

THE ARENA

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THE MIND ARENA OF CHOICE

"Mind is your ship, the Adjuster is your pilot, the human will is captain." (p.1217)

Money and Higher Things

Jeffrey Wattles, USA

How easy it is for us who recognise the primacy of the spiritual to do less than our full share of material tasks! A selective reading of the life of Jesus may even seem to support this tendency. For example, Jesus did no public fund-raising, leaving that task to Matthew. Ready to rise above financial concerns, we may thrill to the Master's assurance:

"When you wholeheartedly devote yourselves to the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, you should not be of doubtful minds concerning the support of yourselves or the families you have forsaken. If you give your lives truly to the gospel, you shall live by the gospel. If you are only believing disciples, you must earn your own bread and contribute to the sustenance of all who teach and preach and heal." (p.1823:3)

A passage like this can inflame our desire to identify with the apostles. Recall, however, that Jesus, when the twelve were first gathered, sent them forth to earn money and joined them in doing so.

Jesus now asked them how much money they had among them; he also inquired as to what provision had been made for their families. When it developed that they had hardly sufficient funds to maintain themselves for two weeks, he said: "It is not the will of my Father that we begin our work in this way. We will remain here by the sea two weeks and fish or do whatever our hands find to do ... (p.1544:3)

The apostles, moreover, were obliged to provide for themselves once Jesus left them.

"You well remember when I sent you forth without purse or wallet and even advised that you take with you no extra clothes. And you will all recall that you lacked nothing. But now have you come upon troublous times. No longer can you depend upon the good will of the multitudes. Henceforth, he who has a purse, let him take it with him. When you go out into the world to proclaim this gospel, make such provision for your support as seems best. I have come to bring peace, but it will not appear for a time." (p.1944:2)

Urantia Foundation has fallen on times of great need,

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touching its ability to perform some of its main tasks. It may even be necessary to postpone existing commitments to translations. At this point, each IUA member or Urantia Foundation supporter has a great question to face: Do I really believe in the importance of the Foundation's key tasks?

What are *my* financial responsibilities? This question may strike fear in our hearts. Given many of our financial situations and family commitments, perhaps we do not like to recall some of the relevant teachings of *The Urantia Book*:

Melchizedek establishing a system of tithing.

Upon the consummation of the solemn covenant, the reconciliation between Abraham and Melchizedek was complete. Abraham again assumed the civil and military leadership of the Salem colony, which at its height carried over one hundred thousand regular tithe payers on the rolls of the Melchizedek brotherhood. (p.1021:4)

Jesus grew up with the practice of tithing.

Mary maintained a dovecote on top of the animal house adjoining the home, and they used the profits from the sale of doves as a special charity fund, which Jesus administered after he deducted the tithe and turned it over to the officer of the synagogue. (p.1361:4)

Jesus, with some qualification, acknowledged tithing as a duty.

"Woe upon you, scribes and Pharisees and all other

hypocrites who make sure that they tithe mint, anise, and cumin and at the same time disregard the weightier matters of the law—faith, mercy, and judgment! Within reason, the one you ought to have done but not to have left the other undone. You are truly blind guides and dumb teachers; you strain out the gnat and swallow the camel.” (p.1908:1)

One thing must be made crystal clear. I am not trying to prove that we each have a duty to tithe, let alone tithe to Urantia Foundation. With tithing in mind as a norm, we each need to see what giving is reasonable for us. Moreover, we may do well to distribute our giving in different directions. Nevertheless, we are all beneficiaries of what the Foundation has been doing for so many years. The Trustees, for example, are unpaid, and they work, some of them at times, nearly a forty-hour week. We owe a great deal to them. Moreover, it seems clear that our unseen friends have many projects that they are pursuing through the teamwork coordinated by Urantia Foundation.

A church, with a mix of upper class, middle class, and lower economic class members may have a hard time raising funds, since the very expensive cars seen in the parking lot makes it easy for many to assume that the wealthy few should carry the financial burden. The middle or lower class folks may feel that they shouldn't be expected to do much. At some point, the wealthy may come to feel that the others are benefiting without contributing, therefore abandon any responsibility when it comes time to help pay for all the advantages the church has to offer. Love of neighbour and wholehearted service suffer as a consequence. However, congregations where faith surges dynamically have no trouble paying the bills.

Every job that is well done gives strength to others yet to come. Every challenge presents us with the alternatives: shall we be fearful and defeated, or shall we respond with vigour? In every challenge we would all do well [to] *feast upon uncertainty, to fatten upon disappointment, to enthuse over apparent defeat, to invigorate in the presence of difficulties, to exhibit indomitable courage in the face of immensity, and to exercise unconquerable faith when confronted with the challenge of the inexplicable. . . . In liaison with God, nothing—absolutely nothing—is impossible!* (p.291:3)

“Seek the greater thing, and the lesser will be found therein; ask for the heavenly, and the earthly shall be included,” said Jesus (p.1823:3). Sometimes the greater thing is to descend to the humble level of material service. What do you think?

