrong with his lecture. Most teachers—indeed most people—would benefit from learning more about human beings and how their minds work, and how they live, and how they see the world. That's why Jesus took so much interest in other people.

And this is true if you are teaching people about *The Urantia Book* or about some practical activity. You must understand how they view the universe, what their experience has been, and why they are resistant to the truth.

Any of these teaching techniques of Jesus can be distorted by overusing them. In the case of preparing thoroughly, one may spend so much time in preparing that one may never begin to apply what one knows. Or, on the other hand, the prospective teacher may become addicted to learning so much about other people that he/she never applies this knowledge.

## 2. Use Teaching Tales and Metaphors

We all know that Jesus used a form of teaching tale called the parable. He took everyday experiences of his students and turned them into a story that demonstrated or revealed a spiritual lesson. His knowledge of people was a good foundation for this technique because he was able to use an everyday experience that was familiar to his students.

The parable is a form of what I call “teaching tales” or “metaphors.” Loosely defined, a metaphor is using a familiar image or model to explain a more complex concept. This technique can be used to explain a concept of social interaction, religious truth, or physical law. Cultures all over the world have used metaphors, teaching tales, to pass on knowledge. We call them fables, myths, fairy tales, folk tales, poetry. But metaphors also include scientific models and theories. And they are a very effective way to transmit concepts. For example, understanding how an electrical current works—something that is unseen—can be likened to water running through a hose, with pressure and volume and power. The nervous system of the body can be envisioned as the electrical system of a house.

But Jesus also recognized that teaching tales, metaphors, can be taken too far. In Paper 151 he warns his apostles not to over-interpret his parable, that doing so would lead to confusion and misunderstanding. And this is true in general when we as teachers use metaphors. One of the biggest mistakes in using a metaphor is to confuse the model with the reality. For example, the metaphor of electrical current as water in a hose has its limitations. If you try to find a short in your electric fence by looking for a leak as if it were a water hose, you will never find the problem—because electricity is electricity, not water. Another example from physics (and please remember that I’m an English teacher, and so I am no great authority on physics): In order to understand what light is, physicists first employed the metaphor of light as a wave. And this theory worked pretty well and explained some of the things that they discovered about light. But it also made some of the things that light does totally inexplicable. And so finally physicists had to come up with a totally different metaphor: light comes in little packages, called

photons. And this new metaphor helped explained other characteristics of light. We ask ourselves, how can light be both a wave and little packages? And the answer is: light is light. Our theory, our metaphor, is only a means of understanding it, but it does not describe it. To confuse the metaphor with the reality is to ultimately miss the point the metaphor.

So as teachers we should use teaching tales, metaphors, but recognize their limitations.

## 3. Learn by Doing

Jesus taught his family and his apostles by giving them the opportunity to do things. He taught his brother James how to run a household by training him and then finally just letting him do it. He taught the apostles, and then made them go out and teach. When they had difficulty with John the Baptist’s apostles, Jesus didn’t lecture them for long hours on how to solve problems, nor did he try to intervene himself. He gave them the opportunity to figure it out for themselves. And he did not hover over them.

Similarly we see Jesus as always doing something. He himself learned to teach by teaching. He prepared for his teaching career by making use of every opportunity that life handed him, including teaching in the temple, teaching his brothers and sisters, teaching Ganid. I myself never understood English grammar, although I was good at it, until I tried to explain it to my students.

*The Urantia Book* further emphasizes this technique of learning by doing by describing how students are taught in the universe schools: *All the way in to Paradise the ascending pilgrims pursue their studies in the practical schools of applied knowledge—actual training in really doing the things they are being taught. The universe educational system sponsored by the Melchizedeks is practical, progressive, meaningful, and experiential. It embraces training in things material, intellectual, moral, and spiritual.* [394:5]

From my own experience as a teacher, I have found that the only way to teach writing is to have students write. They learn to give speeches by giving speeches. And they learn about business or the stock market by attempting to run a business or by buying stocks. The use of a real problem to

solve requires that students actually think about the facts they have learned and apply them. They remember the facts in the context of the problem they resolved instead of learning them only to pass a test.

Like the other approaches, learning by doing can be distorted and overused. For instance, some teachers don't provide their students with a foundation. Their attitude is that the students will figure it all out themselves or that they can look it up in a book. Other teachers make the project too difficult so that students just get frustrated. Take the example of Jesus: After teaching his apostles for several months, he then sent them out in twos to do personal teaching for two weeks. Then they regrouped for a while, he taught them more, and then they did a trial teaching tour. Only after the apostles had gained experience at these smaller tasks, did Jesus send them to Jerusalem.

#### 4. Use the Positive Approach.

In several places we see that Jesus encouraged the positive approach to teaching:

*By the beginning of this year Jesus had fully won his mother to the acceptance of his methods of child training--the positive injunction to do good in the place of the older Jewish method of forbidding to do evil. In his home and throughout his public-teaching career Jesus invariably employed the positive form of exhortation. Always and everywhere did he say, "You shall do this--you ought to do that." Never did he employ the negative mode of teaching derived from the ancient taboos. He refrained from placing emphasis on evil by forbidding it, while he exalted the good by commanding its performance. [1401:2]*

Later he tells his apostles not to try to teach someone by pointing out what is wrong with his/her ideas (1592:4). All of us know the rightness of the positive approach because we have all been wounded at one time or another by a teacher who has castigated us for making mistakes, called us a dummy, pointed out so many errors that we began to think we could do nothing right. And yet, many of us still feel that we can teach someone something by pointing out all the errors. Perhaps parents are the most guilty of using the negative approach with their children.

I know from teaching people to write that many of them have been wounded by their earlier teachers. Students complained to me of teachers that covered their papers with so many red marks and corrections that the student didn't even bother to look at them. The students were just embarrassed and frustrated.

I've found that it's best to comment on what is good in the paper, and try to build from there. Instead of saying, "Your point is so unclear that this paper is meaningless. Your grade is an F," I say, "This is an interesting idea, but I'm not sure I understand it. Can you give me an example?" Then students begin to see that maybe the teacher is their friend, someone who is trying to help them learn, instead of someone who is just trying to prove how smart she herself is.

