

THE ARENA

ANZURA

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THE MIND ARENA OF CHOICE

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

Editor's Notebook

What did the revelatory commission intend as the primary target for the truths that stream from their *URANTIA Book*? Knowing something about these intensions might help focus our mediocre yet sincere contributions, since the plans of our Most Highs will be synchronised and tailored to match the revelators' intent.

Since the truths within their Papers are sufficient to alter the entire context, to adjust the actual frame, within which our pint-sized adventures unfold, let's assume that their primary target was not the human pints and quarts that make up the river of Urantia's flowing generations, but the riverbed itself.

And since these truths are sufficient to adjust the systems and institutions we evolve—our clubs, churches and other therapies—we might also assume that a primary target was not our broken hearts, or the anguish that stunts the unfolding of our souls, but those institutions humanity has designed to help itself shoulder the weight of the compounding and confounding trifles of life. Our contributing to and participation in these systems helps weave threads into the tapestry that one day becomes the brotherhood of mankind. But this task involves personal adjustment and repair. While surely a focus of our own interest, this is an evolutionary attainment, not the immediate target of a Fifth epochal revelation.

The occurrence of epochal revelation should alert us that our arena has been changed—that the props on stage in the inner world of mankind have been adjusted in some way. The focus of our October conference in Canberra will be an attempt to preview this new configuration of our stage, to glimpse more fully this Jerusem-like perspective offered by *The URANTIA Book*.

In this time of anticipation, while waiting in the half-light backstage for the raising of the curtain on "Urantia: Act 5", we early readers assisting with the show can begin to note the outlines of the new set. Over the three days in Canberra, we will try to describe what we see—the potential for a shared planetary culture, the implications stemming from revelation about the inner worlds of individuals [that element of which the "inner world of mankind" must be made], and we will even attempt to

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paint a crude outline of how our *finite* surfs a supreme wave upon the *absonite* deeps, and why responsibility for *personality* had to remain un-delegated.

The truths contained in *The URANTIA Book* are sufficient to change our world. But rather than trumpet the coming of a new age and crack the fragile tapestry we weave, this faint echo of cosmic information will help to raise our temperature sufficiently so that, in good time, we ourselves will melt the ice of quarantine away.

ANZURA Conference 2000

Canberra, October 6–9

October has almost arrived! Conference 2000 will soon be just another memory of those fabulous pioneering days spent on Urantia-606. For those unregistered, there is still time to join us for what we hope will be fresh insights and deeper understandings. All readers are invited to join us at Blackfriars Conference Centre, Canberra. For last minute information, please contact ANZURA,

phone 02 9970 6200

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Together, our value deepens and magnifies. We hope that many of you have the opportunity to join us!

IUA Conference—New York, 2000

Catherine Jones, IUA Administrator

Greetings IUA Friends,

Wish everyone could have been at Wagner College on Stanton Island, NY from August 4th through 7th. It was an experience to remember!

Hats off to all the planners and volunteers. We were all blessed by your many hours of planning and facilitating. Carol Cannon and Francisco Stahl, Greater New York URANTIA Association and Nick Scalzo and Al Aldo, Urantia Association New England—we thank you for a great spiritual experience.

There was a marathon of music and entertainment, co-mingled with inspirational messages of faith and love. Steve Shinall was the music director and what music! His musical ensemble, The Little Savages, came from all corners of the US and played throughout the conference. The variety of their talent was outstanding. We heard great jazz from Voyette Perkins, with back-up from Lynn Gaetan, Canada, Costas Diamanatopoulos, Greece, John and Jane Ploetz and Rob Davis, USA. Jane also inspired us with a beautiful hymn. Helen Anveft of Estonia and Carol Cannon delighted all with beautiful and graceful dance performances. Al Lockett gave an unusual musical performance and stand-up was done by Bill Mosley. Bert Cobb gifted us with some of his inspired poetry.

Suzanne Kelly showed her writing talent with a light and comical visit to Mansonia with a cast of “translators” from Estonia and Finland, Seraphim from the USA and a recently graduated candidate from Urantia, Bruce Brown. Chris Wood wrote and directed and performed in a delightful and meaningful play, featuring most of the 40 children conference attendees. Suzanne and Steve, with some back-up performances by Tonia Baney and Jane Ploetz “roasted” the Trustees—and gave a lively routine of New York, New York!

Artwork and inspired manuscripts were on display throughout the conference. Each evening offered informal music, dancing and lots of “getting to know you” time.

Many who have attended Tennessee conferences are familiar with the multi-talented, singer/songwriter, Lee Farmer. His performance of “Jesus Wept” was moving and inspiring.

Urs Ructi, professional pianist of France performed a truly outstanding piano recital. Christina Seaborn and Robert Salone presented a memorable violin and piano concert. Many remembered their improvisational concert of 1987.

Alfons Halsema directed an outstanding *a'capella* quartet from The Netherlands, performing The Seven Bestowals, written by Alfons. They're “on demand” for the 2002 conference in France.

There were so many inspiring talks from Urantia brothers and sisters from around the globe. Georges Dupont gave an inspiring sharing of his spiritual journey.

Nick Scalzo told of his personal experience of obeying his Thought Adjuster. Carolina Arena, a new reader from Bolivia gave a beautiful testimonial of love and faith. Gaetan Charland of Canada expressed the joys of outreach.

“Living the Father’s Will” workshops were presented daily. The highlight of the conference was the presentation of URANTIA Books to 40 children and youth. Thank you, Nick and Carol and the conference committee for this beautiful gesture, one those young people will not forget, nor will we.