The Common Thread

Daniel Swadling, NSW

Whatever the number of years I've known *The Urantia Book*, only half of those would be the number of

conferences I've been to. I've always enjoyed them, the company they've attracted, and the conversations and activities they hold. These joyful experiences are entirely due to the nature of the like-minded and like-spirited people that come together at these events. Similar satisfying fraternisation occurs at the periodic weekend gatherings and celebrations throughout the year. And of course those few inspiring hours each fortnight just never seem long enough – where everyone desperately shares as much as they can with each other before the midnight bells soon toll and the eyelids start breaking ranks.

Not taken lightly at these moments is the sense of unity. Despite being a fairly small number of people, there are represented here a wide range of our community, all with vastly different backgrounds, leading varied and incredible lives; each one with their own interpretation of truth and ideas of love. But all with a keen desire to engage others in lively, intelligent conversation and debate, and actively share those thoughts of love which otherwise may remain bottled up and stifled by the rigours, distractions and stresses of life's daily grind.

What is it that inspires these people of otherwise uncommon ground to unite? What sparks off the sudden urge to seek out a stranger and tell them, show them in your most unique way that you care a hell of a lot for them, that you even love them? Surely not just a desire to see if it gets reflected right back at you! What is the common thread linking people in this way and woven into the vast, intricate and colourful tapestry of life on

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this planet? These are probably already questions long discussed in the context of *The Urantia Book*, but seeing as I'm a relative newcomer, I figured there's scope for a new analysis and given my own unique twist. And I suppose it's about time some of the younger lot amongst us started sharing some of their ideas and experiences.

I'd essentially like to discuss this commonality conundrum in the context of the world's main religions, which I encounter every day living in this country. I will speculate on how the people of Urantia can get along without denying an individual's beliefs and the diverse cultures they live in, and hope to show that in fact, that diversity can be endorsed and encouraged to flourish while being simultaneously unifying.

Twentieth-century Urantia religions present an interesting study of the social evolution of man's worship impulse. Many faiths have progressed very little since the days of the ghost cult. The Pygmies of Africa have no religious reactions as a class, although some of them believe slightly in a spirit environment. They are today just where primitive man was when the evolution of religion began. The basic belief of primitive religion was survival after death. The idea of worshipping a personal God indicates advanced evolutionary development, even the first stage of revelation. The Dyaks have evolved only the most primitive religious practices. The comparatively recent Eskimos and Amerinds had very meagre concepts of God; they believed in ghosts and had an indefinite idea of survival of some sort after death. Present-day native Australians have only a ghost fear, dread of the dark, and a crude ancestor veneration. The Zulus are just evolving a religion of ghost fear and sacrifice. Many African tribes, except through missionary work of Christians and Mohammedans, are not yet beyond the fetish stage of religious evolution. But some groups have long held to the idea of monotheism, like the onetime Thracians, who also believed in immortality. (The Urantia Book—Further Evolution of Religion p.1010:5)

Let us always remember that:

On Urantia, evolutionary and revelatory religion are progressing side by side while they blend and coalesce into the diversified theologic systems found in the world. (p.1010:6)

The Hindu religion: steeped in the ancient Vedic-Aryan cults and Brahmanic philosophies where denial of human individuality, denial of desire and refusal to attribute personality to the infinite energy-divinity; this uniquely Indian belief has speculated on just about every aspect of theology, forming many conclusions except on the most cosmically vital.

Many of its beliefs approach some of the universal truths revealed to us in *The Urantia Book*:

1. There is definitely a belief in an absolute, infinite being, however unapproachable by the individual;
2. The oversoul and karma concepts near the truth of the Supreme Being;

3. And they come close to realising the presence of the Thought Adjusters, but the soul returning to its origin sadly takes nothing human, nothing experiential with it.

Through a tumultuous history, Hinduism has struggled with numerous conceptions and misconceptions of truth and various social forces. It possesses such diverse levels of practices and beliefs ranging from high intellectual philosophies to base fetishism and cultism.

Buddism: Despite the original teachings of Guatama having been greatly distorted over the millennia, his message of simple belief being corrupted by ceremonial practices and rituals which he had so vigorously denounced, and being amalgamated with pre-existing beliefs of the many people it reached, there remains within Buddhism certain fundamentals which approach universal truths.