This positive technique can also be overdone, and in modern American society, I have seen it overdone often. We have come to consider that the self-esteem of a child is so fragile that everything must be praised. We are afraid to offer corrective advice lest the child realize that he has made a mistake. The child becomes addicted to praise and thinks that every small action on his part is worthy of praise. Using the positive approach is not the same as praising everything. Self-esteem grows in person who realizes she is truly competent at a valued skill. A person who is addicted to praise never feels genuinely competent.

#### 5. Use a Personal One-on-one Approach.

It's sort of a surprise when we read *The Urantia Book* and discover that Jesus rarely taught the multitudes. Once he had trained his apostles, they did the preaching—even so, only a few of them were very good at preaching. The work of the master was accomplished principally through personal, one-on-one work, e.g., the preparing of the teachers in Rome (1455:4—1456:6). And he chose only 12 apostles to begin his work (I often wonder if this fact maybe tells us something about optimal class size).

I've found the one-on-one approach very effective in my own career as a teacher of writing. Like most other subjects, writing is traditionally taught by standing up in front of the classroom

and expounding on the good writing of certain authors—certain techniques to use, things to avoid. Then students are expected to write a paper; the paper is graded and returned—and it's all very impersonal.

But I discovered that, not being a long-winded person, I couldn't fill my class hours with talking about writing. I believe that one learns writing by writing (that learning-by-doing thing). But just having them write for hours is not very productive either. So I added another dimension to this process: the students and I meet one-on-one over their papers and talk about it. This technique completely changes the process. It becomes obvious to them how a reader—a real live person—reacts to their writing. Sometimes if I don't understand what they are trying to say, we can just talk about it. And then I can say, "write down what you just said." Students understand the ins and outs of grammar a lot better if it is applied to the mistakes that they make—not some artificial sample errors. They remember the rule of whether to use "I" or "me" much better when shown on their own paper.

This personal technique works in teaching math, in teaching electricity, in teaching just about anything. People understand concepts better when they are applied to a problem they are working on.

I know a lot of teachers say, "I just don't have the time to do this with all my students. I have too many students; I have too much material to cover." In response my question is, first to the system that assigns so many students to a teacher, what good is it to strive for efficiency if students don't really master material? And to those teachers who think they have so much material to cover: what good is it to cover more material if students don't master the basics?

And again, as far as religious teaching may apply: Why try to tell people all about the Lucifer rebellion or the mansion worlds, when what they personally need is simply encouragement that God loves them as individual children?

Once again, however, personal one-on-one teaching can be overdone. Many concepts can be taught to a group, with a personal follow-up with each student. A teacher has to use time efficiently and simply can't repeatedly teach the same con-

cepts individually to each student. The personal one-on-one approach is designed to help students apply the material to their own experience.

## 6. Reveal Your Human Side

One of the great gifts we have in *The Urantia Book* is the portrait that emerges of Jesus as a real human being. We see his life struggles and get a glimpse of the conflicts that he faced, which all of us also face. And thus he doesn't seem like an unapproachable God who led a perfect life simply because he had the advantage of being God. He seems like a real human being, a person who struggled as we do.

This revealing of the human side is an important component of the teaching relationship. Sometimes teachers come across as haughty, arrogant, always right. We begin to wonder if they are human at all, and we question whether we ourselves can attain their level.

I'm currently studying for a doctoral degree. I had thought about pursuing my Ph.D. for a long time because I enjoy going to school and I'm good at reading and writing. The study part did not scare me. What did scare me was that at the doctoral level I would have to work closely with my advisor—and I was afraid of this relationship. I had a bad attitude about people in the academic profession. My experience had been that they were arrogant, haughty, always right. I wasn't sure that I wanted to enter a close working relationship with them.

When I was accepted at graduate school, I was excited about the person who was going to be my advisor. She is well known in her field, her doctorate is from an ivy league college, and she is an associate dean in the college. I knew that I could learn a lot from her. But I was really concerned about the relationship. Next to her, I felt like a rough Galilean woman: 18 years of teaching at a tiny technical college is not exactly prestigious. I live on a farm, where I start my day in coveralls and knee-high rubber boots. I've milked goats and sheared sheep. I was really concerned that we would not find much in common.

But the relationship has gone well. I'm not going to pretend that we're great buddies or any-

thing, but my advisor has let me see her human side. She is a good teacher, and she has revealed to me enough of her personal conflicts that I can see that she too is a person who struggles. And that encourages me. If she can struggle and continue, then maybe I can too.

This is a teaching technique we often feel is somehow inappropriate because after all, as teachers we think we have to be infallible. But just the opposite is true. People, our children, our students, our employees, will learn more from us if they can see us as people who struggle, who aren't always right or perfect.

In *The Urantia Book* Jesus gives another gift to us that reveals his humanity. This gift is one that I feel has been distorted and misused by almost all of Christianity—and even misused by us as readers of *The Urantia Book*. It's an important gift, and so I'm going to digress for a moment.

I'm talking about the Remembrance Supper. I grew up Catholic; and therefore I have experienced a lot of solemn communion services. I have also received communion in other churches and have shared in Remembrance Suppers with fellow readers. Most of these occasions have been very ceremonious, with solemn readings and motions. There is a place for such formality and solemnity—and I don't mean to denigrate these practices.

But I do think that in establishing the Remembrance Supper Jesus meant it for more everyday use. We are told that he specifically tried **not** to establish a formula for a sacrament. His intention for everyday use is evident in the words that he used. In true English-teacher style, I suggest that we examine the text and look at what the words mean.

*When Jesus had thus established the supper of the remembrance, he said to the apostles: "And as often as you do this, do it in remembrance of me." [1943:2]*

The first question an English teacher would ask is, What does the word *this* refer to in the sentence? It is a pronoun without an antecedent.

*This* could mean, "This solemn offering of unleavened bread and wine among a community of believers." This definition is, of course, the narrow definition that most Christian churches

recognize. But *this* could also mean, "Sharing food with friends," or even more broadly, "Eating." I like these broader definitions. Let's use them in our explication.

