



William Wentworth

With the new year well under way I suppose most study groups are meeting regularly again after the holidays. Here in Towamba we're meeting once a week and thoroughly enjoying Part III. It's amazing how much more there is to learn after so long—it is years since I've read most of these papers from

beginning to end. Like many of you, I suppose, I refer to parts of them when there is something I want to check up on, but rarely read a whole paper except at study group, and I discover new and different ways of looking at the information from the group discussion. I can't emphasise enough how important study groups are in developing a balanced view of the revelation.

On the organizational front, there has been much discussion on the UAI list about our relationship with the Fellowship. This debate breaks out every now and then among North American readers, triggered this time by the UAI president having accepted an invitation to attend the Fellowship Conference this July in Los Angeles. Opinion among UAI members covers a wide range, from suggestions to amalgamate on the one hand, to refusal to acknowledge the Fellowship's right to exist on the other. There still seems to be plenty of heat in the debate, and a quick resolution seems unlikely. Obviously, those of us who are members of both bodies would like to see co-operation at the very least, and there are some tentative signs of an improvement in the relationship. We can only hope.

Urantia Foundation has taken the fairly dramatic step of increasing the size of the Board of Trustees from five to seven, with the appointment of two long time readers as new members of the board. On your behalf, I

congratulate Judy Van Cleave and Marilyn Kulieke on their appointment. As a matter of interest, I think they are the first women to serve as trustees and they will no doubt contribute a very welcome female perspective to the board's deliberations.

Our secretary, Rita Schaad and I are in the process of signing the new license agreement between ANZURA and the Foundation over the use of the trademarks held under copyright by the Foundation. There is not really anything substantially different from the agreement signed in 1994. The same marks are covered—the name URANTIA and the concentric circles symbol—but the terms of the new agreement are slightly more relaxed, and things like email and the internet are specifically covered. They were not mentioned in the earlier agreement because their significance was simply not foreseen at the time. We expect to have the new agreement in place in the next couple of months. In the meantime the 1994 version remains in force.

Don't forget to keep October 17-20 free for the Canberra Conference.

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## Urantia Foundation - Announcement

January 29, 2008

The Trustees of Urantia Foundation are pleased to announce that Urantia Foundation has two new Trustees: Marilyn Kulieke and Judy Van Cleave. The Board now consists of seven Trustees and five Associate Trustees.

Urantia Foundation's President Seppo Kanerva said, "We welcome both of these exquisitely merited ladies to our Board. Marilyn and Judy bring with them a wealth of experience, dedication, wisdom, and a willingness to serve the Revelation. We feel blessed that they now join us in the opportunity of bringing a new revelation to our world."

### Marilynn Kulieke

Marilynn Kulieke is a long-time reader of The Urantia Book. She was introduced to the book by her husband, David, whose family had been involved since the early 1930s. She is a member of First Society for Readers of The Urantia Book in Chicago and served on the General Council and Executive Committee of the Urantia Book Fellowship for eighteen years. She has been an Associate Trustee for the past year and has also served as editor of Urantia Foundation's News Online, the Foundation's electronic newsletter.



After receiving her doctorate from Northwestern University in Educational Psychology, she worked as a researcher and evaluator in a public school district for 15 years. For the past six years she has served as the Senior Vice-President of Research and Development at the National Study of School Evaluation in Schaumburg, Illinois. Marilyn and her husband live in Lincolnshire, Illinois. She has three grown children and one granddaughter.

### Judy Van Cleave

Judy started reading The Urantia Book in 1973 after being introduced to it by her sister, Connie. Since then, Judy has attended and hosted study groups and local conferences and, since 1997, has attended national and international conferences. She is a charter member of the Idaho Urantia Association. During the last ten years she has served on the Governing Board of the Idaho Urantia Association and the Governing Board of the Urantia Association of the United States. She has also served on the International Service Board of Urantia Association International. Since January of



2007 she has served as an Associate Trustee of Urantia Foundation.

Judy and her husband, Wayne, live in Boise, Idaho, where they have a heating and air conditioning business, which they founded in 1976. While raising her two children, a son and a daughter, Judy volunteered regularly for years at their schools and served as a board member of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). She coached her son's soccer teams for three seasons, and both she and her husband participated in activities related to her son's Boy Scout troop and his Little League and high school baseball teams. She has three grandchildren, in whom she delights, and on whom she lavishes time and affection.

### Thanks for the "O Livro de Urântia"

Dear Carlos, Rogerio and All,

On a few occasions I have had the opportunity to hear some of the folks who were there the day the first books arrived at UF in 1955. It was a momentous event. And no different today for the wait has been lengthened and all those words and worries evidenced the concern and the love of those who longed for the book in the Portuguese Language. It is a lesson to see this as a whole process. How do we maintain our passion and enthusiasm in the face of delay. How do we have patience along side hunger? How do we have tolerance when suspicion arises? And then the day arrives and the joy with it. In God's Universe boredom doesn't stand a chance.

Congratulations to our Portuguese speaking Family for the new day dawns. A job well done for Urantia Foundation, having the courage to do it right in a wholehearted way is often a thankless job. And so for Urantia Foundation and our enlarging reader family may you all feel and know gratitude in the most important project currently running on this world.