The concept of Buddha Eternal can essentially be identified with God the Absolute and it sometimes comes close to being personalised. Some Buddhists believe in salvation through faith in the divine mercies and loving care of the God-Buddha. Its philosophy holds that the Buddha, or divine nature, resides in all men, and through his own endeavours man can attain the realisation of his inner divinity – a clear representation of the Thought Adjuster.

One of the greatest attributes of Buddhism is its freedom to recognise truth in all religions, quite rare for any religion. It has a solid comprehension of the relativity of truth, thus able to reconcile divergences and differences within itself and with other beliefs.

Confucism: The Confucian Chinese people live within a strongly ordered ethical and moral framework, which although noble, is limiting and inhibitive to true progressive development of God-consciousness. *But lying submerged within this framework are the old concepts of Lao Tse's Tao, the Supreme God, the source of that divine energy which will remake the world, and by which man ascends to spiritual union with. (p.1034:3)*

Islam: Islam, being a composite religion of Judaism, Christianity and the instructions of Mohamed, has adopted high and noble truths coupled with unnecessary and burdensome scaffolding. Beneath the barbaric rough exterior of Islam, where promulgation is often by the sword and some women degraded to a subhuman status, lies its fundamental clearly defined belief in Allah, the one and only Deity. There lies also an inspiring pursuit of spiritual truth, the personal jihad of aligning one's heart to God and understanding of cosmic realities.

Muslims find it not incongruous to combine Jesus's golden rule with ancient tribal beliefs. Despite being unequal to men, many women are Muslim by their own choice, not necessarily by their husbands'; a zealous 'revolutionary' may kill an infidel knowing that such an inevitability should befall him if he was the unbeliever!

The people of Islam with whom I have lived have an unbridled passion for life and an ardent fervour for

worship, an earnest humanity that has not been stifled by puritanical sentiments and self-detachment. They are some of the most affable people on earth: I've been extended more brotherly love from Muslims than from many Christians I've met. Their raw human passion of living a religious life is a book from which many Western religionists could certainly take a leaf.

Hebrew: Throughout the colourful and endearing evolution of the Hebrew religion, and its entanglement with their secular and patriarchal traditions, there of course persisted the concept of the Universal Father. It contains remnants borrowed from all the ancient Middle Eastern beliefs; it has been responsible for transmitting much of the morality and religious thought of the Levantine people to the West and, more specifically through Christianity, the idea of one God, a loving Universal Father.

Judaism, held strongly together by conserving the highest moral values of its followers within a solid institutional framework, fails to foster progress and encourage philosophic creative discovery in the realms of truth. [It is] deficient in philosophy and almost devoid of aesthetic properties. (p.1076:2) The Jews are caught up in national egotism, false faith in the coming Messiah and the strict tyranny of the priesthood with its rules, regulations and rituals, thus silencing the voices of new religious truth.

Christianity: And I'm sure we're all familiar with the religion of Christianity, that amalgamation of, to name a few:

1. The Jewish system of morality, theology and monotheism;
2. Zoroastrian concepts of the struggle between good and evil;
3. The pagan mystery cults, Mithraism and the Great Mother worship;
4. The life and teachings of Jesus;
5. The personal views and actions of Paul of Tarsus;
6. Greco-Roman philosophic thought of the first few centuries after Christ.

Although the Christian church appears as a somewhat stale and power-obsessed organisation, stifling the true teachings of Jesus, it is apparently a necessary medium in carrying the message through this material age into a more spiritual one; acting as the vessel in which the grub is slowly metamorphosing into the graceful and colourful butterfly it was destined to be.

The most obvious thing about the beliefs of the people of this planet is that they all actually have one, all races and cultures have something to believe in, some reason for living. Whether spiritual or not, it seems a natural human urge to have some reason for getting up in the morning. *After all, it is what one believes rather than what one knows that determines conduct and dominates personal performances. Purely factual knowledge exerts very little influence upon the average man unless it becomes emotionally activated.* (p.1090:1) That belief

begins to take on spiritual tones when higher meanings are sought, when the human mind desires an important reason for living. That human life is given greater spiritual gravity when that mind's desire is for experience of truth.

This appears to be a unique feature within most of the worlds beliefs: the realisation that believing in a falsehood is futile and unstable ignites an endless journey of discovering that which has greater value, that which can be trusted, and that which will provide unceasing comfort through life's uncertainties and mysteries.