Analyzing further, we ask ourselves, how **often** do we eat or share food with friends? The answer, of course, is very frequently. Our lives are punctuated by eating, from the first day to the last. From the first day when a mother holds a newborn baby to her breast, through all the days of childhood and family life, old age and death, we eat almost every day of our lives. And we celebrate major events by sharing food with people: birthdays, graduations, weddings, even funerals.

So when Jesus tells us that as **often** as we do *this*, do it in remembrance of him, maybe he is telling us to do it everyday, several times a day. He goes on to give us more explicit instructions about how to remember him:

*. . . And when you do remember me, first look back upon my life in the flesh, recall that I was once with you, and then, by faith, discern that you shall all some time sup with me in the Father's eternal kingdom. [1943:2]*

What does Jesus want us to remember about him? He wants us to remember that he is human just like us. He wants us to think about how we are feeling at that moment, and to look through his life for a time that he shared the same feelings. Jesus had a life that had many happy moments with his family and friends. But he also had other feelings. There were days of awkwardness in the family because he had been lost in the temple or because his brother Jude had done some unacceptable thing. There were days when he was tired from working so hard. There was that awful day when the family received word that Joseph had been injured and Jesus had to remain behind with the little children and give them something to eat while he waited with such uncertainty and terror. There were the days he ate with his family, but he was wondering how he could tell Rebecca that he wasn't going to marry her. And there was the night he sat down with the people he loved best and knew that he was going to leave them. He worried about them and he was also heartbroken that one of these whom he loved best had already betrayed him.

When you sit down to eat, everyday, stop and ponder that Jesus, the Creator Son of our universe, sat down at a table just as you are now, and felt the same kinds of feelings that you are feeling right now.

And if you do this, you will begin to experience Jesus as a real human being who struggled just as you struggle. He had the courage to go on, and so can you.

## Conclusion

So there we have it: six techniques given to us and demonstrated by the master teacher, Jesus. Of course any of these techniques can be overdone. The whole concept of teaching as a relationship can be overemphasized. The beauty of Jesus' teaching is that he had a balanced approach.

All of these points stand on the same foundation principle: at the heart of teaching is something that happens between student and teaching. It is a relationship between persons; it is a meeting of minds.

So maybe you're beginning to see that you should reconsider what you've been teaching and how you've been teaching. Maybe you're beginning to see that you do have both opportunities and responsibilities to teach—on both the practical and the spiritual planes. But maybe you don't know where to begin; perhaps you think six techniques are too many things to remember. I leave you with one last easy point to remember.

A present day master teacher, an American, Parker Palmer wrote a book called *The Courage to Teach*. I was surprised when I read this book because many of his concepts about the teaching relationship seem related to those in *The Urantia Book*. Although he is a university professor, he has taught at many levels, and he directs his book to all teachers from kindergarten to university.

One of the principal points of his book is: **you teach who you are**. He emphasizes that the lessons people learn from you—intentionally or unintentionally—are about the person you are.

Most of us recognize how true this is. The person that the teacher is impresses us for the positive or the negative. Some of us have developed a lifelong aversion to a subject because of a

certain teacher. We decided years ago that we did not want to have anything to do with, for example physics, because one of our physics teachers was a person we didn't want to be anything like.

But teachers can and do have a positive impact. Many of us have chosen a career because we wanted to be like a particular teacher. That teacher seemed like such a rich human being who was living the kind of life we wanted to live, and therefore we chose the same profession. For example, many of my English teachers were interesting people with such insights into human behavior that I wanted to be like them. In addition, the personality of Parker Palmer that comes through in his book has further energized me to extend my teaching career. I have learned from who my teachers are.

And of course, Jesus, the master teacher, taught who he is. Two thousand years ago he told Ganid basically the same thing about teaching, but in a more positive approach. He said:

*"If we know God, our real business on earth is so to live as to permit the Father to reveal himself in our lives, and thus will all God-seeking persons see the Father and ask for our help in finding out more about the God who in this manner finds expression in our lives."* [1466:2]

In other words: **Be what you teach.**

It's something we sometimes forget, isn't it? And yet it is so obvious. If we want our kids to grow up to be responsible adults, **we have to be** responsible adults. If we want our employees to be courteous and efficient with customers—**we have to be** that way too. I've found that if I want my students to be writers, I have to be a writer too, not just a teacher of writing.

**If we want to go out in the world and teach others about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man—guess what? We have to be family.**

If you don't know where to begin your teaching career, start here, a simple step to remember: **Be what you teach.**

# Avoiding the Subtleties of Extremes: “Personal Religious Attitudes” versus “Organisational Functions”

TREVOR SWADLING, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

**W**hat causes dysfunctional organisations? There are many factors that come into play, but I would particularly like to focus on one that may not be obvious to us, that is: personal religious attitudes versus organisational functions.

Throughout history much confusion and organisational difficulties have arisen, and will continue to arise, among religionists as they come together to function and organise as groups to provide dynamic service to their fellow man. I believe one of the main reasons for this unfortunate disharmony is the failure of individuals within the group to separate certain of their individual religious attitudes from becoming the policy framework for the functional responsibilities of the organisation; the failure to separate “state and church,” so to speak.

While our collective ideals and attitudes are essential for forming fair and just policies, not all of our personal attributes can or should be adopted into our democratic framework. We must apply practical wisdom in the creation of our organisation’s charters and by-laws, and in the election of our administrators and leaders. The evolutionary experience of governing bodies has shown us that this is essential for the group to maintain order and direction to effectively and safely achieve the desired common goals of its members.

Many of our personal religious attitudes and attributes—such as a universal attitude of love to all, non-judgment of spirituality, personal forgiveness, mercy ministry, tolerance, and a personal desire to do good to all others—should, in most cases, be kept separate from becoming group policies as such. “Have you faith? Then have it to yourself.”

With the passing of “might is right” as our civilisation advances, individual maturity is now becoming the essential ingredient to successful teamwork.