Thank You,  
Benet

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dedicated to the promotion of goodwill  
and understanding among readers of  
~ The Urantia Book ~**

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## A Common Metaphysical Vocabulary

by William Wentworth, Australia

For anyone seeking truth these days there is no shortage of information. In fact, there is a veritable flood of information through which the seeker must wade in order to discover what he needs. There is a multitude of books, periodicals, journals, magazines, newsletters, movies, DVD's, websites and lectures from doctors, psychologists, philosophers, academics, journalists, priests, therapists, religionists, celebrities—the list goes on.

Some of these sources of information are sincere, others cynical. Some offer good advice, some bad. Some use the language of science and mathematics, others that of analogy and metaphor. Some are partisan and exclusive, others broad and inclusive.

There is such a dazzling array of opinion that the unaided seeker can easily become confused and desperate as he struggles to find useful information to guide him on his way. What does spirit mean? Or Truth, God, soul, nirvana, karma, providence? What about personality? Free will? Cosmic Consciousness? How can spiritual experience be distinguished from emotion? How can the conflicting claims of different traditions be explained? They all seem to disagree on so much, while seeming to be answering the same set of questions.

Truth-seekers want to share their experiences with one another. They need to be able to communicate with their fellows, to compare and contrast their ideas and concepts with others. But because there are so many different traditions expressing the relevant ideas, there is no common reference frame through which experiences can be compared. One person's experience may well be similar to another's, but they are not recognised as such because each expresses his experience in ideas which the other does not understand. It is as if there is no common language in which to communicate. There seems to be no common vocabulary of metaphysical terminology which truth-seekers can employ in order to make themselves understood.

Until the publication of the Urantia Book.

The Urantia Book reveals a set of categories which the revelators suggest will provide the required common framework for the next era. This has been done by taking the most meaningful ways of describing spiritual

experience already in use, and adapting and extending their meaning so that they encompass the necessary conceptual frame which is common to the different traditions. Notice how the revelators have developed the notion of personality, elevating it from its everyday meaning to the status of a fundamental cosmic reality. This is typical of the way they adapt and extend familiar concepts so that they serve the higher frame. Similar modifications have been made to mind, truth, finite, soul, and many other commonly used terms, to improve precision and clarify meaning.

As humans evolve further, the need for a common frame will become more urgent, as more and more people start to search for meaning, and structure their lives around that search. They will increasingly need to share their experience with others, to facilitate their own search, and assist and encourage their fellows in their's. The Urantia Book provides this frame—a language of truth-seeking which spans the existing traditions by taking the highest concepts found in them and adapting them to the common purpose of all.

Though there will always be new ways of looking at things, and new points of view to include, the categories employed in the Urantia Papers are designed to encompass most of what the coming era is likely to need. They are so broad, and encompass so much, that there will be few conceptual requirements which cannot be cast into the concept frame delineated by them. No doubt there will come a time when this frame is outgrown, and a new and higher frame is needed. But for now, the Urantia Book presents the most general frame we are capable of comprehending and putting to use.

It is to be hoped that seekers with insights expressed in their own special tradition will be able to translate them into the frame suggested by the Urantia Papers so that we can all share in those insights. Though all spiritual experience is personal, we all hope that we find ways to share that experience, and the common spiritual language suggested by the papers is our best chance of being able to do so. To fail to use this common frame is to doom your experience to the limited exposure of whatever special frame you have made use of—possibly one which you, and only you, can participate in—and you are in the position of the lonely mystic, incomprehensible to your fellows. The outsider figure, admirable in many ways, is tragic in others. His tragedy may not be necessary in a world familiar with the Urantia Book.

How does the modern sophisticated soul deal with truth, let alone revelations about truth? In the following article we try to frame the question, to illustrate the problem, and to see where students of the *Urantia Papers* may fit in.

## Finding ~ and Framing ~ Truth

by Nigel Nunn, Australia

Twenty eight years ago Carl Sagan's TV series "Cosmos" was first shown. The content is now dated, and easily forgotten, but who could forget his sincerity, and the enthusiasm with which he presented what at the time were revelations to the public about the cosmic context of mankind? The unveiled joy and unfeigned awe with which he presented these things provoked many a cynical and 'scientifically literate' interviewer to ask, "So is all this the handiwork of God? Do you believe in a Creator?" To whom he would issue the rhetorical challenge: "Whatever your mathematics or your gods, they will have to explain... this!" as he dialled up yet another astrophysical wonder on the view-screen of his virtual starship.

Together with the interviewer, we would catch his benign virus, suspend our disbelief and gaze at the marvels he revealed.

Gently he taunted both materialists and religionists, pointing to the insufficiencies in their frames-for-thought. He provoked both camps to reach beyond their box, not to settle for another's assumptions, not to bind themselves about with prejudice and preconception, to untangle themselves from old assumptions about truth, of both the mystical and materialist kind.