The next highlight, for me, was at the meeting of the Council of National Presidents and Vice Presidents. In a room of world-wide delegates there were only three from the United States! That says, we are no longer just an American group. Barbara Newsom, in her Living the Will of the Father talk summed up the conference—“we are entering a new dawn of spirituality.” I believe we did leave New York with a feeling of hope and a deeper love for our Father and his children.

We were so thrilled by the presence of our many international Foundation representatives and IUA leaders. After having read Moussa N’Diaye’s story of how he taught *The URANTIA Book* to over 1,000 Muslims in Senegal with one *URANTIA Book*. It was indeed a privilege to welcome him and listen to his experiences. And having the children and youth blend in with the adults was refreshing. I believe we learned from them.

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Half a Lifetime

Mike Nielsen, Australia

Although it seems but a short time, it was half a lifetime (or at least half of mine) ago when I started reading *The URANTIA Book*. I will never forget the feelings of thrilling discovery and profound humility I felt at the staggering realisation that here, in my hands, was a book that lucidly described the structure, personality and purpose of the Infinite Creator and Eternal Upholder. And further it went to describe in detail humanity's interrelationship with the very source and destiny of all reality — both personal and non-personal. The clarity, truth, beauty and goodness of its clarion call resonated deeply and powerfully within me. The language was so transparent, the logic so compelling and the love so comprehensive that it hardly occurred to me that there could possibly be people who could read about the nature of God, the organisation and administration of Michael's creation, Thought Adjusters, the Lucifer Rebellion and mostly the Jesus Papers—yes, the Jesus Papers, the crowning glory of *The URANTIA Book*—and still entertain even the slightest shred of doubt that *The URANTIA Book* was all that it claimed to be and more. This book was going to change the world! Surely all one had to do was to hand it out on street corners to thankful passers-by who would immediately recognise its authority and import. Carry dozens of copies into bookstores whose owners, their eyes all misty with gratitude, would push aside all those trite and oh-so-unspiritual best-sellers and stock their shelves with the Big Blue Book. Read passages to small gatherings of people who would immediately and indelibly be impressed by the fact that we had Divine Counselors giving us instruction and so instantaneously alter their entire philosophy and belief systems to be consistent with *The URANTIA Book*. It was all so obvious what had to be done, so naive was I about so many things.

After a few difficult growing-up years, and many experiences too painful to recall, it began to dawn on me that there were many similarities between my reaction to *The URANTIA Book* and what I imagined were the thought patterns of the pathetic and feeble-willed followers of bizarre cults that promised eternal release from the challenges and complexities of everyday living if only they would devote their lives to the Guru, turn their backs on their families, live like animals, poison themselves, burn themselves, die en masse to achieve the ultimate experience of oneness with the, well, the whatever. How was I different? How could my belief system, or any other for that matter, be validated? What distinguished my complete confidence in the existence of Midwayers and Seraphic Guardians of Destiny from the unwavering conviction of UFO abductees? How did I KNOW that *The URANTIA Book* wasn't an elaborate hoax? What EVIDENCE was there of the veracity of anything (that mattered) in the book? How could I PROVE to a

dispassionate observer that *The URANTIA Book* truly was destiny's navigation manual? Elaborate descriptions of the Mansion Worlds just didn't seem to convince anybody. "How can you be SURE?" they would ask. And, to my embarrassment, I had to acknowledge there was nothing intrinsic to the book, no link to anything externally verifiable—fundamentally no rigorous way of defending even the most elementary of *The URANTIA Book's* premises. All I had to go on were the feelings, the leadings, the intangible, elusive, fleeting glimpses of what I thought was truth—maybe the same inventory of rationale as at Jonestown, as at Waco, and as in countless other less spectacular but equally disastrous manifestations of that all-too-common human defect, that pathetic weakness, that fatal flaw, that leads people to seek refuge in a higher power so as to relieve them of the responsibility of living their own lives. As firmly convinced as I was of the validity of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, as sure as I was of at least beginning to make a dent in the psychic circles, as resoundingly REAL were my own experiences of spontaneous worship and momentary Adjuster contact, I became more and more confused about how I could communicate the truth to someone possessed of a rational and stable mind and an objective approach to knowledge.

My problem deepened with parenthood. For me, the ultimate expression of love for my daughter, the one thing of true and lasting value that I can do for her, and my supreme obligation to our Father, is to try, in my faulty and error-prone human fashion, to teach her the unswerving and exhilarating pursuit of truth, because I know that this pursuit will lead to the discovery of God himself. But how can I counterbalance the teeth-gnashing "sin-and-damnation" teaching she receives in her (otherwise excellent) Anglican school? In response to the school's thumping of the Bible, do I thump *The URANTIA Book*, when reliance on the authority of a book is anathema to everything I've tried to teach my daughter—do I betray her? Can I risk the loss to her of such a tremendous resource as *The URANTIA Book* by a clumsy introduction to it before she's ready? And anyway, is The Book itself really the point at all? Where in *The URANTIA Book* does it say anything about introducing other people to "The Book"? What if I just lived as instructed in *The URANTIA Book*? Not in any artificial or forced way, not in any huge and unsustainable quantum leaps, but by slowly, incrementally, and irreversibly making God-oriented decisions where and when it mattered most. By praying for guidance in modelling my relationship with my daughter on God's relationship with us. By loyalty to truth, to goodness and to beauty, not out of any desire to demonstrate piety, but out of a sincere attempt to see Michael's (and thus our Father's) manifestation in day-to-day living. Would not this ultimately serve to validate *The URANTIA Book*, and have the added benefit of my loyalty to God having a lasting influence on my daughter? Would proof flow from the value level to the meaning level, in contrast to my previous