All religions teach the worship of Deity and some doctrine of human salvation. The Buddhist religion promises salvation from suffering, unending peace; the Jewish religion promises salvation from difficulties, prosperity predicated on righteousness; the Greek religion promised salvation from disharmony, ugliness, by the realization of beauty; Christianity promises salvation from sin, sanctity; Mohammedanism provides deliverance from the rigorous moral standards of Judaism and Christianity. The religion of Jesus is salvation from self, deliverance from the evils of creature isolation in time and in eternity. (p.67:3)

As evidenced by the tumultuous religious events of the past, the spread and eager reception of religious beliefs, indicates a common hunger for new and satisfying knowledge and truth. All those who truly have an ear shall hear, and all those truly seeking shall find. And the most appealing message of late to be lapped up by billions of people of various races, creeds and cultures over the last 2000 years, is the universal truth that God is love and that all mankind are the Sons and Daughters of this loving God; therefore love each other as you would yourself.

Another clear commonality is the fact of their difference: no two beliefs or religions are alike and every culture they belong to is entirely unique. All must be shown the utmost of respect; each has their right to exist. The beauty of diversity should be cherished, encouraged and preserved. Variety is the spice of life (cliché, but ever so true); it's what keeps life interesting; it stimulates creativity, competition and the ceaseless quest for new knowledge and new truth.

Respect for, tolerance and adoration of beliefs other than your own precedes the respect, tolerance, adoration and infinite fascination of the individual's unique viewpoints and interpretations of that belief – thus inspiring genuine love and brotherhood.

It's quite clear that the Adjutant Mind Spirits of wisdom and worship are alive and well on this planet, religious development is moving at a pace. There lies within these beliefs I've discussed, certain foundations that will assure their continued growth, and will ensure continued receptivity to the Spirit of Truth. The Hindus have an existing philosophic framework and system of religious worship, Buddhists innately have a keen desire to learn, the Chinese have a lurking desire of investigation, in the Middle East there is abundant love of life, current Western thought wants religion redefined.

All Urantia is waiting for the proclamation of the ennobling message of Michael, unencumbered by the accumulated doctrines and dogmas of nineteen centuries of contact with the religions of evolutionary origin. The hour is striking for presenting to Buddhism, to Christianity, to Hinduism, even to the peoples of all faiths, not the gospel about Jesus, but the living, spiritual reality of the gospel of Jesus. (p.1041:5)

The lowering of inter-religious borders or barriers and the taking of new truth to established belief systems through tact, foresight, tolerance and patience is extremely important. The maintenance of individual cultures in the short term (the next 1000 years) will be essential. For example Mr Moussa N'Diaye, the leader/teacher of a group of West African *Urantia Book* readers, succeeded in wisely tailoring his approach to his Muslim brethren by studying Jesus's methods of teaching and presenting new truths in a loving, non-invasive approach that respected individual beliefs. He also selected some basic concepts from the Koran, which he broadened, emphasised and enlightened with *The Urantia Book* teachings. His success indicates that introduced carefully, patiently and wisely, new ideas can be shared with beliefs that appear to be unshakeable; beliefs which teachers of new truth have not just the right but the duty to uphold.

I'd just like to finish with a couple of quotes that sums it up pretty well:

Observing minds and discriminating souls know religion when they find it in the lives of their fellows. Religion requires no definition; we all know its social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual fruits. And this all grows out of the fact that religion is the property of the human race; it is not a child of culture. True, one's perception of religion is still human and therefore subject to the bondage of ignorance, the slavery of superstition, the deceptions of sophistication, and the delusions of false philosophy. (p.1119:6)

The many religions of Urantia are all good to the extent that they bring man to God and bring the realization of the Father to man. It is a fallacy for any group of religionists to conceive of their creed as The Truth; such attitudes bespeak more of theological arrogance than of certainty of faith. There is not a Urantia religion that could not profitably study and assimilate the best of the truths contained in every other faith, for all contain truth. Religionists would do better to borrow the best in their neighbors' living spiritual faith rather than to denounce the worst in their lingering superstitions and outworn rituals.

All these religions have arisen as a result of man's variable intellectual response to his identical spiritual leading. They can never hope to attain a uniformity of creeds, dogmas, and rituals—these are intellectual; but they can, and some day will, realize a unity in true worship of the Father of all, for this is spiritual, and it is forever true, in the spirit all men are equal. (p.1012:4,5)

Beyond the Shallows, a Generation Embraces the Depths of Belief

(Article from the Faith section of "The Age" April 27, 2002) Writer: Ian Hansen

It was recently reported (*The Age*, 15/4) that the study of theology is enjoying a boom time, especially in Melbourne. Enrolments in courses in a range of theological institutions are high. Thirty-somethings are taking time out from well-paid professions to examine issues of faith and belief. What's really interesting is that some 80 percent of these students of theology are not preparing for the priesthood or ministry. So what are they doing these courses for? They simply want to know what may give meaning to their lives.

The easy answers of the New Age gurus are proving unhelpful. Careerism (that narcissistic focus on career) is failing many young executives. The popular concept of self-actualisation (I can do it all by myself) finally proves a self-indulgence: there's a new generation that wants to explore big ideas about God and the world and what it all means.