But while dismissing outworn and untenable beliefs, he fostered the idea that humans exist at the edge of something wonderful; that we are able—and free—to glimpse something numinous hinted at by truth; to feel it made manifest in the beauty and power of the cosmos. He left hanging the questions of if, and by what means, we might interact with 'the numinous', this indefinable foundation and font of reality. He allowed skeptics the freedom to reflect, without the pressure of having to argue or agree.

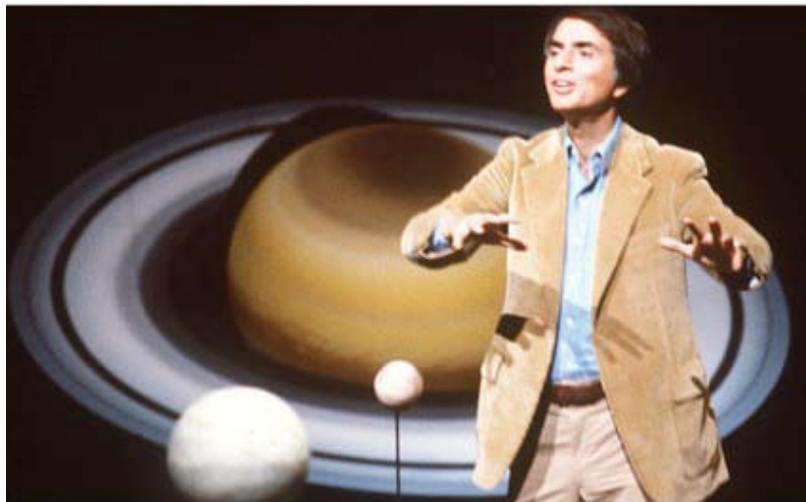
This fresh approach to exploring reality struck a chord, especially within those who had out-grown traditional systems of belief, yet who knew first-hand the response that comes from intimacy with the divine. Such souls could no longer subscribe to spurious beliefs conjured by sacred texts, but their hunger, and passion for seeking truth, was as strong as ever. After his death, Carl's collaborator and third wife Ann Druyan wrote:

*"Why do we separate the scientific, which is just a way of searching for truth, from what we hold sacred, which are those truths that inspire love and awe? Science is nothing more than a never-ending search for truth. What could be more profoundly sacred than that?"*

Ann Druyan, <http://csicop.org/si/2003-11/ann-druyan.html>

***"There is never conflict between true knowledge and truth. There may be conflict between knowledge and human beliefs, ..."***  
[the *Urantia Book*, p.1459:4]

The relationship between faith and belief, between understanding and fact and truth, continues to tease those with time to reflect. The materialist creed includes the idea that if something is not proven, one ought not assume it to be true; that mankind's reservoir of truth should be filled only with the essence of that which we can prove. But there is a problem with this modern materialist ideal, of planetary man carving his own path, of accumulating knowledge and wisdom via incremental evolutionary discovery: progress can be



haphazard, and facts can be glimpsed out of context. Like quantum mechanics: we discovered the flickering, oscillatory nature of matter before learning about that which flickers. This led scientists into a frame for thought (cage?) built upon indeterminism and chance. Knowledge of the ultimatons might have shunted science around this conceptual bottleneck; and to think the ultimatons was revealed at that very moment when scientists most needed this crucial clue.

***"But truth can never become man's possession without the exercise of faith. This is true because man's thoughts, wisdom, ethics, and ideals will never rise higher than his faith, his sublime hope."***  
[UB, p.1459:5]

For the generation that grew up with the Beatles and "Star Trek", Carl was a catalyst helping to blend science and the mathematical with the personal and the numinous. He urged us to feel out the way towards truth, then to stride beyond our childhood frames and find it!

*“Man must think in a mortal universe frame, but that does not mean that he cannot envision other and higher frames within which thought can take place.”*  
[UB, p.1260:3]

Sagan’s exploration of truth continued in his novel “Contact”. In the 1996 film adaptation, he weaves together the lives of a scientist and a religionist, two characters that epitomize respectively a rational and a faith-based approach to life. Both the scientist Ellie Arroway and the religionist Palmer Joss are on the hunt for truth, of the deepest and widest kind. But their love for each other is grated upon by what seems to be the incompatibility of their views about how truth is best discovered. The movie reaches a climax when the scientist (Ellie), in the middle of a relativistic ride to the center of the galaxy, is forced by tears of joy to halt her methodical report. Her voice and breath taken away by [the truth in] what she sees, she can only mutter: “too beautiful... they should have sent a poet.”

Sagan ends the story when these characters glimpse that, having started from opposite sides of a conceptual divide, their relentless and uncompromising journeys have brought them to what seems be the same place. But when asked by their fellows to prove, or even to describe, their personal discoveries, both realize that such description lies beyond where reason can go—beyond the “*full philosophic limit*”; and that interaction with truth by mortals is mediated by faith.

As readers of the Urantia Papers, we can see that such authors and characters seem ready to engage a frame for thought unimaginable by humanity until now. But many such modern mortals have learned to seek proof rather than to apply [what they believe to be a discredited mediaeval] faith. How could such souls ever be expected to accept “a revelation” such as the Urantia Papers? Likewise, is it realistic to hope that any of the great religious traditions might evolve themselves through the eye a needle into an enlarged fifth epochal frame? For both camps, this is likely a leap too far.

