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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)

Are We Really Agondonters?

Nigel Nunn, Canberra, Australia

During a recent re-fresh and re-tune of my motivations, I got to wondering why Adjusters like our world so much, and so deeply value finding their Person here. Having a visible administration imposes the heavy weight of facts upon a planet. This snuffs out the agondonter opportunity.

But here, each person remains for their Adjuster a blank page, a fresh adventure with uncertain, unbounded future.

What a situation! With just the thin thread of love with which to motivate the unfolding of their baby Person, the upstream presence of Michael's father adjusts our fragile motivations, while the spirit of Michael woos us along.

A unique and precious configuration?

And then along comes *The Urantia Book*—the lightest possible consistent, accessible, global intrusion our administration could have made. Even so, for those of us that can accept it, it represents in effect a Jerusem-like view on the universe.

Can we be "agondonters" if we grow up with such a view?

Seems like the most highs face a tough problem: is it better that millions are stripped of the agondonter opportunity for the sake of rapid stabilization, or that millions be adjusted out of chaos into a fresh interpretation of cooperation and citizenship—a planetary transition to amaze all Nebadon?

Ever since our number grew large enough for factions to form, there has been discussion about how to proceed... fast better than slow, etc. Since this is much the same question agonized over by the most highs, seraphim, and midwayers, no wonder we have trouble agreeing upon an answer.

But I feel things have gone well and continue on target. Urantia Foundation helped make an epoch-changing description available without imposing anything upon anyone. An entire conceptual framework, finely tuned to be appropriate for the fifth epoch, has gently been made available to us—not installed upon us.

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Adjusters, seraphim, and midwayers all now share an accessible target towards which to guide individuals from all cultures, on a timetable determined by most highs, not by high-anxiety, high-finance, or high pressure.

Any debates among we sincere and enthusiastic workers about timetables and publications should begin with an attempt to understand what the Adjusters would prefer, and what sequence would best serve the enduring planet-wide progress intended and sponsored by the most highs, who are said to rule here.

The Most Highs are not so much engaged in fostering individual advancement on the inhabited worlds; they rule in the kingdoms of men rather than in the hearts of individuals. (p.495:6)

Comments on “Are We Really Agondonters?”

Vern Verass, Canberra, Australia

Nigel, you really like to throw morsels out every now and then don't you? This one is a three-phase beauty.

I've often mused how our agondonter status is affected by being privy to the revelatory content of *The Urantia Book* in light of the admonition regarding unearned knowledge. The revelators have indeed walked a fine line. I too, am impressed by your “thin thread of love” phrase in informing us of the universe at large. Sow enough seeds to whet the appetite for universe citizenship (adjuster cooperation) to continue the divine process of transformation—animal to spiritual.

The crux is to believe without seeing, to move ahead relying only on faith—here I go with my favourite passage: *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) WOW!

You were tying all this into our present efforts at socializing *The Urantia Book* information; where are we at? Are we on song or behind schedule? I think we have a great core group of dedicated, albeit a small and growing band, of well grounded, wisdom admonished readers—many of whom I number as personal friends. Friends such as yourself who have displayed a refreshing consistency over the years. A framework is now in place to build upon.

A comforting thought, we are not alone in this enterprise, ably assisted by the greatest minds of the universe, our unseen friends egging on our yet feeble efforts. I am thankful for this period of grace; a mere half century and look at what's been achieved as the world media focuses on the usual materially biased sensationalism. It will be a while until good news gains popularity. The climate of looking for enemies (terrorists) is not conducive to brotherhood. However, the average man and woman is good. Time for Adjuster attunement.

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)

“The Eternal Adventure”—ANZURA Conference in Melbourne

3 – 6 October 2003

Your short sojourn on Urantia, on this sphere of mortal infancy, is only a single link, the very first in the long chain that is to stretch across universes and through the eternal ages. (p.435:6)

Enclosed you will find a brochure and registration form for this year's annual ANZURA conference in Melbourne hosted by the Melbourne study group. Come and explore together the big questions such as: What has been your adventure so far? What lies ahead? Where will your eternal adventure take you ... ?