(continued next page)

approach of predicating the spiritual journey upon logic? Would I dare to forge ahead on the path of spiritual growth with no tangible evidence that the path would lead anywhere at all? Could I become truly worthy of Agondonter status, progressing my grasp of *The URANTIA Book's* teachings from the mind level of belief to the spirit level of faith? I started to realise the enormous importance of distinguishing the message from the medium—the river from the river bed. And therein lies one of the outstanding strokes of brilliance of *The URANTIA Book*. It is designed to leave those who are sincere in their pursuit of its teachings no alternative but to exercise faith in advancing *The URANTIA Book* ideas from mere concepts to exalted ideals. It forces us to extend our reach beyond fact and philosophy to value—to the domain where we can maximise our contact with those spiritual realities that tirelessly labour for our spiritual advancement. And in a sense, this is eternity in microcosm, for this will be the pattern of our expanding relationship with our Creator—endless spiritual riches, our attainment of which is reward for both Creator and creature. So my approach now is to lead with my life. When I start to bear spiritual fruit, when my way of living and approach to life becomes attractive to those who know me, when people start to ask me the source of my patience, kindness, sincerity and generosity, when I truly become of service to people whose life-paths cross mine, then will I be able to point to *The URANTIA Book* and say “It started there.” I don’t know when this will be—perhaps I’ll fail to achieve it in the 40-odd years I may have left here on Earth. But that’s OK. What I can’t achieve in less than 100 years on Urantia, I’ll have hundreds of billions of years to get sorted out afterwards. Even if I fail to become a living, breathing, *URANTIA Book* testimonial, perhaps somewhere, somehow, maybe even unknowingly, I can, through my efforts to live the Urantia teachings, give navigational assistance to another pilgrim.

And I look forward to the day, sometime in the distant future, in some remote corner of the universe, when I bump into one of you, and we say “Remember the Urantia Book?”.

Thank you to those of you who had the patience to read this. I hope it was of some value.

*Dominus Deus Sabaoth
pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.*

Love,
Michael Nielsen

What are we Thinking?

- a Reader

“Knowledge is the sphere of the material or fact-discerning mind. Truth is the domain of the spiritually endowed intellect that is conscious of knowing God. Knowledge is demonstrable; truth is experienced. Knowledge is a possession of the mind; truth an experience of the soul, the progressing self. Knowledge is a function of the nonspiritual level; truth is a phase of the mind-spirit level of the universes. The eye of the material mind perceives a world of factual knowledge; the eye of the spiritualized intellect discerns a world of true values. These two views, synchronized and harmonized, reveal the world of reality, wherein wisdom interprets the phenomena of the universe in terms of progressive personal experience.” (page 1435)

REVEALED Truth is given to mortals because (1) they cannot arrive at it themselves by the mind’s logical or metaphysical reason, and (2) mortal personality is much more than logical mind. Mortals have *soul* and a spiritual endowment that equips their intellects to receive truth (by living faith).

Take any fundamental spiritual truth; for example, *God is*. This truth cannot be logically proved to a faithless mind. God therefore meets us *in faith* (by revelation), to compensate for our inability to reach him by logic and metaphysics.

The truth of God seems to suffer diminishing returns when it enters into time-space and is made subject to logic-dominated (or fear-dominated) minds that are not moved to seek its validity in faith.

Because the warrant for such truth is other-worldly, it is vulnerable to the logical scrutiny and doubt of adjutant mind. Whoever attempts to communicate the truth of God’s existence to other minds in the form of words, using variations on the proposition *God is*, discovers this fact.

But the words that are made to bear the freight of Truth in the mental realm are always secondary to the truth itself; they are only the vehicle by which a life-giving revealed truth is transmitted to and held (or lost) by a mortal mind.

The spiritual truth in every case has nothing to do with the juxtaposition of noun and verb. We know that *God IS*, irrespective of the logical validity of the statement *God is*. This is one of the meanings of the statement by M. Coombs, that “truth exists independently of the vehicle by which it is transmitted”.

The same goes for every single revealed statement in *The URANTIA Book*. Hence the difficulty of transmittal to a wider public.

The spiritual effect of our choice of life in the presence of the Truth of God ought to be indelible, unmistakable, and eminently attractive to truth-seekers, and is of course the key to the gospel of the new era. But the development

of such spiritual fragrance is a life work in itself for some evolutionary creatures...

... among whom you may count this reader.

On What are we Thinking?

Ron Besser

In my career with *URANTIA Book* groups I've attended, the cycle of comment always comes around to discussions about why it is so hard to share the greatness of the *URANTIA Book* concepts. When one winnows down the multiple reasons why this may be true, among the remaining and unforgiving hard seeds left on the floor to crack is the question of the nature of shared reality. Is there something about it that excludes the ability to transmit more than personal viewpoints?

"Reader" references M.Coombs who says the truth exists independently of the vehicle (us), and it is the same view *The URANTIA Book* teaches when it says the truth can not be owned. Therefore, truth as reality, is not a commodity in reality but an experience about reality. Words, language, speech—these are verbal quantities the listener has to fathom in order to experience what attracts you to truth. That listener hears the speaker with one of four mind sets that determines the extent of the effect of the speaker's words upon him:

- 1) He is a conformer, resigned to submission to tradition and authority;
- 2) He leads a stable life and let's well enough alone;
- 3) He is a creature of logic and stagnates on the cultural biases;
- 4) He is the person you can talk to about *The URANTIA Book* with success: He is free of the first 3 handicaps listed above. (See Paper 101, page 1114, 2nd full paragraph about these four "mind sets").