As individuals, we have attitudes and these attitudes have attributes. These attitudes and attributes can be positive or negative. We are not perfect; we are growing, so we need to protect ourselves and our organisations from our incompleteness and imperfection. We

do this by education and by the way we construct our charters and by-laws (or our rules and modes of conduct). This is the watermark that is behind all successful and cooperative organisations.

We know that groups are not personal. In the main they should only have functions that protect but preclude certain of our individual attitudes. If religious groups over-formalise personal attributes that belong to the sacred domain of the individual, then these groups may become judgmental and cultic. Maintenance of growth of the group may become more important than the achievement of its goals.

As a group, and when functioning as a group, the group should be perceived from the outside and from within as having common goals and functions, even though the individuals that make up the group certainly do have a diversity of attributes and attitudes. The group should be wisely structured and organised to achieve and protect its goals and functions. To varying degrees it is inevitable that the group will be perceived from the outside as having a persona of some kind.

But if the persona of the group is adopted by the individual members as being their personal code of conduct, the individuals may take on those attributes as their personal religious attitudes. When this goes too far, it is a problem. This is the very root of the beginnings of religious group problems. Herein lie the seeds to the formation of different denominations, unproductive competition between religious groups—even religious wars—religious prejudices and bigotry. Statements like, “you are not being spiritual,” “you don’t think the same as we do,” or “we think and feel this way and you don’t fit in,” are often heard among these differing groups that supposedly have common goals!

Following are two analogies that attempt to magnify the problems caused by the differences between the “individual’s stance” and the “collective/protective” function of organisation. These analogies are simple ones to highlight the danger of what happens when some of our individual attitudes become the very policies that attempt to direct the functioning

of the group. In all our world affairs, until the age of Light and Life, group functions and responsibilities must, and should be clearly defined and protected. It is not the right of individuals to disrupt and pervert the function of the group by asserting that the group must adopt the persona of the individual's attitude.

For example:

1. In an evolving imperfect world advanced cultures must provide a fair and sound framework to protect and foster the very culture that allows its individual citizens to practice and express their personal religious attitudes. Just imagine the disaster to this civilization if the advanced individual's religious attitudes of non-violence towards any other individual were to be adopted as the policy of the government of that nation, whereon their very doorstep there was a belligerent neighbouring nation that was bent on conquering and destroying this very civilisation. If this government took on the individual attitude of non-violence as its collective action, then its advancing civilisation of peace-loving citizens would be completely destroyed and would pass into the annals of history. Therefore, religious, humanitarian, and political idealism must always be balanced by the sound common sense of a clear appraisal of the given status of our imperfect realities.

2. The sincere individual religionist experiences a profound simple spiritual truth: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Then other sincere religionists experience the same or very similar spiritual truth. Then these religionists come together and form a religious group based on their like-mindedness. They then make the mistake of judging other individuals, nations, cultures, groups, and organisations by what they deem to be the right individual and group attitude that one must have to be spiritual. Religious intolerance is born. The group's attitudes crystallize and religious prejudices are subtly indoctrinated into new members. Some of the bloodiest wars in history have been and are still being fought over religious dogma of this kind.

If religious groups over-formalise personal attributes that belong to the sacred domain of the individual, then these groups may become judgmental and cultic.

We must bear in mind that organisations are subject to the combined personal wills of its members and are non-personal. Therefore the members of any executive branch of an organisation should be guided by, and follow the rules and charter of the group. They should not overly use their positional powers to further their own personal attitudes and agendas, especially when this may hamper the established goals of the group.

Our individual value systems are based on our experi-

ential foundations and our personal relationships with our Creator. As religionists we all strive for a life of love, mercy, and ministry. As a group we base our actions on goals, and administer justice and power. If we did not perform these duties in our evolving imperfect world, would not the self-centred free will of anarchy emerge? Also, we should bear in mind that the moral aspects of the policies of an organisation need not become the personal attributes of individual members.

From the Paradise Trinity right on down to the Seraphic Planetary Government the importance of organisation and the separation of personal attitudes in relation to group functions become apparent after reading *The Urantia Book*. In my mind, to enhance optimum success in the dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and its teachings, it is important that group efforts and functions of *Urantia Book* readers do not become an institution of religious attitudes.

So to end, let us take a peek at a little of what *The Urantia Book* says about the differences between the attitudes and functions of individuals and their relationship and interaction within the group. After all, as the book says on page 1434:6: *The meaning of life is its adaptability. . .*

*The Trinity is an association of infinite persons functioning in a non-personal capacity but not in contravention of personality. The illustration is crude, but a father, son, and grandson could form a corporate entity, which would be non-personal but nonetheless subject to their personal wills. [112:6]*

*Justice is not the attitude of the Father, the Son, or the Spirit. Justice is the Trinity attitude of these personalities of love, mercy, and ministry. No one of the Paradise Deities fosters the administration of justice. Justice is never a personal attitude; it is always a plural function. [114:3]*

*The personal Deities have attributes, but it is hardly consistent to speak of the Trinity as having attributes. This association of divine beings may more properly be regarded as having **functions**. . . [113:2]*

*For example: The Master, when on earth, admonished his followers that justice is never a **personal** act; it is always a **group** function. Neither do the Gods, as persons, administer justice. But they perform this very function as a collective whole, as the Paradise Trinity. [1146:1]*

*Genuine religion renders the religionist socially fragrant and creates insights into human fellowship. But the formalization of religious groups many times destroys the very values for the promotion of which the group was organized. [1089:9]*

*Just as certainly as men share their religious beliefs, they create a religious group of some sort which eventually creates common goals. Some day religionists will get together and actually effect co-operation on the basis of unity of ideals and purposes rather than attempting to do so on the basis of psychological opinions and theological beliefs. Goals rather than creeds should unify religionists. Since true religion is a matter of personal spiritual experience, it is inevitable that each individual religionist must have his own and personal interpretation of the realization of that spiritual experience. Let the term "faith" stand for the individual's relation to God rather than for the creedal formulation of what some group of mortals have been able to agree upon as a common religious attitude. "Have you faith? Then have it to yourself." [1091:6]*