Such exploration is always accompanied by metaphor. That is, to explain or to come to understand theological ideas such as God or forgiveness, you have to use comparisons. You have to be able to say it's like something. For example, God is like a still, small voice. This is only one attribute of God, but the comparison, the simile, helps us begin to put together an idea of God.

Believers through the ages have said with confidence that it's like being able to fly on eagles' wings, they long for God like a deer longs in the desert for a cooling stream. Jesus talking about the kingdom of heaven would say it is like a mustard seed or yeast or a shepherd who has lost a sheep—all on the borderlands between prose and poetry, using the age old devices of poetry, making comparisons.

But for deeply rich analogies, we do no better than the seldom-read Book of Ezekiel. The Old Testament prophet lived around 600 BC. We know very little about him: he's never mentioned anywhere else in the Old Testament and never quoted in the Gospels. Among his many vivid comparisons is the picture of the river of life. Ezekiel in a vision sees a temple where water is running from its eastern gate. A man with a measuring line makes Ezekiel walk "for a thousand cubits" through the water and it comes up to his ankles. Another thousand and the water is up to Ezekiel's knees. Another thousand and it is up to his waist. Another thousand and the water "was deep enough to swim in".

It's a fruitful image of the religious life. Many people only paddle in their beliefs. Just up to their ankles. Their beliefs cost them very little. In one of his films, Groucho Marx snarls, "They're my principles, and if you don't like 'em... I'll change 'em." Some people believe up to their knees but the ground is still safe beneath their feet, no chance of them being swept away. Other people are

up to their waist; the rush of water in the river tugs at them. Their feet are not always secure, but they feel in control and run no risks. But others find themselves in water so deep that they have to swim.

The 30 somethings in theological courses have taken to the deep water. Not for them the shallows of belief in which, sadly, so many churchgoers live out their faith. Nor even the knee and waist-deep believing whereby if the tug of the river is frightening you can reach the safety of the bank. The challenge is to push off into the deep, to think about what it is to believe, to absorb notions that are disturbing, to confront ideas ignored by popular culture. I remember a university mission with the slogan "Give God a Piece of Your Mind". We could all do that.

Australian & New Zealand Annual *Urantia Book* Readers' Conference

Theme? 'Being' and 'Doing' According to *The Urantia Book*

When? 11—13 October, 2002

Where? Dicky Beach on Queensland's beautiful Sunshine Coast north of Brisbane.

Cost? \$150 (includes accommodation for Friday and Saturday nights, and meals from Saturday breakfast to Sunday lunch.)

Readers from the Brisbane and Sunshine Coast study groups will be hosting this year's annual *Urantia Book* readers' conference. See enclosed brochure for more details and registration form.

Astronomers Find Jupiter-Sized Planet Orbiting Star In Big Dipper

A team of astronomers has found a Jupiter-sized planet orbiting a faint nearby star similar to our Sun, raising intriguing prospects of finding a solar system like our own.

The planet is the second found orbiting the star 47 Ursae Majoris in the Big Dipper, also known as Ursa Major or the Big Bear. The new planet is at least three-fourths the mass of Jupiter and orbits the star at a distance that, in our Solar System, would place it beyond Mars but within the orbit of Jupiter.

"Astronomers have detected evidence of more than 70 extrasolar planets," said Morris Aizenman, a senior science advisor at the National Science Foundation (NSF). "Each discovery brings us closer to determining whether other planetary systems have features like those of our own."

"For the first time we have detected two planets in

nearly circular orbits around the same star," said team member Debra Fischer of the University of California at Berkeley. "Most of the 70 planets people we have found to date are in bizarre solar systems, with short periods and eccentric orbits close to the star. As our sensitivity improves we are finally seeing planets with longer orbital periods, planetary systems that look more like our Solar System."

The planet-search team, which is supported by NASA and the National Science Foundation, Arlington, VA, has been instrumental in finding a majority of the planets outside our Solar System (also called extrasolar planets). Besides Fischer, the team includes Geoffrey Marcy, also of Berkeley, Paul Butler of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Steve Vogt of the University of California at Santa Cruz and Gregory Laughlin of NASA's Ames Research Center, Mountain View, CA. Their report on the new planet has been submitted to the *Astrophysical Journal*.

A few years ago, Marcy and Butler discovered a planet more than twice the mass of Jupiter in a circular orbit around the same star. The star is one of 100 that the scientists have targeted since 1987 in their search for evidence of extrasolar planets. Using telescopes at the University of California's Lick Observatory, they measure changes in the characteristics of light emitted by the stars. Those changes, they believe, signal the presence of a planet periodically pulling the star toward or away from Earth.