How to bridge the gaps between the present cultures of our world and the frame-for-thought set up by the Urantia Papers? How to accelerate the cultures evolved within the “4<sup>th</sup> epochal frame” so that they might strike step with the 5<sup>th</sup>?

Transfer between two states implies an interface that touches, and is compatible with, both. Is this not what we are? As contemporary humans that have endured a reading of the Urantia Papers, have we not become a living bridge between human states old and new? Are we not primed to serve as evolutionary links, helping to inch our world towards Michael’s better Way, and His sweeter, larger truth?

Epochal revelation is a technique for adjusting and expanding the frame for thought used by an influential culture of the day. Melchizedek used Abraham to inject the belief in one all-powerful God, in whom we need only have faith. Jesus used his apostles and his Spirit of Truth to lay a new foundation of truth—that Melchizedek’s all-powerful God is the personal Father of us all. This key support of his frame for thought makes true the fact of the brotherhood of all mankind. And now, the fifth revelation of epochal significance extends our frame again. The Urantia Papers illuminate this



truth, and recast this fact in a much expanded frame; and then they dare to go on, to reveal **how** he is our Father, and imply a glimpse of **why**.

### **Man — a moment of opportunity**

So how is God our Father, and why? Well, it seems that we are that moment where He aligns two fragments of himself, then waits upon our will. We are that moment when He allows another will to say “Yes!” or “No!” to him. We are that moment when Eternity opens and welcomes a new child, or the angels mourn the death of that child that only we could be.

This is the phenomenon of man: that we launch a Paradise Finaliter, or we murder that child that only we could be. In the Father’s frame He either sees us surf His waves of love into His absolute domain, or He endures the pain of losing that child... whom only we could be.

## The Templeton Prize

*“Instead, this award is intended to encourage the concept that resources and manpower are needed to accelerate progress in spiritual discoveries, which can help humans to learn more than a hundredfold more about divinity.”*

The following statement introduces the purpose and scope of the Templeton Prize. For those of us seeking to foster understanding about *the divine*, it appears that Sir John Templeton was on the same page:

### Purpose

“If even one-tenth of world research were focused on spiritual realities, could benefits be even more vast than the benefits in the latest two centuries from research in food, travel, medicine or electronics, and cosmology?”

- Research and innovation in food products just since 1800 caused over 100 fold more food production per American farmer.
- Research and innovation in travel methods since 1950, enabled over 100 fold increase in travel by Americans.
- Research and innovation in medicine just since 1900 caused over 100 fold increase in information about our bodies.
- Research and innovation in electronics just since 1900 caused over 1000 fold increase in information available to us.
- In 300 centuries, humans observed less than a million stars; but just in the last two centuries innovations in methods and research has revealed a cosmos of 100 billion times 100 billion stars.”

— Sir John Templeton

How might humankind's spiritual information and advancement increase by more than a hundredfold? This is the challenge presented by the Templeton Prize. Just as knowledge in science, medicine, cosmology and other disciplines has grown exponentially during the past century, the Templeton Prize honors and encourages the many entrepreneurs trying various ways for discoveries and breakthroughs to expand human perceptions of divinity and to help in the acceleration of divine creativity.

Their various methods, particularly through scientific research, serve to supplement the wonderful ancient scriptures and traditions of all the world's religions. Many honors and titles and prizes have been given for many centuries and will be given in the future for good works, reconciliation, saintliness or for relief of poverty and sickness. But these very worthy endeavors are not the purpose of the Templeton Prize.

Instead, this award is intended to encourage the concept that resources and manpower are needed to accelerate

progress in spiritual discoveries, which can help humans to learn more than a hundredfold more about divinity. We hope that by learning about the lives of the awardees, millions of people will be uplifted and inspired toward research and more discoveries about aspects of divinity. The Prize is intended to help people see the infinity of the Universal Spirit still creating the galaxies and all living things and the variety of ways in which the Creator is revealing himself to different people. We hope all religions may become more dynamic and inspirational.

The Templeton Prize is awarded annually to a living person. The Templeton Prize does not encourage syncretism but rather an understanding of the benefits of diversity. It seeks to focus attention on the wide variety of endeavors toward discoveries through spiritual realities research. It does not seek a unity of denominations nor a unity of world religions; but rather it seeks to encourage understanding of the benefits of diversity. There is no limitation of race, creed, sex, or geographical background.

### Objective

Progress is needed in spiritual discovery as in all other dimensions of human experience and endeavor. Progress in religion needs to be accelerated as rapidly as progress in other disciplines. A wider universe demands deeper awareness of the aspects of the Creator and of spiritual resources available for humankind, of the infinity of God, and of the divine knowledge and understanding still to be claimed.

The Templeton Prize serves to stimulate this quest for deeper understanding and pioneering breakthroughs in religious concepts and knowledge by calling attention annually to achievements in this area. It is hoped that there will result from this enterprise expanded spiritual awareness on the part of humankind, a wider understanding of the purpose of life, heightened quality of devotion and love, and a greater emphasis on the kind of research and discovery that brings human perceptions more into concert with the divine will.