*Religion is the revelation to man of his divine and eternal destiny. Religion is a purely personal and spiritual experience and must forever be distinguished from man's other high forms of thought, such as:*

- 1. Man's logical attitude toward the things of material reality.*
- 2. Man's aesthetic appreciation of beauty contrasted with ugliness.*
- 3. Man's ethical recognition of social obligations and political duty.*
- 3. Even man's sense of human morality is not, in and of itself, religious. [2075:6]*

*Thus did Jesus teach the dangers and illustrate the unfairness of sitting in personal judgment upon one's fellows. Discipline must be maintained, justice must be administered, but in all these matters the wisdom of the brotherhood should prevail. Jesus invested legislative and judicial authority in the **group**, not in the **individual**. Even this investment of authority in the group must not be exercised as personal authority. There is always danger that the verdict of an individual may be warped by prejudice or distorted by passion.[1764:1]*

*If one man craves freedom—liberty—he must remember that **all** other men long for the same freedom. Groups of such liberty-loving mortals cannot live together in peace without becoming subservient to such laws, rules, and regulations as will grant each person the same degree of freedom while at the same time safeguarding an equal degree of freedom for all of his fellow mortals. If one man is to be absolutely free, then another must become an absolute slave. And the relative nature of freedom is true socially, economically, and politically. Freedom is the gift of civilization made possible by the enforcement of **LAW**. [1490:4]*

*Religion makes it spiritually possible to realize the brotherhood of men, but it will require mankind government to regulate the social, economic, and political problems associated with such a goal of human happiness and efficiency. [1490:5]*

## Presentations from the ANZURA Conference Canberra, October 6—9, 2000

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### Introduction

NIGEL NUNN, AUSTRALIA

**I**f any celestial passers-by were to look in upon us this morning, what would they see? As individuals, we are an unspectacular lot. As a group, we have no real claim to fame. In fact, we are remarkably average and surprisingly normal. So what might catch the interest of those who may be watching?

Those interested watchers—those student observers who happen to be present; the seraphim of pro-

gress who have sponsored us in unsuspected ways; the Lanonondek administrators, one of whose concerns we are; the Vorondadek Most Highs to whom we are a very special project; the embrace of seraphic oversight and watchcare that has sustained us all; Michael of Nebadon who holds us closer than we can imagine—all these would be interested in this phenomenon of this group of normal people, interrupting their lives to intensify their collaboration. Why? Why should

anybody, let alone our celestial benefactors and local universe administration, care that we have gathered here today?

One reason might be this: for over 2000 years, for the duration of the entire fourth epoch of our world, agents of our administration have teased out from a wild and crude humanity hundreds of millions of baby souls engaged with the Spirit of Truth, young lovers of the king of Nebadon. The sincerity of these millions needs no adjustment. The target of their devotion is already correct—the one who is the source of the Spirit of Truth. Their potential is without measure—as baby Finaliters, these millions will number among the trillions involved in ripening the absonite heart that beats in the bosom of eternity. Grand cultivation has occurred in this lonely distant vineyard. And its vines are heavy with the finest fruit.

A small adjustment to mankind's inner world, a simple tweaking of the universe frame we all use, a Jerusem-like perspective onto our context and circumstance, would be sufficient to shift our various stagnant dogmas and replace them with the larger truths of Nebadon.

And just such a significant but simple adjustment can be triggered by the perspective, the enlarged universe frame, presented in the Urantia Papers.

Successfully evolving a world from habitation into Light and Life would provide deep satisfaction to the administrators responsible. And such success must be a source of much joy to the Supreme. But another predictable success, when added to a million others, may lack a certain something. Is this why the Master Architects and caretakers of Orvonton planned the decimal worlds? But even the risk and adventures implied by these subtle experiments are bound by parameters and regulations. So think what Urantia must mean to all these reliable administrators, trustworthy creators and transcendent overseers. A world whose conceptual soil has been abused and poisoned for 200,000 years, a world whose genetic foundations were never lifted beyond the threat of retrograde bacteria, a world even whose very air and water now suffer damage. A world where a Creator Son could experience being washed away by injustice.

A thousand years ago, even a seasoned Lanonandek might have predicted that we were a lost cause. Yet look at the harvest ready to reap: “the sincerity of millions needs no adjustment, the target of their devotion is correct.” Jesus, our Michael, already shines as a superstar on the Urantian mindscape. The millions who adore our Source and Creator need only a subtle ad-

justment to their beliefs. The entire Christian world needs only a skillful, loving touch and it could take flight. Millions from every faith stand quivering on the brink. Given a less restricted cage, imagine how their wings might unfurl.

So here we are, spending three days pondering and probing this business of Deity gently adjusting the flow of mundane life, of the Ancients of Days and our Most Highs adjusting, by means of their Urantia Papers, the conceptual framework of our world. During this time together we will explore the epic frame being put in place for the human minds of Urantia's fifth age. A worst case scenario is that we all have a few pleasant days spent in the company of friends. A best case scenario is that we will stumble onto insights and understandings that will make us more valuable in the task of moving humanity into its fifth epoch.

First we require some perspective. So let us consider this threshold on which we stand.

### Thresholds

*Urantia is now quivering on the very brink of one of its most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment.*  
[2082:7]

From 1908 to 1933, a relationship was worked out between the Revelators entrusted with delivering the Urantia Papers and a handful of sincere but unremarkable natives. Over these 25 years, a core group of humans were gently adjusted to receive a revelation.

The appearance of the Papers during 1934/35 represented the completion of stage one—a stable human configuration able to receive and maintain the successfully delivered Papers. This small group had in common the experience of dealing with the Revelators. They were focused on the same goals and were full of appreciation for what had happened.

From this initial point of fragile stability began the first expansion. The next twenty years, as the circle of readers grew, saw a predictable progression unfold—from an initial breathless excitement and deep thankfulness on the part of all those introduced, to simple disagreements, to the friction of strong opinions, frustrations and internal conflict. But eventually a working arrangement was achieved, born of maturity and broadened perspectives.