Language is effective, then, for those who are open to receive an adventure, but one needs to keep in mind the psychologies of belief operating within the listener's mind to be able to successfully transmit one's spiritual enthusiasms about that adventure.

I would also suggest that most of us came up from the first through the fourth development level ourselves. Such motion through these levels is an acquirement of growth status and even *URANTIA Book* readers are influenced in their beliefs about the book because they have not entirely escaped the third psychological level. These levels are at heart the personality's attitude about shared reality and are the motivation behind the various behaviours toward truth.

Even revealed religion represents a spiritual attitude toward truth and is not the truth itself. With the mind action of reading the words of revealed truth there operates both the Spirit of Truth and the Holy Spirit. One's mind

is already endowed with spiritual intuition through cosmic mind pattern and it is the Holy Spirit that adds spiritual reason and soul intelligence to compare to the natural musings of mind about revelatory meanings. The Spirit of Truth adds the flavour of the wisdom of spiritual knowledge (that is, its context). And when the personality coordinates these influences through the auspices of the Thought Adjuster during reflection, it is entirely possible to transcend the nature of mind proof of truth into the certitude of having experienced the divine affirmations of God's existence as the truth represented in words just read.

Take away any of these influences (as in poorly encircuted) and the human mind is skewed toward the material and unable to rise beyond the insanity of spiritless existence. It takes time on a planet where so many beginnings apply to put into operation all the spiritual influences necessary for man to use the intelligence of the universe about his origins. We who are fortunate to have reached relative maturity with these operations should be careful about falling into our own traps of despondency over the lack of response in our fellow man.

What are we thinking? And how is what we think to change our religion? Both questions are answered by what we sense is important to our survival. To some it is sticks and stones to stay away from and words are harmless empty bubbles with barely any reality. These thinkers do not reach for spiritual survival, only material life survival. Those who see further into the question of survival find the word (the intellect) the most rewarding for their faith that all of this we go through must be worth something.

"There are appointed times and places for worship on Paradise, but these are not adequate to accommodate the ever-increasing overflow of the spiritual emotions of the growing intelligence and expanding divinity recognition of the brilliant beings of experiential ascension to the eternal Isle. Never since the times of Grandfanda have the supernaphim been able fully to accommodate the spirit of worship on Paradise. Always is there an excess of worshipfulness as gauged by the preparation therefor. And this is because personalities of inherent perfection never can fully appreciate the tremendous reactions of the spiritual emotions of beings who have slowly and laboriously made their way upward to Paradise glory from the depths of the spiritual darkness of the lower worlds of time and space. When such angels and mortals of time attain the presence of the Powers of Paradise, there occurs the expression of the accumulated emotions of the ages, a spectacle astounding to the angels of Paradise and productive of the supreme joy of divine satisfaction in the Paradise Deities." (page 304)

The Father's Will

Rick Warren, USA

Fourteen years ago, when I stumbled onto *The URANTIA Book*, there was a change in the direction of travel, just a small one. Things began to fall away because they were either unnecessary or unwanted. First to go was dividing people into categories of good and bad. I had to try to love EVERYBODY by delving into their souls and discovering what they cared about. That made me search my own soul and throw out the baggage that was keeping me from knowing my Paradise Partner (excuse me revelators, Thought Adjuster is a clunky term!). Little by little, I had to humble myself enough to talk to my Partner, as if He really existed. After all the UB said he exists in everyone. All that took a dozen years. But I knew progress was occurring in at least three ways. First, unhealthy habits were, one by one, dropping by the way-side, second, a connectedness was growing in me, a feeling of love from my Partner, and third, keeping distance between me and others became less desirable. And these things came about without very much effort on my part, just remembering the teachings of the book, reading and ruminating about the revelations.

Doing the will of deity came quite naturally when I tried to keep God in the forefront of my mind. When I first wake up, when I'm driving, when there's a moment of no thoughts, the will of God comes through in such a natural way that I feel like I thought of it. Wasn't it me who wanted to start a study group? I'm not really positive, but I do believe it is God's will. Wasn't it me who wanted to stop smoking? I'm not sure. God wants me to be healthier in order to enjoy serving Him, yes? The desire to fund a translation, where did that come from? I don't know but I think it is what God would want. Obviously, I am not in direct contact, yet a harmony is beginning to function between us.

Not long ago, thinking about falling in love, and those wonderful feelings that come when love is brand new got me to wondering if I could fall in love with God. That would be the ultimate love affair wouldn't it?! Falling in love with Deity was a strange concept to me when it first occurred, but it is bearing fruit. I can sense it in the people with whom I make contact and in my internal climate. Maybe it is what the revelators intended all along and I'm just slow. But it is adding to the richness of everyday life and it's growing.

I write these words for those who have only just discovered the most amazing book that has ever been written so that they might be encouraged by knowing that the teachings of the book actually work when implemented. And that one should not expect instant results but a gradual growth that rewards like no other work. One begins to feel cosmically connected merely by staying focused on the goal of integrating the teachings that touch you today. Every teaching that is assimilated

adds to the whole and in time the dividends DO accrue.

More and more, bit by bit, that's the way it has gone for me ever since finding *The URANTIA Book*. I don't think we are supposed to have monumental deviations in our path, just slow practical change that gradually evolves us over a period of twenty trillion years into the Finaliters God intended us to be.