### Criteria

The judges consider a nominee's contribution to progress made either during the year prior to his selection or during his or her entire career. The qualities sought in awarding the Prize are: freshness, creativity, innovation and effectiveness. Such contributions may involve new concepts of divinity, new organizations, new and effective ways of communicating God's wisdom and infinite love, creation of new schools of thought, creation of new structures of understanding the relationship of the Creator to his ongoing creation of the universe, to the physical sciences, and the life sciences, and the human sciences, the releasing of new and vital impulses into old religious structures and forms.

<http://www.templeton.org/>

## Grassroots

*The following is a note sent recently by Meredith Van Woert to those 129 souls engaged with the UAI email discussion list. Below is a reply by Gaétan Charland, and some thoughts by William Wentworth.*

Hello,

I'd like to bring up the topic of the notion of UAI, as a supposedly grassroots organization. I have chanted *grassroots, grassroots, grassroots* many times since my association with other Urantia Book readers and UAI at the beginning of the 1990's. Supposedly we are a bottom to top organization. What the heck does this really mean anyway? Or is it just a dream where people like me are only dreaming and giving lip service to wishful thinking?

What if it is all top and no bottom? That would explain why so few people contribute to the dollar-a-day program, and why the organization(s) are so largely dependent upon the big fish donators for support. By the way, would someone dare to tell us how many dollar-a-day supporters UAI has? I realize it is taboo to let out such secrets or discuss the topic of money. But isn't the money flow an indicator of organizational well-being? Or is it bad table manners to bring it up at the table?

At the top we have the deciders. The promulgators of the rules, the Bylaws, the methods, the plans. Meetings are held, reports made, decisions decided. At the bottom we have readers who are not interested in rules, methods, Bylaws, plans, meetings. They just want to study the book. They don't care about elected officialdom, positions, plans, money, power-plays, meetings. They just want to get together, socialize, read a little of the book and go back home to their regular lives. Some are very much into the *grass* part of grassroots. In my experience those people are unable to be effective in many ways, because they are unable to follow through or remember what they said they would do.

Conferences bring out the people who can afford it. It's great fun to get together, meet readers and party. It



*Asociacion Urantia de Espana, 2006, Segovia, Spain*

takes a lot of work and a coordinated effort to organize these events. But in reality neither you nor I have to be a member of any organization to carry out an event, if we could get a team of readers together to do it. And many readers have done just this. It helps if you have some money up front and a database of readers to invite. Are people in the grassroots waiting for someone to give them permission to act?

Maybe people in the grassroots want to be recipients of what someone else organizes or authorizes. Or maybe, instead, the people in the grassroots (not you people on the UAI email list, you who are energized, vitalized, motivated, and active in your respective locales, but the others whom you serve) are under the spell of the animal vestigial traits [p.551]?

The real action happens in the grassroots. Not up in the limbs and branches. People want to read together (a little, not too much) and socialize. The limbs and branches will have to fight it out in the air. Meanwhile, we'll be studying the book in the field.

Meredith

### ***Gaétan Charland replied to Meredith:***

Dear Meredith,

Thank you for bringing up this subject, like you said it is taboo to talk deeply about this subject. In fact it is often time taboo to talk about things that move us outside the comfort zone of our beliefs and life habits. I would add one thing to your post, while some of us might be in some sense the branches and the leaves of the tree we can always through our decisions and actions be part of the grassroots structure itself by being involved locally in the dissemination of the UB by hosting or attending study groups, participating in or organizing workshop conferences or simply being involved socially in any activities where we can be spiritually of service to our brothers and sisters. For the ones who cannot do these things because they are too busy with their family, their work or their business, they can always offer the monetary gain of one hour of work of every week or month in the form of a donation to the Foundation or UAI.

There is simply no excuses for any one of us who are truly conscious of the spiritual realities portrayed in the Urantia Book to not participate personally or as a group in the dissemination efforts of those realities. Once we are in the Kingdom of heaven, we need to keep working to stay in. On the opposite side of this, it would require of us to be unconscious of those realities in order to be excused of our participation in their unfolding. The inertia of our animal origin runs very strong in our life habits and is amplified by the materialistic society we live in. It takes courage and stamina to transcend our animal nature, and our association with others can make a big difference in the choices we make in transcending this animal nature.

*continued...*

The building of UAI as a grassroots organization was an idealistic idea that will require a lot of educational efforts on the part of all of us in elevating the intellectual, social and spiritual consciousness of all readers that are attracted to our organization. Our failure to do so will be characterized by the grassroots always waiting to be energized, motivated, directed and inspired by the top of the tree. When we truly become conscious of God within ourselves we become increasingly and progressively liberated from the bondage of our animal tendencies and we start acting and participating of our own free will, motivation and energy. When we can say we are being lead by the Spirit that lives within us, we become the whole tree.

Gaétan G. Charland

### **William Wentworth responds**

#### **Some Middle Ground**

While there is much for us to heed in the comments of both Meredith and Gaétan, it is important not to lose sight of another aspect of the revelation and our response to it.

When it is all said and done, the message of the Urantia Book is to individuals. It provides the information we need to re-order our lives so as to seek truth, and dedicate ourselves to live as sons of God in service to our fellows.