It seems the Revelators used this period to allow the people involved to adjust. After all, by receiving the Urantia Papers, these folks were being asked to accommodate a new description of reality. No matter how sincere and enthusiastic a person might be, the

business of shifting realities is fraught with difficulty. We may never know the struggles and anguish that transpired within this group, but they spent 20 years getting used to the fit of this new thing.

By 1955, the Forum core had stabilized sufficiently to allow a second expansion—and a transition into the uncertainties and destabilization implied by publication of the text.

Over the next thirty years, the circle of readers grew to include a few thousand natives, each characterized by their capacity to be roused sufficiently to read 2097 pages of difficult text, and to survive such a radical and voluntary adjustment of their inner world.

This tilling of a small plot of the Urantian mind-scape was slow and unspectacular work. More interesting has been the decade of organizational exercises just past. These recent years of internal debate have allowed this second, larger, core to safely explore the problems of managing disagreements between equally sincere and intelligent fellow idealists. The strength and maturity gained from such lessons has forged us into a team able to assist with the process of shifting forward the millions standing on the threshold between epochs.

Urantia has arrived at a point where the Most Highs can attempt a third expansion. The implications of this situation are the focus of our explorations this weekend.

Those of us who were part of the second wave of readers find ourselves arranged, waiting on the brink of that inflexion when revelation meets Urantia's increasing capacity to respond.

This is a collaboration. We are all in the same position of trying to make sense of our role in the scheme of things, where we fit in, what we might be able to contribute to facilitate this dawning of Urantia's fifth epoch.

### Opportunity

There is much deep experience and wisdom tucked away in the recesses of the minds of those gathered here today. So let us make use of this opportunity. As you listen to the following presentations, and over lunch, please gather your thoughts so that you might share this hard-won evolutionary wisdom and insight.

With that need and opportunity in the back of our minds, I now call upon William Wentworth to start us on our way—by painting the big picture.

## The Lures of the Fifth Epoch

WILLIAM WENTWORTH, AUSTRALIA

### Disclaimer:

We don't really know what we are talking about. We know that the fifth epoch is our own idea. We are in the position of small children trying to form ideas about the big wide world.

But bear with us. *The Urantia Book* points out that everything the finite mind can think about is more or less erroneous. But the process of learning is one of setting up frames of reference in which to think. When faced with what we do not understand, then we postulate a frame of reference in which to think about what we don't understand. Such reference frames are always wrong in themselves, but they constitute the bridge to the next frame of reference, which is a bit less wrong than the previous one. So does evolution proceed—laboriously erecting scaffolding in the hope of comprehension, only to have to demolish the scaffolding to reach a still higher level which only becomes apparent from the top of the last construct.

So Nigel, Vern and I, when we conceived this conference, decided to ask you to accept our frame of reference as a working hypothesis, for the purpose of erecting some scaffolding to see what we can see when we get to the top.

We are not for one minute suggesting that there is any factual basis for our speculation.

\* \* \* \* \*

**T**he *Urantia Book* is sometimes referred to as the fifth epochal revelation. This derives from page 1007:1—1008:2 where the five religious revelations of epochal significance are listed—with the *Urantia Papers* listed as Number 5. The book does not call itself the fifth epochal revelation—but for the purposes of this conference we are assuming that it is. This is a liberty for which we ask your indulgence.

We have gone further. We have dared to postulate and define the fifth epoch. And I'll ramble on the bit about that now.

We are all familiar with the notion that our planet *Urantia* and its peoples and civilisations are a bit on the backward side. Our various historical misfortunes—particularly *Caligastia's* going into rebellion with *Lucifer*, and the consequent *Adamic default*—have left us in a mess. We are retarded, disorganised, ignorant and confused.

Between where we are now and the state of light and life, there is a large gulf to be bridged. The approach to the era of light and life is to be one of fairly intense revelation and learning. Before we can begin to learn rapidly and benefit much from really substantial revelation, we need some remedial work. So we have decided to refer to this period of remedial work as the fifth epoch—the epoch of the *Urantia Papers*.

Please note—we are not suggesting that this epoch will lead us into the era of light and life. It won't. What it will do is bring us to a point—the “threshold point” we have decided to call it—from which the acceleration to light and life can begin.

As a backward planet, we cannot receive very much in the way of revelation. We can't understand it, our animal habits are too strong, our intellects are too feeble, and our traditions too ignorant of reality for us to be able to absorb and adjust to it. What we do manage to grasp we tend to pervert and fanaticise. All we have managed so far is a “complex reflection of shared delusions”—eloquently put by *Nigel*—based more on adjutant mind stimuli rather than spirit.

Before any rapid progress can be made we need to develop capacity—and *The Urantia Book* is designed to facilitate this.

We think, then, of the fifth epoch as being the remedial phase during which humanity will evolve to a threshold from which it is possible for our celestial supervisors to risk stepping up the intensity of revelation. At the moment they can't risk it. But if we can be led to the threshold level then maybe the Most Highs will be game to stimulate us hard enough to accelerate us to light and life.

That's the general frame of reference we are asking you to think within. It is not real or true. We know that. It is one possible frame, and it seems to us sufficiently feasible that we ask you to accept it for the duration of this conference. So we propose a frame of reference, and my job is to introduce it.

Now as you know *the advances of true civilization are all born in the inner world of mankind* [1220:2]. Civilisation progresses because individuals have insights, put their insights into practice and generate progress.

It is interesting to imagine creation from God's point of view and compare it to ours. God—beyond time and space—says let there be a finaliter called *Rita*, and *Rita* as a finaliter appears in his presence. She has been created. From God's point of view on the absolute level it happens as soon as he thinks of it.

*Rita*—down here in time and space—has a somewhat different view of her own creation. She decides to do God's will, goes through the *morontia* regime, fuses with her adjuster, goes on through local and superuniverse careers, struggling all the time to know God's will and to do it. After her *Havona* experience she eventually staggers onto *Paradise* and is mustered into the corps of the finality after maybe one trillion time-space years.