Without knowing precisely when, I fell in love with God and his Son and Daughter, and now I am always surrounded and steeped in that family feeling of belonging to a great group who loves me far more than I can possibly reciprocate. I still make so many wretched mistakes, still catch myself being selfish, and yet behind it all is that relentless love that my celestial family keeps throwing my way. Now, more and more, I find myself having an internal monologue with these unseen Ones and that reinforces their reality for me. I don't believe I can surrender my will to God in one lump. It just occurs, piece by piece, as I love Him more. I want to give to God as I would to some person to whom I had given my heart, and who I want to please simply because I love that person. When you love someone you want to fulfil their worthy desires. And we all know what God wants from us. My limitation is how much I am willing to give, how much I trust that He won't take me where I am afraid to go. And He never has. He waits for me as a patient Father would. We go only as fast as I can, just as you would never try to make a toddler run at a sprint. One day I will be running at His pace, but only when the time is right, only when my training and ability will permit it. Until then I will do my best to enjoy spiritual toddlerhood and learn each lesson well and then move on. After all, this world is a lot like a pre-kindergarten for the soul. The higher grades are available, but few make it that far. It is up to me.

On The Father's Will

Steve Hecht replied to Rick:

Hi Rick—thanks for the beautiful and wise essay. You've said it all here:

"My limitation is how much I am willing to give, how much I trust that He won't take me where I am afraid to go. And He never has. He waits for me as a patient Father would. We go only as fast as I can, just as you would never try to make a toddler run at a sprint. One day I will be running at His pace, but only when the time is right, only when my training and ability will permit it."

I would only say, based on the testimony and insights provided in your essay, that you are *already* "running at His pace." I think I know what you mean, i.e., that you're not currently doing as well as you will be in the future.

OK. But I don't believe that "His pace" is measured that way; sincerity—the profound desire to do the Father's will—is what measures *His* pace, even while mortals continue to make self-serving mistakes. If your intention to do God's will is there, deep in your will, that measure of quality is the rod used rather than your (quantitative) consistency in executing that will in every choice you make. (I guess it's that old question of "salvation through works" or "through faith." I am opting for the latter.) While our notion of "pace" is commonly understood primarily quantitatively because conceived through our finite existence in space-time, the Father, being pure spirit, conceives quite differently. God understands us through love, and knows that in order to become a frog (an actualised spirit being) we need to live sincerely as a tadpole each day. The Father's pace is not in any way challenged when we make mistakes and hurt others (provided that our purity of will remains clear to him) since he already regards and loves us in and from eternity: that is, he knows us on the basis of our accomplished finaliter status as much as because of our current state of imperfection. What is mostly affected and disturbed when a sincere child of God neglects to fulfil their profoundest desire to do the will of God is, of course, the child's own pace of spiritual development (as well as that of others who have been affected by that person's imperfect choices).

But, as you've intimated, the Father's love has created a universe of law that allows us not only to make mistakes but to learn from them, and to use that learning to grow closer to him should we so choose. Theoretically speaking, a universe of laws by itself would not *necessarily* include that particular technique for personal growth in the face of the challenges of finite existence. Only the Father's love makes such a salutary environment—one which encourages the emergence of spirit realities out of imperfect finite origins—practically inevitable. This could be called the grace of God, and that is something you have clearly articulated in your writing.

There is a gift associated with believing that, even with all one's imperfections, one can still be "running at His pace". The gift is the peace that passes all understanding, and that peace is also the grace of God.

Thank you,
Steve Hecht

On Rejecting Truth as Error

-a Reader

During the first 24-hour period of my experience with the UB (perhaps the most important day in my life), an initial impression that gave my mind much trouble was the notion that God required such a complex celestial hierarchy to accomplish his eternal purpose.

Everyone has a slightly different *take* on the book at first glance. Bureaucracy was my pet peeve at the time, and simplicity was my supreme value, so naturally my rationale was couched in terms that would most justify my rejection of the revelation I held in my hands.

"If there is a God, he couldn't possibly have need of such a bureaucratic structure, and if he does require such an apparatus, I want no part in him or it!" I remember uttering these words under my breath (looking briefly up to the sky, in fact) while I walked along the next day to return the book (I had borrowed it from a friendly used-book dealer who had no interest in the UB whatsoever, except as merchandise).

"If there is a God..." This was a milestone in my thinking. Since leaving my parent's church, my stance had been one of tentative atheism, but I was on a path that had recently taken me back into religion via Buddhism. In the months before finding the UB, I had been attracted to the noble ethics of the Buddhist monk I was reading (a Tibetan), whose seriousness and austerity were values that exerted a fair calling upon my soul. It was a religious path in which God was not an issue. But in taking it my soul had experienced a moral sea-change; one that, I now am sure, was actually putting me in the path of readiness for revelation. Even more so, since other writers had earlier given me pause to consider the *possibility* of the existence of an unseen realm and communication therewith.

"I want no part in him or it!" This prayer of rejection is, oddly, the point from which I feel I will always date the memorial of my salvation. Although negatively phrased, these words were spoken from the soul, and they were addressed to a *somebody* out there, a God-ideal of simplicity, love, understanding, mercy, a divinity who would never place a bureaucratic mediation-apparatus between himself and the soul. Of course the bureaucratic structure was a creation of my own mind's misunderstanding, and my ideal was not far from the actual truth of the Universal Father. I returned the book to my friend and went home.