During the course of the weekend our hosts will help us explore various aspects of our eternal adventure by getting us to stretch our minds around good gutsy topics such as the beginnings of the adventure, the destination of the adventure, steppingstones of the adventure, the physical realms of the adventure, the destination of finaliters, and the physical life in relation to the kingdom of heaven.

To register just fill out the details on the enclosed registration form and return to the ANZURA office. Hope to see you there!

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New Trustee for Urantia Foundation

Announcement from Urantia Foundation 16 May 2003

It is with great pleasure that the Trustees announce the appointment of Seppo Kanerva to the Board of Trustees of Urantia Foundation.

Seppo has been courageously loyal and unselfishly dedicated to the work of Urantia Foundation for many years. He has been a reader of the *The Urantia Book* since 1976 and has hosted study groups in both Finnish and English for the last several years. In 1989 he helped to organise the Urantia Association of Finland. In 1993 he completed the seven year's project of translating *The Urantia Book* into Finnish. Seppo also managed Urantia Foundation's Helsinki office for eight years before passing on responsibility to the current managers in 2001.

As Urantia Foundation's Translation Manager, Seppo has overseen the translation and publication of *The Urantia Book* into six languages. He is currently overseeing sixteen additional translations, of which seven are nearing completion. He also coordinates the work of scores of volunteers who translate newsletters and other communications into many languages. His extraordinary talent as a linguist and passion for languages (he speaks nine) has been extremely valuable to Urantia Foundation. Seppo will continue his duties as the Translation Manager.

During the early 1990's, Seppo was a member of the Advisory Committee to the Trustees which enthusiastically undertook the formation of the membership organisation, International Urantia Association (IUA). As the Chairman of the IUA's Council of National Presidents and Vice Presidents (CNP) for the past five years, he has served the worldwide membership of the IUA with grace and wisdom.

Seppo has dedicated his life to the service of the Urantia revelation. His integrity, loyalty, and willingness to serve, coupled with his charm, intelligence, and good humour, are extraordinary. The Trustees and Staff of Urantia Foundation welcome Seppo and feel blessed to have him as a member the Board of Trustees.

The Urantia Book Workbooks

Urantia Foundation recently announced the re-printing of this series of workbooks. Originally published in the 1950s and 1960s, these study aids were authored by Dr. William S. Sadler and Alvin Kulieke to serve as texts to train teachers and students of the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

The first of the 2003 re-printings of these texts, used by some of the founding members of the Urantia movement, are now available and three more volumes will be available later on in the year.

These new 6" x 9" paperback books, printed on top-quality paper, feature full-colour covers and are

thematically organised with discussion on Part I of *The Urantia Book*, comparisons between the New Testament and *The Urantia Book*, discussions of the science of *The Urantia Book*, and many other subjects. These volumes will certainly be a great help to students seeking a greater understanding of this profound gift to mankind.

You can view more about these workbooks on the web at www.urantia.org/workbooks.html

You can order these workbooks directly from the Australian Foundation branch office by filling out the enclosed order form and sending it to the office with your payment.

National Study Day and the Urmia Lectures

Vern Verass, Canberra, Australia (for the Canberra study group)

Where three or more are gathered in his name, He is there also. In such spirit of unity we Canberra readers embarked on the study of Paper 134, *The Transition Years*, for the 2003 National Study Day.

We came across much food for thought as we delved into the content covering the time of Jesus' life when he finally ended the rebellion in his universe by confronting Satan and Caligastia face-to-face. We were intrigued to learn of the contention between the seraphim of the churches and the seraphim of progress over permission to include the content of Jesus' presentation at Urmia. This caused us to consider more closely the meaning of this, Jesus' most systematic and formal presentation while on earth. We further took note of the content of the paper in light of current world events, namely, the recent conflict in Iraq.

The thrust of discussion centred on *brotherhood*; the core topic of the Urmia lectures. As we read about the way to live in harmony with each other it became apparent how far there is yet to go. It looks so simple to agree, but unfortunately apparently so hard to do—to surrender notions of sovereignty, be they religious or nationalistic.