God has created. *Rita* has been inside the process of creation—her own creation—participating in it herself. God has set up time-space so that *Rita*, instead of popping into existence instantaneously, can experience and participate in the process of being created. Isn't time-space wonderful?

The idea that personality is one of the four fundamental realities of the universe is central to the understanding of the fifth epoch. Our cultural view of personality as something with which we are vivacious at a party, or on TV, is one of our greatest limitations. Personality is a fundamental reality—transcending finite and even absonite existence. Along with matter, mind and spirit, it actually constitutes reality. Personality, after all, is what makes us spontaneous because only personality can be free of antecedent causation. All other aspects of reality are locked into the prison of cause and effect. Only personality can break out of it, and be creative.

### How Did We Come to the Fifth Epoch Notion?

We were speculating about how the Most Highs of *Edentia* might view *Urantia*, and what opportunities might be open to them.

We agreed that our starting point had to be the inner world of mankind—the source of all progress. But the problem is that the various different civilisations

and cultural groups all have rather different conceptions of this inner world. Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Moslems, Animists, etc., Scientists and Secular Humanists—all these groups, to some degree, are defined by their experiences of and beliefs about this inner world. And these experiences and beliefs can be very different. The fighting among them for Doctrine, Power, Social Influence and Membership often leads to bloodshed. So we won't be able to make much progress with our inner worlds until there is one we can share. We are not talking a common inner world language. The concepts are different though much of the underlying motivation is compatible—the one with the other.

No doubt the Most Highs have seen it all before. But they can't do much with this unless we can agree on the categories in which we think. So they would have to be planning some kind of amalgamation of those cultural traditions which describe our inner worlds.

It seems likely that the remedial phase—the fifth epoch—will, among other things, be devoted to bringing together and harmonising the various cultures and traditions now extant on Urantia. After all, most of the existing traditions have their roots in the third and fourth epochs—those of Melchizedek and Jesus.

But until mankind as a whole shares an inner world, revelation is bound to be divisive as the different traditions make their different responses to it. In other words, the threshold level—from which the stimulation of advanced revelation can begin—is that level of planetary culture where humanity—or at least the majority of us—share the same inner world.

What on earth does this mean? We are warned against uniformity, against the idea of trying to fit diverse points of view into a single package. Diversity of opinion and belief reflect a freedom from coercion, which is highly desirable. So what does it mean to say that humanity can share an inner world?

We are referring here not to uniformity of beliefs, but to the underlying frame of reference from which such beliefs develop.

It's not easy to talk about this frame of reference, because its elements are so largely unconscious. They are the assumptions about reality that we grow up with, without thinking about them very much—things which we take for granted about the world and the universe, ourselves and others, which constitute the background to our awareness. They are the canvas onto which we paint our thoughts and ideals.

An example of this which I think illustrates the concepts very well concerns the nature of mind. Most of the world's cultures, and certainly our own Western

culture, conceive of mind as something which is generated by the brain. We don't reason about this, but take it for granted. Various specialists study various different aspects of the brain and of the mind, and observe the interactions between them, but everybody assumes that the mind is the output of the functioning brain. This is our culture's frame of reference about the mind.

But if it should be a fact that mind is a universal phenomenon originating outside the brain, which the brain apprehends and interprets, but does not actually generate or produce, then our understanding of what mental activity is about is likely to alter significantly. The speculations of psychologists about the mind's functioning would take a rather different tack if the frame of reference shifted in this way.

Now, as you know, *The Urantia Book* is suggesting just that. What hope then do psychologists, operating in the old frame of reference, have of understanding much about mind?

Do you see what I'm trying to say? This is an example of the significance of the frame of reference which our culture assumes rather than perceives. This is one example, but if you multiply this by all the assumptions our culture makes about the nature of reality—and they are hard to identify because they are so basic they are virtually unconscious—but if you imagine all the others, then you can begin to get a feel for the significance of the cultural frame of reference.

Now this is the kind of thing we are referring to when we speak about sharing the same inner world. While the various different “-ologies” and “-isms” are all making different assumptions about what is real or what is not, what is happening in the world and the universe, and what reality is all about, then the ability of the Most Highs and their agents and collaborators to actually reveal anything much to us is rather limited.

Only when we do actually share more or less the same inner world can much in the way of revelation take place.

Now we—Nigel, Vern and I—are asking you to accept that the fifth epoch, the epoch of the Urantia Papers, is the epoch which will establish the shared inner life—this common frame of reference. It is not that we all have to think, feel and believe the same. It is rather that we have to share the assumptions about reality which underlie our thinking, feeling and believing.

Now this has led me to some speculation about what might actually be going on. Don't take this too seriously, please. It goes like this. The second and third epochs—those of the material sons and Machiventa Melchizedek—gave men the confidence to try

to do things. Prior to them, men cowed in superstitious dread, unable to do anything but accept and endure, too afraid of the spirits and demons to do anything more than secure the next meal and the requirements of their habits. But the codifying of superstitious dread into formal religious systems gave rise to man's ability to do things—to attempt to move things around, to rearrange, to organise, to build, to fight wars and so on. Men developed a bit of confidence. Reality was not entirely the play thing of capricious spirits—though they were still to be reckoned with.

With the fourth epoch—that of Jesus—real confidence began to develop, because not only were the spirits organised under a single authority, but that authority, God, was benevolent. People began to do even more, and after a while it dawned on people that God played reality according to laws. He always did the same thing in the same way—and thus what we now know as science became possible.

Science got carried away with itself, and now imagines that there isn't a god at all—just laws to be discovered and put into practice. And whatever we might think about that, it has given rise to a whole new civilisation—one which specialises in the manipulation of energy-matter. Some would argue that its entire frame of reference is contained within this principle—the ability to manipulate energy-matter into usable forms—but I think that is an extreme view. In my view, the confidence in universal law and the ability to use energy-matter is blending with the underlying values growing out of the third and fourth epochs—and something really new is appearing. For the first time, a frame of reference is establishing itself which has a truly global reach. Most cultures can participate in the scientific viewpoint—there may be some exceptions—and everybody wants the results—material abundance, disease control, extended lifespan, fast information flow, leisure, etc. I know there are some nasty by-products—cultural collapse in some regions, transitional breakdown and stress, fear of meaninglessness, confusion, etc. But the potential benefits outweigh these. No one wants to go back to pre-industrial times.