Fischer was able to see the periodic wobble from the second planet, smaller and farther from the star than the first, because of improved instrumentation.

The star is a yellow star similar to the sun, probably about seven billion years old and located about 51 light-years from Earth. A light-year, the distance light travels in one year, is approximately 6 trillion miles.

"Every new planetary system reveals some new quirk that we didn't expect. We've found planets in small orbits and wacky eccentric orbits," said Marcy. "With 47 Ursae Majoris, it's heartwarming to find a planetary system that finally reminds us of our solar system."

From the ANZURA Fundraising Committee

At last year's Annual General Meeting, members of ANZURA voted to form a fundraising committee to raise funds for the Chinese Translation of *The Urantia Book*. Since then the Governing Board has also approved a proposal by the committee to raise funds for seeding India with *Urantia Books*.

The committee has formulated a mission statement, which reads:

"The ANZURA fundraising committee will join with reader groups worldwide to help raise \$350,000 for the Chinese translation in order to give 885 million people, who speak or read Mandarin Chinese, an opportunity to discover *The Urantia Book* and its supernal teachings. In addition we will help raise \$50,000, which is needed to seed India with English *Urantia Books* in order to expose the revelation to the 100 million English-speaking people who belong to the educated classes there.

"We take on this endeavour to ensure future revelators of truth to Urantia never again have reason to say something like this to mortals:

"And again we remark that the early teachers of the Christian religion made a great mistake when they so exclusively turned their attention to the western civilization of the Roman world. The teachings of Jesus, as they were held by the Mesopotamian believers of the first century, would have been readily received by the various groups of Asiatic religionists. (The Urantia Book p.1432:3)"

Seeding India with *Urantia Books*

Over the last few years ANZURA members have assisted Urantia Foundation at book fairs in India. It was amazing to discover that hundreds of people who visited the booth from the various non-Christian groups in India, such as Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Sikhs were open to *The Urantia Book*. They were quick to accept that much of the book's message builds upon the essential truths found in all of the major religions. It was also found that many truth seekers there are not adverse to new revelation that expands upon the old belief systems. It didn't take long to see that the religious soil is rich in India for the ready acceptance of the Urantia revelation.

Another exciting discovery was that the clergy of many of the Christian institutions in India have a tendency to be more accepting of *The Urantia Book* than in Christian countries. They seem to understand the difficulties people from other religions have in accepting traditional, westernised Christianity. Many churches and members of the clergy are being persecuted in India because of the damage certain intolerant Christian fundamentalist groups have caused. (Naturally, if you go around calling Hindus or Muslims "heathen" and "devil worshippers" in their own country, you're bound to cause trouble for other Christians.)

Many of the more flexible Christians in India seem to

be willing to explore new methods for introducing Christ to their fellow countrymen, therefore the message contained in *The Urantia Book* is a lot less threatening to them than to their counterparts in Christian cultures; in fact some members of the clergy have expressed that it could be a benign way of introducing the gospel message to non-Christians.

During their visits to India, Urantia Foundation personnel have been developing relationships with some Christian institutions. One group, acknowledging the benefit *The Urantia Book* would hold for students studying in the ministry, offered to distribute over 200 donated books to theological and seminary college libraries on behalf of the Foundation. The response from the libraries was extremely positive.

As many books will be needed for donation purposes in order to seed India, it would be economically viable if the books were to be printed in India. Progress is being made in the quest for a reliable printer in India, and if the funds can be raised, an affordable book for the Indian market could soon be in reach—and let's not forget that the educated classes in India speak English fluently, so there will be a huge, ready made, English-speaking market of approximately 100 million people.

Here's what *The Urantia Book* has to say about the potential for the Indian people:

Its [Hinduism's] great strength lies in the fact that it has proved to be the most adaptive, amorphous religion to appear on Urantia. It is capable of almost unlimited change and possesses an unusual range of flexible adjustment ... (p.1031:9)

Today, in India, the great need is for the portrayal of the Jesusonian gospel—the Fatherhood of God and the sonship and consequent brotherhood of all men, which is personally realized in loving ministry and social service. In India the philosophical framework is existent, the cult structure is present; all that is needed is the vitalizing spark of the dynamic love portrayed in the original gospel of the Son of Man, divested of the Occidental dogmas and doctrines which have tended to make Michael's life bestowal a white man's religion. (p.1032:2)

Chinese Translation of *The Urantia Book*

Almost one sixth of the world's population lives in China. 885 million people speak or read Mandarin Chinese as their native language. Although religion was suppressed in China for several decades, China is now going through significant social and economic changes and some day the right to religious freedom will be a reality there.