The Urmia lectures, read as an historical summary of our journey through the ages, brings us right up to modern times in 2003; and the family ever the core of society, with GOD the ultimate head of the family of mankind.

Our world is indeed in a state of transition; women are increasingly becoming the equal partners of men, communication is revealing what once was hidden, we can see global events unfold as they happen, religion is fast becoming out of favour as an excuse for bad behaviour, and as Leonard Cohen once sang, "Democracy is coming to the USA."

There was much plain talk regarding specific paths to peaceful coexistence: *Peace will not come to Urantia until*

every so-called sovereign nation surrenders its power to make war into the hands of a representative government of all mankind. (p. 1489:3)

Yes, there was talk of freedom, defined as the ...*gift of civilization made possible by the enforcement of LAW. (p.1490:4)* Nation states act contrary to their own laws at their own peril. Global Sovereignty via global government is the only available future, ...*there is no other way whereby peace on earth and good will among men can be realized. (p.1491:7)*

The tone of the Urmia lectures seems apt for our time as there is something of a battle going on between those who strive for a global society and those who wish to perpetuate nationalism.

Always will the spiritual viewpoint prevail. We have already witnessed many remarkable things in our short lifetime. Did not the USSR look a mighty enduring nation state and look what happened, and in relative peace? I guess we continue to think globally, act locally, and keep being nice to one another.

There can be no end to the evolution of political sovereignty short of the appearance of the government of the sovereignty of all men. All other sovereignties are relative in value, intermediate in meaning, and subordinate in status. (p.1490:2)

The True Purpose of IUA

Rick Lyon, IL, USA

The IUA's purpose is to produce teachers and leaders for the present and the future. The IUA should not be so much about membership in an organisation as it is about service to the readers, ALL readers, whether they are IUA members or not. I fear that we may someday develop the attitude that only members of specific organisations are the "real" *Urantia Book* readers, or that someone cannot follow these teachings unless they become a member of some organised group. Becoming an IUA member means that you have made the choice to do more to advance this revelation. As an IUA member you have chosen to become a teacher or leader in training. As an IUA member you have decided to serve all readers by training others as teachers and leaders who serve all readers.

The IUA should not try to compete with other organisations. If we offer the opportunities that readers are looking for, and that our Adjusters and guardians are leading us to provide, then any conflict between organisations will become irrelevant. As long as the

relationship between Urantia organisations remains one of a power struggle fighting for membership numbers, then these organisations will be of little value to this revelation.

I think our responsibilities as IUA members are to first live these teachings so that our Father is reflected by our deeds and words. Second, teach your children the truth about our Father contained in this revelation. Third, host or attend a regular study group even if it is just you alone every Tuesday night. My opinion is that any IUA member who is not regularly attending or hosting a study group is not meeting their basic commitment to this organisation. Other things we can do to fulfil our responsibilities as members of IUA are: become a teacher or student of the *Urantia Book Internet School* (UBIS), volunteer to help with the 2004 international conference and all other national and local conferences and social events, make sure every library in your area has a copy of *The Urantia Book*, regularly contribute to the Foundation with your time and money, and do any of the other things that your Thought Adjuster and the Angels guide you to do. Create opportunities for growth among readers and unity will take care of itself.

The Family: Birthplace of Cosmic Citizens

Introduction to a presentation by Paul Snider, Chicago, USA

We bring a child into the world. A simple and ordinary thing, but wonderfully complex. Whether we know it or not, we have now become engaged in the supreme responsibility of human existence. We have now begun the process of nurturing and shaping a cosmic citizen. What faith the Father in heaven has in us to allow us the privilege of doing this! To entrust His children to our watch care. Of all human trusts, this is the most sacred, our highest human duty. Whether we know it or not, these are the facts of life.