My mind had detected what it perceived to be error and had been vigilant to rid itself of it. At the same time, however, my soul had detected Truth, and would not let me quite disregard the whole unlikely prospect that an epochal wonder might, after all, have been cast abroad upon this world. The next day I woke up haunted by these soul-feelings, and I returned to the bookstore and bought the book.

The deal I had brokered between my imploring soul and my sceptical mind was that we should read the big book together and debunk it. How clever we would be! (And how far past the purest joy on earth were soul and Spirit transported by the news!)

Certification of Teachers

Jeffrey Wattles [jwattles@kent.edu]

Dear friends,

Over the years, I've heard so much protest against the very idea of "certified teachers" that I doubt that at the present time the potential values of certification are worth pursuing against the somewhat legitimate scepticism that the project arouses. Everyone, however, at some level, at some time, has opportunities, however small, for teaching and leadership. Any well-designed program can help participants get better. There is a lot that can be taught and learned about public speaking, for example (Toastmasters does a good job). There is also still a lot of clarity that folks need, I believe, regarding focusing effectively on particular projects that the revelators point to. Understandably, we are more of a book club than a loving community of persons that effectively supports individuals in their dedication to various specific planetary projects to which the book calls us. A problem I see is that sometimes those with gifts of potential leadership have not been well cultivated and clashes ensue between unwise energy and unwise pressures toward conformity. We need better understanding of the universe grounds for wise policy to help potential leaders direct their efforts well. Of course, it's easy to see needs, hard to remedy them. We are all doing our best, and volunteer time is scarce. So we can join in prayer for guidance and unity with the higher agencies who can multiply our effectiveness whenever we harmonize with their circuits.

Jeff.

On the Certification of Teachers

David replied to Jeff:

Excellent note! I would like to comment on the one aspect dealing with certification of teachers. Currently the UB movement has a real time need for teachers at *The URANTIA Book Internet School* (UBIS). This is the only venue for which I see a specific need for a process to recognize and train teachers for this worthy project (in my opinion). I was fortunate to attend one of the classes (Thought Adjusters) and found the experience to be very beneficial and somewhat enlightening. I don't know by what process the teacher was selected but I can attest that he did a very good job.

Most of the classes we have attended in life have been taught by certified teachers, for example, public school and college. Later in life some receive training in job specific areas like real estate, auto mechanics, plumbing, heating and air, law enforcement, child care, elder care, air traffic control etc. It is necessary to certify the teachers/professors to ensure that the students receive consistent and basically uniform educations throughout society.

Trade specific jobs require certification of the individual before they can earn a living in the profession of their choice. Our society is tailored to this method of accreditation of teachers and certification of students.

The questions before us now seem to concern whether or not we, in the UB movement, need to adopt the familiar and socially accepted process of education and training. Do we need a board of accreditation to certify teachers for the UBIS? What is the current process for selecting these teachers? Is it working? Does it need to be fixed? Does UBIS have credibility with UB readers? Credibility is a measure of success.

I am keeping my mind open in anticipation of the ensuing discussions on this subject. It is sure to be interesting, stimulating *and* educational.

David.

On this matter of the certification of teachers, Gary Mullinix added:

Greetings All,

"Never forget there is only one adventure which is more satisfying and thrilling than the attempt to discover the will of the living God, and that is the supreme experience of honestly trying to do that divine will. And fail not to remember that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation. Some callings are not holy and others secular. All things are sacred in the lives of those who are spirit led; that is, subordinated to truth, ennobled by love, dominated by mercy, and restrained by fairness—justice. The spirit which my Father and I shall send into the world is not only the Spirit of Truth but also the spirit of idealistic beauty." (page 1732)

The day of revelation we find ourselves living in begs for leaders to help describe the truth, to step up and apply the values that *The URANTIA Book* broadcasts to our generation; to gather from the successes and failures of the early administrators of Christ's revelation all we can, and make our Master proud of our stewardship of His truth.

I am sure the early Christians found themselves, as we do, with the ground shifting beneath their feet, as they sift through the truth they behold and plot a new direction, hoping to ensure the truth would not be lost nor given in vain. We have the luxury of examining their shortcomings, as they interjected the theologies of their day into the revelation and thereby compromised the simplicity of Christ's gospel. But how will future generations see our attempts to nurture and promote the fifth epochal revelation? Will we do better? As the revelation of 2000 years ago proves—a lot of the success of the revelation depends on those people unto which it is initially entrusted.

So many possibilities are evident; it could be warped into a creed rooted in the infallibility of the book; it could be absorbed into metaphysical new age thought; it could be considered fantasy; it could be dismissed as fraud or elitist; it could be forgotten as it, like so many others, becomes a house of faith divided within itself, losing its worldly appeal; or perhaps we can remain focused and start in our own homes and lives and make the hard decisions it takes to dedicate our lives to the whole truth we have been given, with no reservation, no holding back; in which condition God will hopefully find us when he comes looking. The first century believers no doubt looked back on their predecessors with some of the same incredulity we place upon them. I hope history doesn't repeat itself once more.

Gary Mullinix

Lynn Prentice added:

I'm not sure whether certifying teachers and leaders is necessary, but I do think cultivating them is something we should focus on, and I agree that is best done with actual experience. There are many talented people in the Urantia Family who are already good teachers and leaders and it would be great to identify them, but I think there

URANTIA Book Internet School

UBIS—Teachers Online

In The URANTIA Book we are repeatedly reminded of the importance of learning by doing. In the Urantia family and organization there are many opportunities for teaching and leading. There are conferences to organize, workshops to develop and teach, plenary addresses to give, study groups to develop and host, service projects to promote and facilitate, UBIS courses to teach, and many things we have not even thought of. Outside the Urantia group, there are endless other opportunities that we are doing or could be doing. Many of us teach professionally, many are leaders in one capacity or another.