There are some, as are many members of UAI, who serve by attempting to disseminate the teachings of the book by engaging in gatherings and conferences, by stimulating book sales and encouraging others to read the book. They are a dedicated group who spend enormous effort and resources to reach out to the wider community.

There are, however, others who serve by intense efforts to comprehend the meaning of the cosmology the book portrays. The value of their efforts may not be realised until far into the future, when other readers have caught up with them and can benefit from their work. They may see no immediate value in social gatherings—or partying, as Meredith puts it—and may be best left alone to work for future generations.

And we should not lose faith in the value of the social fragrance of inspired individuals, living everyday life in such a way as to bring benefit and inspiration to their fellows as they go through life. Their contribution does not depend on institutions or societies, but on their own conviction.

I consider it unwise to pressure readers to serve in any particular way. Members of UAI agree to put forth certain efforts, and this is part of belonging to the group. The individual members voluntarily accept the code of the group. But there is always the problem of members of the group developing the “us and them” attitude, something which can lead to great difficulty.

There are many paths to Paradise.

## **Getting a grip on the Cosmos**

by Nigel Nunn, Australia

*“The great obstacle to discovering the shape of the Earth, the continents and the oceans was not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge. Imagination drew in bold strokes, instantly serving hopes and fears, while knowledge advanced by slow increments and contradictory witnesses.” Daniel Boorstin <sup>[1]</sup>.*

In the Sept/Oct 2007 edition of the periodical American Scientist, Michael J. Disney closes his commentary on the current state of cosmology with the above comment. Disney goes on to reflect: “Acceptance of the current myth, if myth it is, could likewise hold up progress in cosmology for generations to come.”

Such comments will surely stir a response from students familiar with the cosmology described in the Urantia Papers. While mindful of the limitations upon scientific revelation, the Urantia Papers nevertheless reveal that Jesus, Michael of Nebadon, has been working on his own local universe for more than 400 billion years.

*“and he began the organization of your local universe about four hundred billion years ago.” [p.1309:1]*

Given our current understanding of time, this is not easy to reconcile with the prevailing scientific belief that all space, time and matter eventuated from a Big Bang a mere 13 billion years ago. But the good news is that we may not need to. Despite textbooks and public opinion assuming a Big Bang to be the best way to explain what we can measure, there has been dissent about this belief ever since the theory was proposed. Over the last 5 years this debate has been invigorated by the release for scientific scrutiny of data from the WMAP mission <sup>[2]</sup>. Below is an extract from a recent article by Michael Disney that alerts us to the current state of play in this slow-moving discipline.

### **Modern Cosmology: Science or Folktales?**

*Current cosmological theory rests on a disturbingly small number of independent observations*

by Michael J. Disney

from: American Scientist, Sept-Oct 2007

<http://www.americanscientist.org/>

It appears that everybody is interested in cosmology. In one anthropological study, every one of the more than 60 separate cultures examined was found to have several common characteristics, including “faith healing, luck superstitions, propitiation of supernatural beings, ... and a cosmology.” Apparently, to be human is to care how the physical world came to be, whether it has boundaries and what is to become of it. Modern cosmology is a highly sophisticated subject funded by governments with hundreds of millions of dollars a year. It is unquestionably interesting, but is it, even in its modern guise, convincing?

The current Big Bang paradigm has it that the cosmos is expanding out of an initially dense state and that by looking outward into space, one can, thanks to the finite speed of light, look back to much earlier epochs. This understanding owes much to two accidents: astronomers' discovery of redshifts in the spectra of distant nebulae and the fortuitous detection of an omnipresent background of microwave noise, which is believed to be the remnant of radiation from a hot and distant past. Set in the theoretical framework of Einstein's general theory of relativity, such observations lead to a model that makes predictions and can thus be tested.

Of late, there has been much excitement over precision measurements of the cosmic background radiation and the discovery of very distant galaxies of great antiquity. There is even talk of a "concordance model" in which all of the observations come together to paint a coherent picture of how the universe must be constructed.

It is true that the modern study of cosmology has taken a turn for the better, if only because astronomers can now build relevant instruments rather than waiting for serendipitous evidence to turn up. On the other hand, to explain some surprising observations, theoreticians have had to create heroic and yet insubstantial notions such as "dark matter" and "dark energy," which supposedly overwhelm, by a hundred to one, the stuff of the universe we can directly detect. Outsiders are bound to ask whether they should be more impressed by the new observations or more dismayed by the theoretical jinnies that have been conjured up to account for them.

My limited aim here is to discuss this dilemma by looking at the development of cosmology over the past century and to compare the growing number of independent relevant observations with the number of (also growing) separate hypotheses or "free parameters" that have had to be introduced to explain them. Without having to understand the complex astrophysics, one can still ask, at an epistemological level, whether the number of relevant independent measurements has overtaken and comfortably surpassed the number of free parameters needed to fit them—as one would expect of a maturing science. This approach should be appealing to nonspecialists, who otherwise would have little option but to believe experts who may be far too committed to supply objective advice. What one finds, in my view, is that modern cosmology has at best very flimsy observational support.