What is it about the idea of family that makes it so profoundly important? Why does *The Urantia Book* say that almost everything of lasting value has its roots in the family, that the home is civilization's only hope of survival? Why is it that the family occupied the very centre of Jesus' philosophy of life, here and hereafter? What is it in this simple notion that resonates from here to Paradise and beyond?

I think we can find some of the answers by looking at what families do. Every family is unique. No two have exactly the same dynamics. And yet, families all do the same things, with greater or lesser skill.

In family life we are like sharp rough-edged stones all thrown together. We continuously toss against each other in the river of time. After all the rubbing and rubbing the sharp edges begin to disappear. We become smooth

pebbles. We adjust our antagonisms. We teach the pursuits of peace to our children. The family is the master civilizer.

With some assistance from friends, neighbours, and community, the true family teaches most of what is really essential in life. This is what *The Urantia Book* tells us. This is what our own experience confirms. Well, what are the essentials of life?

First and foremost, we begin to learn about love, how to love, how to be loved. All of the foundations of cosmic citizenship are built upon the enduring base of love. Without love we are nothing. Without love there is no place for us in the universe. In the way we love our children we begin to get a glimmer—we actually begin to experience—the way God relates to His universe children. And at the same time—if we get it right—we portray to our children the first of a long series of ascending disclosures of the love of God for all universe children. We begin to portray unconditional love.

Second, we learn about mercy. I have so often received mercy that I did not deserve, that I have come to define mercy as what you extend to someone who doesn't deserve it. If it's deserved, it's not mercy, it's justice.

Someone once told me that home is where you go when you can't go anywhere else. When I think about that, when I think about all the children who can't ever go home again—when I imagine their eyes—it tears my heart out. Mercy is what you extend to someone who doesn't deserve it. Home is where we first begin to learn about mercy and forgiveness. Mercy is applied love.

Third, we learn about ministry. A true parent continuously ministers to the child. And ministry does not mean indulgence. Just the opposite. Ministry focuses on things that build character. In time, children come to recognize this and appreciate it. And this service endures as long as there is a parent-child relationship. You never stop being a father. You never stop being a mother.

The list could go on and on. So many other things. The family teaches culture to the next generation. The family teaches patience, altruism, tolerance, forbearance. And it also teaches duty, responsibility, discipline, consequences. It teaches us that we are all bound together, that we rise or fall, a little bit or a lot, with the actions of each member. It's not like a big corporation in which you can say: We're having some financial problems this year. We'll have to downsize. Sorry, but we'll have to let a few of you kids go. Good luck.

No way. In a family you can't lay off or fire anyone. The family teaches: We are all in this together. We will rise or fall with each other . . . Somewhere the thought recurs again and again in my mind: It is the Father's will that none should be lost.

"I love you all with the love wherewith the Father loves me, and therefore should you henceforth love one another, even as I have loved you." (p.1962:4)

Earth and Moon—A Puzzle

William Wentworth, Towamba, NSW

I have been very much disconcerted lately by the article by Ken Glasziou in "Innerface International" pointing out that the account by the Life Carrier of the origin of the Earth-Moon system (paper 57) is quite impossible.

Ken points out that the account given on page 658:9 implies that the moon was 8 times as massive 2 billion years ago as it is now. The mass of the earth and moon were approximately equal 2.5 billion years ago, when they were about one tenth of the earth's present mass. Then the earth suddenly gained on the moon so that 2 billion years ago, when the earth was one fifth of its present mass, it had become much more massive than the moon. But if the moon was ever to be approximately one tenth of the earth's present mass, it must have been 8 times as massive then as it is now, since it is now only one eightieth as massive as the earth. This does not seem possible, barring some catastrophe such as the disruption of the moon or something, in which case the Life Carrier would surely have mentioned it, and there would be some evidence of it which physicists would have detected. Something is wrong.

Now I am (pretty much) a *Urantia Book* Fundamentalist, and I have been trying to see how the Life Carrier's account of things can fit the facts. It is true that if the word "size" refers to diameter rather than mass then the Life Carrier makes sense. Both earth and moon were about one fifth of the earth's present diameter—i.e. about 2400 km—2 billion years ago, while the moon reached its present mass (and presumably diameter)—i.e. about 3500 km—1.5 billion years ago. This seems OK.