We are told in *The Urantia Book* that *the religious tendencies of the human races are innate...* (p.1129:2). No political regime can hold back those innate tendencies forever, and new religious movements are beginning to emerge in China. Where then, is there a greater need for the Urantia revelation today than among the Chinese speaking peoples?

A translation of *The Urantia Book* into Mandarin Chinese has commenced. This project could take many years. If the Chinese translation could be ready for the time when religious freedom becomes a reality in China, it will be a priceless blessing to nearly one sixth of Urantia's population. Even now the need is evident. When Urantia Foundation's representative went into China last year to place *Urantia Books* in libraries, the university libraries willingly accepted a book as students are learning English in great numbers.

Translating *The Urantia Book* is an involved and complicated process even for languages with similar derivatives to the English language. How much more complex will the process be for Chinese? To ensure that a high quality, accurate translation is produced, Urantia Foundation must use highly skilled translators for this project. It will be no small feat and the costs will not be small either. Much help is needed, and we who consider ourselves neighbours to the great nation of China can help to take the enlightened message of the Urantia revelation to our brothers and sisters there by helping with this translation effort.

While the eastern branch of the early Christian church, having its headquarters at Philadelphia, held more faithfully to the teachings of Jesus than did the Jerusalem brethren, it was regrettable that there was no one like Peter to go into China, or like Paul to enter India, where the spiritual soil was then so favorable for planting the seed of the new gospel of the kingdom. These very teachings of Jesus, as they were held by the Philadelphians, would have made just such an immediate and effective appeal to the minds of the spiritually hungry Asiatic peoples as did the preaching of Peter and Paul in the West. (p.1430:1)

As ANZURA seeks to assist in the dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and its teachings throughout the Australasian, Indian, and South West Pacific regions, it is befitting that we help by raising funds to underwrite these two projects for India and China. Therefore we are hoping that readers in this part of the world who wish to see the revelation succeed in our neighbouring countries will help us to raise these funds.

To launch this campaign we are running a *Urantia Book* raffle—1st prize: a leather cover *Urantia Book*, 2nd prize: a cap with logo, and 3rd prize: a T-shirt with logo. The raffle will be drawn at the end of this year's conference in Queensland (13/10/02). You may purchase tickets by filling in the attached form and returning it with your payment; tickets will be mailed as your receipt, or you can contact the ANZURA office (details are on the form). Tickets will also be on sale during the conference.

Let's do our bit for the world—every small step counts and every contribution helps. Collectively we can do great things for our Father's children on this planet. Thanks for your participation—and remember, the more tickets you buy the better your chances of winning!

“Not Drinking, Talking”

This was the title of an article that appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald Metropolitan section on February 2, 2002. Here are some snippets:

“Late on a Thursday night, the packed tables at Newtown's Steki Taverna are still loaded with the debris of a Greek feast. The attention of the 70-odd diners is focused on a small stage usually reserved for musicians, where three professional philosophers have explored the theme ‘Philosophy as the Art of Living’ from the perspectives of Socrates, Aristotle and the Stoics...”

“Wrapping up this Philosophy Night presentation is Edward Spence, ethics lecturer at Charles Sturt university and the event's main organiser. He has a final, bold prediction. ‘Stoic philosophy,’ he announces, ‘is going to become the practical philosophy of everyday life for the new millennium.’ After enthusiastic applause, the tables start buzzing with conversation. The open-mic discussion will soon begin...”

“On a Tuesday night, about 40 people arrive at the Berkelouw Bookdealers café in Leichardt to discuss the question ‘What should general knowledge be?’ over lattes and short blacks... [The organisers of] the fortnightly Philosophy in the café, introduce the theme then split the crowd into smaller groups to discuss the question. A microphone is passed around for a member of each group to report on his or her musings—anyone is free to respond.”

“Similar scenes of open debate are occurring around the country in bookshops, cafes and restaurants... These gatherings represent a return to the Socratic tradition of philosophy—encouraging public dialogue around the big questions. What is freedom? What is love? What is happiness? How do we get them? And the big one: what is the meaning of life? Pub trivia it isn't.”

“The usual structure is an evening based around a chosen topic or the thoughts of a specific philosopher. A guest speaker or a facilitator usually starts the ball rolling, but listening to one person hold forth is not the point—the focus is on the general discussion generated by the introductory talk. ‘Everybody's in conversation throughout the city,’ Del Nevo says, ‘so we had this vision of adding to the quality of the conversation.’”

“Gilbert Burgh, a lecturer at the University of Queensland and one of the instigators of the Brisbane Philosophy Café, feels many people have a distorted view of philosophy, sometimes confusing it with psychology or connecting it with navel-gazing pursuits as working out how many angels fit on a pin head. ‘I guess the false impression is of older gents with beards contemplating abstract ideas and nothing else. I wanted to show that philosophy has a relevance.’”