Okay, so if you are one of the Most Highs of Edentia surveying this scene you may not be all that discouraged. True, it's a mess. But look: for the first time the beginnings of a truly global frame of reference has appeared. It is conceivable that the benefits of secular science could be extended to all cultures. It is conceivable that the ethics of the third and fourth epochs could adapt to secular science. It is conceivable that the information age may spread serviceable fashions

and ideas to most cultures. It is conceivable that these fashions and ideas may even contain the ideals of the fourth epoch, so that over a period of time a common frame of reference for progressive humanity may form.

Put *The Urantia Book* into this cultural soup and be a bit optimistic. May it be that the Most Highs and their agents and collaborators plan to harness this unifying materialistic urge by addressing the sense of meaninglessness which accompanies it? While our terrific physicists, astronomers, microbiologists, engineers, marketers, financial gurus and I.T. whizzes can do extraordinary things, they cannot actually explain much about what underlies their achievements. They don't know themselves. People become reluctant, even scared, when they realise they don't know what it's all about—when they see that the old ways of settling the big questions are no longer adequate. But this is where the Urantia Papers can provide an exquisite satisfaction, harmonising science and religion, providing modern answers to age-old questions, being reachable at many levels by different kinds of intellect. In so doing, these Papers form a basis for that frame of reference, the shared inner life of mankind. And it's only possible for *The Urantia Book* to be influential because the secular revolt against organised religion produced the modern world and its material skills and development. And it is these same material skills and development which allow the book and its message to spread. Just as the Adjusters use material gravity to travel to us, so do the Urantia Papers use physical development to propagate and spread.

Instead of contrasting material development with spiritual, and worrying about the imbalance—the possibility of cultural self-destruction through over rapid material progress—maybe we could look at material development as the carrier wave of spiritual growth. The danger of material progress bringing on a dark age by out-running spiritual growth (1302:3) may be counteracted by co-opting material progress to serve the purposes of the necessary acceleration in spiritual growth.

But let's not kid ourselves that very many people will read *The Urantia Book*. They won't. Not many people understood Isaac Newton or Albert Einstein either. But just as Newtonian physics and Einsteinian relativity have become integral to the common frame of reference of modern humanity, so too will the primary themes of the Urantia Papers. These truths will become woven into our set of cultural assumptions because they are relatively true, because they work for our time and place, and because more and more people will reflect in their lives a deepening understanding

of these things. And when enough individuals team such insight and understanding with experience, the world has changed.

We postulate that this may be what is going on.

This can occur in many ways. Those who follow ordinary careers—made super-ordinary by the attempt to follow these careers as God would like us to do—are the keys to the spread of the fifth epochal revelation. Remember what Jesus said to the inn keeper [1475:1]:

*“Minister your hospitality as one who entertains the children of the Most High. Elevate the drudgery of your daily toil to the high levels of a fine art through the increasing realization...”*

But the Papers are helping because they are providing a common vocabulary in which the concepts of meaning and value can be discussed:

mind  
truth  
soul  
spirit  
personality

These are all notions with which most cultures are familiar. From now on we can all be talking about the same thing when we use these terms.

\* \* \*

I have racked my brains to try to get a feel for the flavour of the fifth epoch—how it may differ from the past:

1. Less emphasis on the sacred, more on the information. There will not be a sacred institution. There is just information about how to live your life. This leaves a hole—how will the message be propagated? What about groups? Don’t know. But people will no longer allow themselves to be intimidated into supporting special groups and causes. It is all voluntary—information rather than “the word.” Perhaps the fifth epoch will be the first in which religion survives without an institution (1083:1).

2. Knowledge of the big picture makes everyday life a much more attractive prospect than previously. Mystery is inherent in the finite’s inability to reach the infinite. As finite beings we will never understand much about the infinite. But the important thing is how we live our everyday lives. This is the key to real progress. If we can see what it is all for, we are less inclined to be dissatisfied with our lot. The Jews in

Babylonian captivity, the Struggle between Mithraism and Christianity—these are extreme examples. It is in the arena of everyday life that most of us do God’s will.

3. Inside/outside. The conflict between our ideals and our life can be a bit less intense. People can increasingly see that the two—the inside and the outside—are working together. This is fundamental to the evolutionary process. You don’t have to deny ideals in order to fulfill a reasonable outer life. People will begin increasingly to realise that there is a massive network consisting of a fundamental reality inside them, cooperating with a number of influences outside them, which not only defines reality, but urges them to participate in it. Instead of living in dread of the consequences of our mistakes—“woe is sinful me”—we begin to shrug them off and learn from them.

4. The fifth epoch does not drive us. In the frames of reference of previous epochs we were inclined to be driven by fear into what we saw as a refuge of religious contemplation. The fifth epoch lures us, drawing us forward with the vision of a vast universe in which we can find a meaningful place with satisfying work to perform. *The Urantia Book’s* depiction of evolution as a process of our participating in our own creation by our own efforts in partnership with God is a truly sublime image. With a carrot like that, who need a stick?

5. The fifth epoch will redefine the relationship between science and religion. It is not necessary to deny science in order to be religious, or to deny religion in order to be scientific. Science and religion are both forms of information. Science is information about matter. Religion is information about spirit. Science without religion produces fear and despair—modern nihilism. Religion without science produces superstition and fanaticism—paranoid and self-righteous fundamentalism. The fifth epoch will put the two things together. It sees the chasm between matter and spirit which only mind can bridge. All notions of spirit being able to influence matter directly are passé. I think this also implies the impotence of prayer to influence matter—to change God’s mind, as it were. All prayer can do really is reconcile the praying person to God.

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This has been an attempt to introduce the “inner world of mankind,” and to suggest that the *Urantia Papers* have been tuned and targeted to strike directly at this point of planetary leverage.

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