But on the other hand, a fair reading of the text definitely gives the impression that the words "size" and "mass" are used interchangeably. They mean the same thing in this context.

So I'm stuck. I want to believe the Life Carrier's account, but it looks like it's impossible.

In all those other instances where *The Urantia Book* and modern science disagree, I can find some acceptable reason. I don't care that the distance to the Andromeda spiral galaxy given by the book disagrees with astronomy's. This is a case where the book simply gives the figure which was accepted knowledge at the time. Revelators are not allowed to reveal knowledge which humanity can discover for itself.

Similarly, I don't care that physicists calculate that Fandors could not fly. There may be all sorts of things about both Fandors and the principles of flight which are beyond the imagination of physicists.

Neither does it bother me that secondary midways have such a strange origin. They contain superhuman factors in their ancestry about which scientists could know nothing. This could account for all sorts of effects

unknown to current science.

Bearing in mind the book's disclaimers about the limits of revelation, and also the very imperfect knowledge (theories really) of science, I have been happy to accept the accounts of things given by the authors of the papers.

But this problem with the relative masses of the earth and moon has got me beaten. These quantities are not in doubt—indeed they are facts of human experience. Linear gravity is a fact of everyday experience for all of us, and is proportional to the mass of the earth. Similarly, men have been on the moon, and experienced the same thing for that body. There is simply no room left for doubt about the relative masses of the earth and the moon.

So why does the Life Carrier give the account he gives? It is inconceivable that a Life Carrier would not know the facts of the origin and history of the earth and moon. And I am unable to believe that any of the revelators would deliberately mislead or deceive us. They could just leave that bit out if we were not to be told the truth. There is no need to mislead.

I am not at all persuaded to accept that such mistakes are included deliberately in order to inoculate us against the temptation to treat the book as infallible. This smacks of a kind of slick cynicism rather than the benevolent sincerity we trust the revelators to exhibit. If they see that we need to be inoculated against fundamentalism, they'll find a way to do it which does not involve lies and deception.

Perhaps there has been an error in transmission. This is always possible, but bearing in mind the care with which the rest of the book has been edited it seems unlikely. This is not just a small slip; it is a major mistake. And if there is one error of this kind, who knows how many more there might be.

Clearly, over time humanity is going to have to discover for itself just which assertions of the book's science are accurate, and which are not. And in the absence of any evidence one way or another, those of us who want to can believe the book.

But this question of the relative masses of the earth and moon seems to be in a category all on its own. There seems to be no reasonable way to account for it.

I don't know what to think. It's a puzzle!!

Answer to the Earth/Moon Puzzle

Ron Louie, Vancouver, Canada

I'd like to address William's concerns about the Earth/Moon puzzle. The challenge was basically to answer the question: "How is it possible for the moon, which 2.5 billion years ago was the same "size" as earth (which in turn was then 1/10th of earth's current "mass") now be 1/80th of earth's present "mass"? This would mean that the moon would have had to shrink to 1/8th of its "size" of 2.5

billion years ago. It is possible of course that the moon was totally radioactive long ago and that what we are now observing is the remnant of a dissipated core or that the moon was somehow robbed of not just its atmosphere but its mass as well. However, these are unlikely events especially since there is no evidence to support this. Undoubtedly the question appears perplexing, but it is only so if the terms "mass" and "size" are used interchangeably, as was suggested by William.

The answer I think is far simpler. I do not believe the Life Carrier responsible for the account in this Paper was imprecise in his usage of the language, despite the fact that he was an ESL user (English as a Second Language with Uversa likely being his mother tongue) and as we are told by the revelators that the Urantia Revelation, as we have it, is a translation of the original, which was in the language of Uversa.) The Life Carrier's statements are nonetheless not only consistent but remarkably revealing about the genesis of our planet and its satellite, our moon. A careful consideration of the Life Carrier's statements will bear this out.