“According to Spence, there's nothing daunting about philosophy, contrary to popular perception. ‘It's based on rational argument that is open to everybody.

Everybody can be a philosopher.”

“Over on the west coast, organiser Mark Randell explains why he started the monthly Freemantle Philosophy Café. ‘I wanted to go to one and we didn’t have one.’”

“Despite the trend towards these open discussions, it doesn’t mean hordes of Australians are embracing a more philosophical way of life. After immersing himself in philosophy...Justin Woods now runs Melbourne’s Philosophy in the Café, which meets once once a month. Years ago, he was convinced philosophy would boom and become fashionable. These days he is resigned to the fact it is a minority pursuit.”

“‘It’s too hard,’ he says. ‘To think abstractly... and to analyse what people are saying—it costs a lot of mental effort.’”

So why is all of this relevant to students of *The Urantia Book*? Well we know that one of the central threads running through *The Urantia Book’s* teachings is the integration of matter, mind and spirit; science, philosophy and religion; things, meanings and values; truth beauty and goodness. Philosophy—the pursuit of reason and knowledge—is an integral part of that system we call the human being.

Science is man’s attempted study of his physical environment, the world of energy-matter; religion is man’s experience with the cosmos of spirit values; philosophy has been developed by man’s mind effort to organize and correlate the findings of these widely separated concepts into something like a reasonable and unified attitude toward the cosmos. Philosophy, clarified by revelation, functions acceptably in the absence of mota and in the presence of the breakdown and failure of man’s reason substitute for mota—metaphysics. (The Urantia Book, p.1136:4)

Also as students of *The Urantia Book*, we are no doubt keen to share ourselves in a meaningful way with our fellow man. How many of us search for places to go where we may have meaningful encounters with others—especially with ones who like to think and explore truth? Perhaps we could be attending some of these “Philosophy in the Café” events and see what kinds of interesting places the discussions may lead us.

Unity is best found in human experience through philosophy. And while the body of philosophic thought must ever be founded on material facts, the soul and energy of true philosophic dynamics is mortal spiritual insight. (p.1120:3)

Here are a couple of contacts for such venues:

Another Philosophy Night: email espence@csu.edu.au or phone (02) 9519-9459

Philosophy in the Café: fortnightly, Tuesdays 8-9:30pm, Berkelouw Bookdealers, 70 Norton St, Leichhardt, ph: (02) 9922-1996.

Food For Thought

"What are you planning to do Mr. Bell... wire up every house in the country?" Ridicule leveled at Alexander Bell as he presented plans for wire telephony to bankers and investors in Philadelphia.

"This ‘telephone’ has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of no value to us." Western Union internal memo, 1876.

"Computers in the future may weigh no more than 1.5 tonnes." Popular Mechanics – 1949.

"Stocks have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau." Irving Fisher, Professor of Economics at Yale, 1929.

"Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible." Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society 1890-5.

"There is a young madman proposing to light the streets of London - with what do you suppose - with smoke." [gas lamps]! Sir Walter Scott, 1810.

"The wireless music box has no imaginable commercial value. Who would pay for a message sent to nobody in particular?" David Sarnoff’s associates in response to his urgings for investment in the radio in the 1920s.

Who the hell wants to hear actors talk? H.M. Warner, Warner Brothers, 1927

"Television won’t last. It’s a flash in the pan." Mary Somerville, pioneer of radio educational broadcasts, 1948.

"X-rays will prove to be a hoax." Lord Kelvin, President of the Royal Society, 1890-5.

"The proposition, that the sun is the centre and does not revolve about the earth, is foolish, absurd, false in theology and heretical." The Inquisition, on Galileo’s proposals.

"England is at last ripe for revolution." Leon Trotsky, 1925.

"The trade of Advertising is now so near to perfection that it is not easy to propose any improvement." The Idler, 1759.

"Everything that can be invented has been invented." Director of the US Patents Office, 1899.

Contacts in Australia and New Zealand

If you would like your study group listed here, or if details have changed, please contact the Editor.

The Inner Light

Let the inner light shine in my life once more

Let it burn in my heart as it did before;

Let it be a beacon in a world forlorn,

A world in trouble, a world that is torn.

Let me touch the heart of all who come my
way,

Those that I see will have a brighter and
happier day.

Let them see the wonders, the magic that each
day can bring,

Let them experience and feel the majesty and
the power of God within.

Let each new day be an adventure in the
journey we all take,

Let them walk in the light and in the fullness
of God partake.

Let them be a beacon for all the world to see,

Then the world will be a wonderful place, a
world in harmony.

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