Is our goal for the school to certify teachers and leaders, or to identify the teachers and leaders among us? Perhaps this school should be to a great extent a process of recognizing these traits in the people who are already teaching and leading. Could a person who has organized conferences successfully, who has given good speeches, or taught a number of workshops and other courses, or hosted study groups, or taught UBIS courses, etc. be evaluated? Could deficiencies be identified then remedied? Could a board then evaluate and certify candidates somewhat like comps in graduate school?

are many others who because of their youth or lack of experience have not yet developed this potential.

Although there are some of us who will never be great leaders or teachers, regardless of the training and experience we receive, I don't think there are any of us who would not benefit from such training. It seems to me that we all become leaders and/or teachers at some point in our lives, even if it is just for a brief moment here and there, in our interactions with people in our communities, in our jobs, as parents, etc. A big part of the training of leaders and teachers is in communications skills, and who couldn't benefit from better communications skills.

We were charged to develop teachers and leaders, but I don't think it was intended that their only purpose would be to teach *The URANTIA Book*, although that is one important aspect to consider. In my opinion as *URANTIA Book* readers we have a greater responsibility than most to occupy the roles of teacher and leader in society in general, to disseminate the teachings in our actions and by our example, even if its just in the little things. We have the benefit of some valuable information that not everyone has, and it is up to us take responsibility for that knowledge and be willing to stand up as the occasion requires. Some training and experience would make a difference in both our willingness and ability to effectively do this.

I think identifying deficiencies and improving on them would be a beneficial part of training, but again I think there are many people out there who are not yet good teachers and leaders but with encouragement, training and experience could be. If education is something that happens throughout life then we all have a great responsibility as both teachers and students.

Well, I've gotten a little carried away so I'll leave it at this.

Lynn

And Gaetan Charland wrote:

I find the idea of forming teachers and leaders very interesting and worth pursuing. My suggestion toward that achievement would be to look into the work done by Moussa Ndiaye from Senegal. After talking with him about his work in his country, one cannot be indifferent to the wisdom and know-how of this great teacher. We have much to learn from him and probably could apply many of his techniques to our ways of teaching. So far he is a true and rare example of the applications of Jesus' ways of teaching. Look at the history of the URANTIA movement in Senegal, this by itself bears witness to the work of a great teacher.

Gaetan

“You have elected to...”
upstep your inner world

Jesus, page 1740

And so, while they paused in the shade of the hillside, Jesus continued to teach them regarding the religion of the spirit, in substance saying:

“You have come out from among those of your fellows who choose to remain satisfied with a religion of mind, who crave security and prefer conformity. You have elected to exchange your feelings of authoritative certainty for the assurances of the spirit of adventurous and progressive faith. You have dared to protest against the grueling bondage of institutional religion and to reject the authority of the traditions of record which are now regarded as the word of God. Our Father did indeed speak through Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea, but he did not cease to minister words of truth to the world when these prophets of old made an end of their utterances. My Father is no respecter of races or generations in that the word of truth is vouchsafed one age and withheld from another. Commit not the folly of calling that divine which is wholly human, and fail not to discern the words of truth which come not through the traditional oracles of supposed inspiration.

I have called upon you to be born again, to be born of the spirit. I have called you out of the darkness of authority and the lethargy of tradition into the transcendent light of the realization of the possibility of making for yourselves the greatest discovery possible for the human soul to make—the supernal experience of finding God for yourself, in yourself, and of yourself, and of doing all this as a fact in your own personal experience. And so may you pass from death to life, from the authority of tradition to the experience of knowing God; thus will you pass from darkness to light, from a racial faith inherited to a personal faith achieved by actual experience; and thereby will you progress from a theology of mind handed down by your ancestors to a true religion of spirit which shall be built up in your souls as an eternal endowment.

Your religion shall change from the mere intellectual belief in traditional authority to the actual experience of that living faith which is able to grasp the reality of God and all that relates to the divine spirit of the Father. The religion of the mind ties you hopelessly to the past; the religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation and ever beckons you on toward higher and holier achievements in spiritual ideals and eternal realities.

While the religion of authority may impart a present feeling of settled security, you pay for such a transient satisfaction the price of the loss of your spiritual freedom

and religious liberty. My Father does not require of you as the price of entering the kingdom of heaven that you should force yourself to subscribe to a belief in things which are spiritually repugnant, unholy, and untruthful. It is not required of you that your own sense of mercy, justice, and truth should be outraged by submission to an outworn system of religious forms and ceremonies. The religion of the spirit leaves you forever free to follow the truth wherever the leadings of the spirit may take you. And who can judge—perhaps this spirit may have something to impart to this generation which other generations have refused to hear?

Shame on those false religious teachers who would drag hungry souls back into the dim and distant past and there leave them! And so are these unfortunate persons doomed to become frightened by every new discovery, while they are discomfited by every new revelation of truth. The prophet who said, “He will be kept in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on God,” was not a mere intellectual believer in authoritative theology. This truth-knowing human had discovered God; he was not merely talking about God.