Consider the following explanation:

If we take the Life Carriers' statements at face value then the most reasonable explanation would be that the earth in its formative stage 2.5 billion years ago must have been a lot denser than it is today. For the sake of simplifying a mathematical solution to demonstrate this point, the following assumptions and derivative calculations are made.

1. 2.5 billion years ago the moon and the earth were the same "size" (meaning volume) (Life Carrier statement).

2. Assume that the moon's density was the same as it is now, i.e. 3.3 g/cc (Norton's Star Atlas 16th Edition 1973).

3. The current mass of the earth is $5.96 \times 10^{+24}$ kg (my calculations based on Norton's star Atlas using an average diameter of 12,735 kilometres).

4. The earth's mass 2.5 billion years ago would be $5.96 \times 10^{+23}$ kilograms or 1/10th of its current mass (deduced from Life Carrier's statement).

5. The present size (volume) of the moon is $2.2 \times 10^{+10}$ cubic kilometres (calculations based on information from Norton's Star Atlas).

6. The size (volume) of the earth 2.5 billion years ago would be $2.2 \times 10^{+10}$ cubic kilometres (same as the moon, past and present and deduced from Life Carrier statement).

7. The density of the earth at that time would be about 27.1 g/cc (found by dividing its mass by its volume and using a conversion factor of 10^{+12} for kg/cubic kilometre).

8. The current earth mass to moon mass ratio is 81.30 (Norton's star Atlas), i.e. the mass of the earth is 81.30 times greater than the mass of the moon.

9. The earth mass to moon mass ratio 2.5 billion years

ago would be about 8.22, i.e. the mass of the earth was 8.22 times greater than the mass of the moon.

10. The earth's density has decreased from 27.1 g/cc to its current 5.517 g/cc (Norton's star Atlas) while the moon's density remained unchanged from its current 3.3g/cc.

In summary then, 2.5 billion years ago, the moon was the same size and had the same density as it does now. The earth was the same size (volume) as the moon, but its density was about 5 times greater then, than what it is now.

Over time the earth gained in size while the moon remained the same in size and density. The earth however, although increasing in volume, was experiencing a decrease in density as a result of a number of factors, e.g. the increasing large proportion of lighter elements appearing in its composition, appearances of gases, void ratio of terrestrial crust etc.

Additional comments:

a) Today the earth is denser than the moon by a ratio of 1.68 (derived from Norton's Star Atlas). There would be no reason to assume that the density of the earth remained unchanged during this 2.5 billion year interval of time in light of the many events impacting on its density e.g. Meteoric accretion, "condensation" of its heavier elements etc.

b) The higher calculated density ratio of 8.22 of earth/moon for two bodies of the same volume would also explain why the earth became the recipient of the many meteors which were attracted to the earth's gravitational field and not the moon. (In fact, the moon was ultimately robbed of its atmosphere by the earth.) *The Urantia Book* in describing the formation of the other planets seems to make a distinction between the "condensation nucleuses of the other ten planets" and the "cores of most of the moons" (p.658). Further, *The Urantia Book* describes the "condensation bodies" as being further receptive to "influences which gradually caused the heavier elements, such as iron, to settle more and more toward the centre of the planet." (p.659:0) These last two comments strongly suggest that the earth was far denser than the moon.

c) The density of the earth 2.5 billion years ago was hypothetically calculated to be 27.1 g/cc. It is interesting to note that the density of earth's naturally occurring heavier elements such as Rhenium (20.8 g/cc), Osmium (22.6 g/cc), Platinum (21.5g/cc), and Neptunium (20.2 g/cc) are within the same neighbourhood and compare favourably. It is possible that heavier elements (my periodic table does not list the density of elements above atomic number 97) or denser matter was present. These elements are within a fraction of the same order of magnitude of earth's calculated density and when compared to the range in magnitude of order of densities that occur in stellar evolution this difference becomes insignificant. Consider *The Urantia Book* description of the density wherein *...One of your near-by suns, which started life with about the same mass as yours, has now*

contracted almost to the size of Urantia, having become forty thousand times as dense as your sun. The weight of this hot-cold gaseous-solid is about one ton per cubic inch. (p.460:1) This would convert to 55,300 g/cc. (This would be akin to quibbling over a few Angstroms in the context of the whole electromagnetic spectrum.)