\* \* \*

*[Disney goes on to present a short history of Cosmology, discusses the significance of cosmology, then finishes with these final remarks. Ed]*

### Where Do We Stand Today?

Big Bang cosmology is not a single theory; rather, it is five separate theories constructed on top of one another. The ground floor is a theory, historically but not fundamentally rooted in general relativity, to explain the redshifts—this

is Expansion, which happily also accounts for the cosmic background radiation. The second floor is Inflation—needed to solve the horizon and "flatness" problems of the Big Bang. The third floor is the Dark Matter hypothesis required to explain the existence of contemporary visible structures, such as galaxies and clusters, which otherwise would never condense within the expanding fireball. The fourth floor is some kind of description for the "seeds" from which such structure is to grow. And the fifth and topmost floor is the mysterious Dark Energy, needed to allow for the recent acceleration of cosmic expansion indicated by the supernova observations. Thus Dark Energy could crumble, leaving the rest of the building intact. But if the Expansion floor collapsed, the entire edifice above it would come crashing down. Expansion is a moderately well-supported hypothesis, consistent with the cosmic background radiation, with the helium abundance and with the ages inferred for the oldest stars and star clusters in our neighborhood. However, finding more direct evidence for Expansion must be of paramount importance.

In the 1930s, Richard Tolman proposed such a test, really good data for which are only now becoming available. Tolman calculated that the surface brightness (the apparent brightness per unit area) of receding galaxies should fall off in a particularly dramatic way with redshift—indeed, so dramatically that those of us building the first cameras for the Hubble Space Telescope in the 1980s were told by cosmologists not to worry about distant galaxies, because we simply wouldn't see them. Imagine our surprise therefore when every deep Hubble image turned out to have hundreds of apparently distant galaxies scattered all over it (as seen in the first image in this piece). Contemporary cosmologists mutter about "galaxy evolution," but the omens do not necessarily look good for the Tolman test of Expansion at high redshift.

In its original form, an expanding Einstein model had an attractive, economic elegance. Alas, it has since run into serious difficulties, which have been cured only by sticking on some ugly bandages: inflation to cover horizon and flatness problems; overwhelming amounts of dark matter to provide internal structure; and dark energy, whatever that might be, to explain the seemingly recent acceleration. A skeptic is entitled to feel that a negative significance, after so much time, effort and trimming, is nothing more than one would expect of a folktale constantly re-edited to fit inconvenient new observations.

The historian of science Daniel Boorstin once remarked: "The great obstacle to discovering the shape of the Earth, the continents and the oceans was not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge. Imagination drew in bold strokes, instantly serving hopes and fears, while knowledge advanced by slow increments and contradictory witnesses." Acceptance of the current myth, if myth it is, could likewise hold up progress in cosmology for generations to come.

[1] Daniel Boorstin, "The Discoverers" (p.86) 1983

[2] WMAP – <http://map.gsfc.nasa.gov/>

— The Study Group —  
*... we wish we could all have*

In Australia and New Zealand we are frustrated by the distance that separates our fellow students of the Urantia Papers. In our small meetings, as we stumble across gems of insight and understanding, how often have we wished that more of our friends were with us, that they might share and amplify those golden moments of study and discovery. That instead of being lonely handfuls, we might be a group 40 or 50 strong, infecting each other with the love and enthusiasm this gift from heaven deserves.

But in October, we will be such a group! Forty or so souls, free of distraction, stimulated by friendship, gathered from across our southern vastness to be with ones we love, to share ourselves, to understand, to appreciate, keen to help Michael accelerate his plan for his most damaged and special world. With so many of us gathered together, what an opportunity to struggle, as a team, with the juiciest and most interesting concepts in the book. With more souls on board, such a study group can become like a class on the mansion worlds, motivated by Melchizedeks and Divine counsellors, and guided by Michael's own Spirit of Truth. What a joy, together to unwrap a revelation, to bring to life in ourselves the truth it freely beams.

At this year's conference, our focus is Thought Adjusters, and how our lives are like **"a moment of opportunity"** to become engaged with them. The Papers reveal how this engagement begins, via the technique of the soul: the creation of a morontia platform for our ascending identity. And how it continues, as we become the personal poetry in a web of associated essences, as the Father aligns the seven dimensions of human personality with the eternal orientations of his Thought Adjusters.

This is the Father's work that Jesus had in mind. Our Michael has already spent 400 billion years making Nebadon the womb his Father needs—a place where fragments of his Father can be fertilized by all the colour and experience our wilful personalities can bring. A place to begin the adventure of turning baby versions of himself into associable absolutes.

***"And then, when such a universe has been so completely organized and so repletely manned, does the Creator Son enter into the Father's proposal to create mortal man in their divine image." [p.359:5]***

What are Michael and his Father really up to? What are the Adjusters? What really is man? To help explore this theme, and to get a taste of what a Study Group can be, we plan to spend Saturday afternoon studying Paper 111, **"The Adjuster and the Soul"**. Please join us!