I admonish you to give up the practice of always quoting the prophets of old and praising the heroes of Israel, and instead aspire to become living prophets of the Most High and spiritual heroes of the coming kingdom. To honor the God-knowing leaders of the past may indeed be worth while, but why, in so doing, should you sacrifice the supreme experience of human existence: finding God for yourselves and knowing him in your own souls?

Every race of mankind has its own mental outlook upon human existence; therefore must the religion of the mind ever run true to these various racial viewpoints. Never can the religions of authority come to unification. Human unity and mortal brotherhood can be achieved only by and through the superendowment of the religion of the spirit. Racial minds may differ, but all mankind is indwelt by the same divine and eternal spirit. The hope of human brotherhood can only be realized when, and as, the divergent mind religions of authority become impregnated with, and overshadowed by, the unifying and ennobling religion of the spirit—the religion of personal spiritual experience.

The religions of authority can only divide men and set them in conscientious array against each other; the religion of the spirit will progressively draw men together and cause them to become understandingly sympathetic with one another. The religions of authority require of men uniformity in belief, but this is impossible of realization in the present state of the world. The religion of the spirit requires only unity of experience—uniformity of destiny—making full allowance for diversity of belief.

The religion of the spirit requires only uniformity of insight, not uniformity of viewpoint and outlook. The religion of the spirit does not demand uniformity of intellectual views, only unity of spirit feeling. The religions of authority crystallize into lifeless creeds; the religion of the spirit grows into the increasing joy and liberty of ennobling deeds of loving service and merciful ministration.

But watch, lest any of you look with disdain upon the children of Abraham because they have fallen on these evil days of traditional barrenness. Our forefathers gave themselves up to the persistent and passionate search for God, and they found him as no other whole race of men have ever known him since the times of Adam, who knew much of this as he was himself a Son of God. My Father has not failed to mark the long and untiring struggle of Israel, ever since the days of Moses, to find God and to know God. For weary generations the Jews have not ceased to toil, sweat, groan, travail, and endure the sufferings and experience the sorrows of a misunderstood and despised people, all in order that they might come a little nearer the discovery of the truth about God. And, notwithstanding all the failures and falterings of Israel, our fathers progressively, from Moses to the times of Amos and Hosea, did reveal increasingly to the whole world an ever clearer and more truthful picture of the eternal God. And so was the way prepared for the still greater revelation of the Father which you have been called to share.

Never forget there is only one adventure which is more satisfying and thrilling than the attempt to discover the will of the living God, and that is the supreme experience of honestly trying to do that divine will. And fail not to remember that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation. Some callings are not holy and others secular. All things are sacred in the lives of those who are spirit led; that is, subordinated to truth, ennobled by love, dominated by mercy, and restrained by fairness—justice. The spirit which my Father and I shall send into the world is not only the Spirit of Truth but also the spirit of idealistic beauty.

You must cease to seek for the word of God only on the pages of the olden records of theologic authority. Those who are born of the spirit of God shall henceforth discern the word of God regardless of whence it appears to take origin. Divine truth must not be discounted because the channel of its bestowal is apparently human. Many of your brethren have minds which accept the theory of God while they spiritually fail to realize the presence of God. And that is just the reason why I have so often taught you that the kingdom of heaven can best be realized by acquiring the spiritual attitude of a sincere child. It is not the mental immaturity of the child that I commend to you but rather

the spiritual simplicity of such an easy-believing and fully-trusting little one. It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to feel the presence of God.

When you once begin to find God in your soul, presently you will begin to discover him in other men's souls and eventually in all the creatures and creations of a mighty universe. But what chance does the Father have to appear as a God of supreme loyalties and divine ideals in the souls of men who give little or no time to the thoughtful contemplation of such eternal realities? While the mind is not the seat of the spiritual nature, it is indeed the gateway thereto.

But do not make the mistake of trying to prove to other men that you have found God; you cannot consciously produce such valid proof, albeit there are two positive and powerful demonstrations of the fact that you are God-knowing, and they are:

1. The fruits of the spirit of God showing forth in your daily routine life.
2. The fact that your entire life plan furnishes positive proof that you have unreservedly risked everything you are and have on the adventure of survival after death in the pursuit of the hope of finding the God of eternity, whose presence you have foretasted in time.

Now, mistake not, my Father will ever respond to the faintest flicker of faith. He takes note of the physical and superstitious emotions of the primitive man. And with those honest but fearful souls whose faith is so weak that it amounts to little more than an intellectual conformity to a passive attitude of assent to religions of authority, the Father is ever alert to honor and foster even all such feeble attempts to reach out for him. But you who have been called out of darkness into the light are expected to believe with a whole heart; your faith shall dominate the combined attitudes of body, mind, and spirit.

You are my apostles, and to you religion shall not become a theologic shelter to which you may flee in fear of facing the rugged realities of spiritual progress and idealistic adventure; but rather shall your religion become the fact of real experience which testifies that God has found you, idealized, ennobled, and spiritualized you, and that you have enlisted in the eternal adventure of finding the God who has thus found and sonshipped you."

And when Jesus had finished speaking, he beckoned to Andrew and, pointing to the west toward Phoenicia, said: "Let us be on our way."

From The URANTIA Book, page 1730.

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Initiating Love

There is a river
of love flowing
outward from paradise.
When it reaches
the extreme edge
of creation
it splashes
against the nothingness
of empty space
and begins a return
voyage to it's
point of origin.
It matters not
whether we fall in
in the river's
outward bound course
or it's returning flow.
All that is important
is that we get
in the water
and take the ride.
It's love
either way
and all the way.
Splash all you want,
God has plenty more
where that came from.

Ron Lawson