Although the foregoing comments are based on a simplified analysis of observed and deduced phenomena that attempt to explain in a rational way this whole question of earth and moon formation, there also exists a broad range of intelligent Creator prerogative actions that has not yet been considered in this discussion. If we accept the idea that solar system and planetary creation are not random events but are orchestrated by higher beings. It would not be at all surprising that many other intelligent entities manipulating and focalising other hitherto unknown forces on our world would yield a result precisely in the manner as "presented by a Life Carrier, a member of the original Urantia Corps and now a resident observer" who surely must know whereof he speaks. Suffice it to say, the role of the Energy Manipulators, Power Directors, Force Organisers, and a host of other unknown celestial personalities have undoubtedly played important roles in the intelligent creation of our world Urantia, the "sentimental shrine of all Nebadon" and its satellite, our moon.

The foregoing was cobbled together with the help of what I could remember from physics courses in college, my slide rule (augmented with a spreadsheet) and so I make no claim to its accuracy but offer it as a ballpark plausible alternative to believing that the Life Carrier was up to some mischief for intentionally misleading us. Hope you find this helpful.

Solar System "Twin" Found

Dr David Whitehouse

BBC News Online science editor (taken from www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/3041220.stm)

Astronomers have found a planetary system similar to ours—a Jupiter-like world circling a Sun-like star in roughly the same orbit that Jupiter follows our Sun.

Of the 100 or so other planetary systems known, this one more closely resembles ours than any other.

Researchers speculate that this system may contain other worlds, such as smaller rocky planets like Earth, either in orbit around the star or around the Jupiter-like world itself.

The planet's parent star, called HD 70642, is slightly too faint to be seen with the unaided eye, but is easily visible in the southern sky using binoculars.

At just 95 light-years away, the gas-giant planet, bathed in the light of a yellow-dwarf star is on our galactic doorstep. Like Jupiter, its atmosphere could be mottled and streaked with wind patterns and weather systems.

Dark-red methane clouds may scurry across its face beneath a high-altitude frosting of bright ammonia crystals. At its poles, aurora may glisten and lightning bolts pulse across its night-time face.

The planet detected orbiting HD 70642 is not the first Jupiter-class world to be found circling another star. All of the planetary systems found so far contain gas giants like Jupiter. But this Jupiter-like world stirs memories. It circles its parent star at a distance of 467 million kilometres, not a lot different from the 778 million km that Jupiter is away from our Sun. The similarities do not end there. This new world circles its star every 6 years; our Jupiter takes 12 years.

Intriguing certainly, but the interest in this system is not principally because of what we know is there, but rather because of what else we suspect may be lurking unseen around the star and its planet. There could be other worlds, smaller and rocky—possibly Earth-like. These are below the limits of our detectability.

“This is the closest we have yet got to a real Solar System-like planet, and advances our search for systems that are even more like our own,” says Hugh Jones of Liverpool John Moores University, UK, who helped discover the new world.

The planet was found using the 3.9-metre Anglo-Australian Telescope in New South Wales, Australia. The discovery is being announced at a conference in France.

Prior to the discovery of planets circling other stars, it was predicted that other planetary systems would be similar to our Solar System—giant planets orbiting beyond 4 Earth-Sun distances in circular orbits, and smaller, rocky worlds in inner orbits.

But it turned out to not be like that. Planetary systems are much more diverse than anyone imagined.

The so-called extrasolar planets detected so far are gas-giants that usually lie in elliptical orbits, which would make the existence of habitable rocky planets unlikely. The discovery of a system that bears a very close resemblance to our Solar System demonstrates that searches for exoplanets are good enough to find Jupiter-like planets in Jupiter-like orbits.

It will encourage astronomers to develop the techniques and space missions required to find smaller Earth-like planets, and look for signs of life on them.

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