## New Zealand Corner

*Neville Twist*

I'm sorry to report that Sonny Wikaira, one of our new study group attendees passed away suddenly towards the end of 2007. Sonny and his cousin Raewyn Wikaira (who he introduced to the UB), attended several times and made a significant contribution. Sonny had been reading the book for a number of years and had a pretty good grasp on most areas of the book - and to the best of my knowledge, had attained it all by personal study.

To top it off, Raewyn and her family sold up in Auckland and moved to the far North (of the North Island), so our study group is back to just Marion, Susan, Trish and myself. Hopefully Ian Campbell will return from the UK soon to bolster numbers.

I had a visit just before Christmas from a Fijian Indian chap (sorry his name eludes me), who was over here from Australia visiting family. Really nice guy and again a guy who had a good knowledge of the book from personal study. Spent a very pleasant evening and meal with him. He was heading back to Australia



to recommence fruit picking, so I urged him to contact Trevor & Kathleen and others readers throughout Australia, so hopefully he has done this.

Our daughter Rachel Twist, who moved to Canterbury in Kent, England in October 2007, reported the other day seeing an "older man" preaching from the Urantia Book on the street corner in Canterbury. Unfortunately, she was running late for work and didn't have time to stop and question him as to who he was, but she has promised to do so if she sees him again. Any guesses as to who it might be? Chris Mosley came to mind.

Planning to get the study group underway again soon and to hold these on a more frequent basis this year.

That's about it for now.  
 Take care, God bless  
 and all the best for  
 2008.  
 Love - Neville & Trish.



# Conference 2008

## Canberra, 17-20 October



### A Moment of Opportunity

*“What is man, that you are mindful of him?”*

Large parts of the Urantia Papers are designed to coordinate our knowledge about more or less familiar things. They expand our understanding in a logical way. But the Papers also contain highlights of pure revelation. For mankind of today, perhaps the most interesting (and intimate) are the revelations about the nature and function of Thought Adjusters, a set of truths that finally explain and make sense of the phenomenon of man. How and why the Father dwells in us is the crucial truth, the conceptual link to motivate and integrate our world. Ignorance of this truth has allowed our cultures to head off on tangents, and repeatedly to spiral down to base evolutionary levels.

So what are the Adjusters, and what on earth are they up to? In Papers 107 – 112, the Revelators tell us everything we could possibly want or need to know about these fragments of the Universal Father. But their description only touches the surface of the experience of our adventure of living with, and becoming, such a being.

*“The Adjuster is an absolute essence of an infinite being ... ” [p.1176:6]*

As humans, we know too well our capacities and limitations. So when we read about the divinity, the origin and nature of our Thought Adjusters, we are staggered by the contrast between what we are, and what we are to be.

*“Ultimately, surviving mortals achieve identity in a seven-dimensional universe.” [p.1439:5]*

Is this from where our Adjuster comes—a seven dimensional reality? Then how can he take us home? How can we dwell in such a place? What aspect or feature of us is compatible with a Paradisiacal home in a seven dimensional domain?

*“The type of personality bestowed upon Urantia mortals has a potentiality of seven dimensions of self-expression or person-realization.” [p.1226:13]*

This is new. Identity in a “7D” universe? Seven dimensions of expression and realization? And we find **Jesus himself** talking about all this to a Mithraic priest in Carthage. What did that man make of what Jesus said? Why did he not discuss such things with his apostles, those men charged with spreading the 4th epochal revelation? Such concept was then and still is beyond the full philosophic limit of any existing frame, yet here it is embedded, on behalf of Jesus, into the fifth epochal revelation, the substance of our new frame for thought...

Should we be upset or exhilarated when we find ourselves beyond the “**full philosophic limit**”? When reason has run out of puff, when wisdom has bumped into the very edges of its frame for thought, will we be willing to follow where truth leads?

*“Faith most willingly carries reason along as far as reason can go and then goes on with wisdom to the full philosophic limit; and then it dares to launch out upon the limitless and never-ending universe journey in the sole company of TRUTH.” [p.1141:5]*

When faith finds reason and wisdom wanting, what part of us remains to **dare to launch** onwards and beyond? All that’s left is our wilful personality, hungering and thirsting for... truth? Our personality, that part of our self the Adjuster seeks, that component of us destined to unfold like a seven dimensional butterfly. We are that moment when this magic happens, that **moment of opportunity** when the Universal Father attempts to zip together these two fragments of himself.

Let’s launch out together in October, and see if we can discover what Jesus was talking about, to go deeper and discover more about what we are, and why, in a fifth epochal sense, our Father is mindful of us.

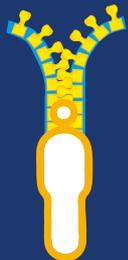
Put a big circle around



Glimpses of our next ACT conference venue



Personality



Thought Adjuster

Ascending Mortal

## Contacts in

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*If you would like to be listed as a contact person, advise about your study Group or if your details have changed—please contact the editor [see page 2].*

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*But be not discouraged; some day a real musician may appear on Urantia, and whole peoples will be enthralled by the magnificent strains of his melodies. One such human being could forever change the course of a whole nation, even the entire civilized world. It is literally true, “melody has power a whole world to transform.” Forever, music will remain the universal language of men, angels, and spirits. Harmony is the speech of Havona.*

*The Urantia Book, page 500:6*