

The Michaels Foundation, Inc.

Lake Murray Retreat 2002

Student Presentations

Due to the many requests for copies of the lectures given at the Lake Murray Retreat this year we are making available to you the lectures in “Microsoft Word format” or “PDF (Portable Document Format)” so that you may print them individually or all at once for your convenience. It is with great joy and pride in my students that we present the first in a series of papers by the students of The Michaels Foundation, Inc.---enjoy!

If you print this document then you will be printing all of them but if you look for the specific person’s lecture in the list available, you may print them separately.

Many thanks to Terry Clark for the work
in getting this together
and making it work for us on the website!

A Life Quest

R. R.

Throughout the history of civilization and even before, mankind has been strongly guided and influenced by religion. Where did this strong influence come from?

Those of us raised in this generation can look back a few years and trace our personal experience of religion to the Judeo-Christian teachings mostly, and somewhat to Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, or Taoist traditions. These are all crystallized, ritualized, rigid thought systems that purport to hold the keys to our spiritual growth and purpose in life. But do they?

Some of us, perhaps all of us, here today have sought answers to our deepest spiritual questions from these religions or others, or even from new thought, New Age groups, cults and gurus, and have not found the answers we seek to that most important question, "What is really the ultimate meaning and purpose of life?"

That question has always been at the heart of all my seeking for truth these last 60-some years I have trod this earth. It has always been a sideline or hobby standing beside or behind my various secular activities I've engaged in to maintain my social, family, and economic life. No matter what outward activities I was involved in, I eventually got back to considering the inner causes and meanings of my thoughts, words, and actions, and even the larger causes of all the world's thoughts, words, and actions.

I was not satisfied to just occupy myself with disposing of the debris of my life. I felt compelled to determine what the value of it all might be. I have studied the writings of other seekers of truth during my life-long quest, and gleaned certain useful uplifting facts from them all. Beside the obvious scholastic teachings of Shakespeare, Browning, Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats, Byron, Thoreau, Emerson, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Hume, Adam Smith, Franklin, and many others, like Adler, Freud, Jung, and Skinner, there have been more non-traditional, perhaps mystical writers like Maurice Bucke, Ernest Holmes, Mary Baker Eddy, Madame Blavatsky, Alice Bailey, The Filmores, Swedenborg, Rudolph Steiner, Gurdjiff, Ouspensky, and so many more whose names escape me, but their teachings linger on.

It seems that each new batch of concepts I approached eventually pointed me in the direction of many more. I had this insatiable thirst for wisdom, and I looked everywhere for it. I did spend many years with traditional religion, reading the Bible several times and listening to preachers and teachers who purported to have found *the truth* through their own studies, prayers, and inspiration, even revelations. I explored Carlos Casteneda, Don Juan, Jane Roberts, the Seth books, the Course in Miracles, The Celestine Prophecy, and many more Pop-spiritual teachings,

Of course, I did sit at the feet of one who I felt was quite illuminated and most wise understanding and teaching great, deep truths. This was Father A. A. Taliaferro (pronounced Tolivar) who I was led to through my efforts at elevating my consciousness through light-energy meditation exercises in a group where I also met another great teacher and spiritual seeker, Jean Barr.

At this time, I was led to the Urantia Book and I have been studying it ever since. There so much I could say about it but there just isn't enough time. It is a miracle, a revelation, a compendium of the greatest amount of truth accumulated between two book covers since the beginning of the world, and it completely answers the question, "What is the meaning of life?" that is why I believe in its truth and follow its teachings, and have faith in its authenticity as the best guide for my spiritual growth, my most important endeavor. It is a book about God - all

aspects of God. It starts with God, the I Am, Infinity and describes and explains how He extends Himself as Universal Father to Eternal Son, Infinite Spirit, Paradise, Supreme, Ultimate, Absolute and Eternal.

It also explains how He creates time and space for Eternities to use to develop man as an ascending being, and it explains how all worlds are created and evolve toward the perfection of Havona, which is one billion perfect worlds surrounding Paradise. It is surrounded by the Seven Super Universes, which contain the local universes, within which are the created physical worlds, one of which is ours: Urantia.

On all worlds suitable for it, life is created by great spiritual beings called Life-carriers. It grows and evolves; man eventually develops on the worlds within these local universes ruled over and created by the Christ, Michael, and Universe Mother Spirit. Man begins his ascent to Paradise and his destiny as a highly spiritual experiential being, thus returning to God, the existential, the possibility of combining the actual and potential, existence, and being.

Along the way, man is assisted in this quest for spiritual growth by vast numbers of intermediate created divine beings, such as Seraphim, Midwayers, Planetary Princes, System Sovereigns, Most High Constellation Fathers, Ancients of Days, Creator Sons, Magisterial Sons, Adjutant Mind Spirits, Cosmic Mind, and many more greater and lesser Divine beings, Forces and Powers. The most important to man personally is the Thought-Adjuster, or Mystery Monitor, who is the fragment of God that dwells with him and ultimately fuses with him so that he can become the Finaliter he was always destined to be and continue throughout Eternity and beyond to do the will of the Father.

And thus I now know the ultimate meaning and purpose of my life. And with the help of my angels, the Thought Adjuster, the Spirit of Truth and the Holy Spirit, I am being drawn toward my divine destiny, as we all are one who have chosen to follow this path of spiritual growth.

My Magnificent Guardians

A. A.



An Experience

I would like to share with you an experience I had several years ago. The event occurred not long after I had started attending Barbara's class. I was living in an apartment complex in East Fort Worth in an area of town that was close to school and not far from my parent's house. One evening I returned to my apartment after visiting at Mom and Dad's and decided to pick up my mail before driving to my apartment building. I lived in a gated complex where everyone received the mail at the same location not far past the entrance gate. I would leave my car running to give myself additional light as I checked the mailbox. It wasn't that late in the evening but it was quite dark outside. As I was returning to my car and thumbing through my mail, something told me to turn around, so I did and started to get into my car when I noticed something crouching down between 2 apartment buildings. It took me a second to realize it was a man and that he was looking back at me and then started toward me. I remember thinking to myself, "do I know him" the little voice in my head said- "No", "maybe he needs help" the little voice inside my head said- "I don't think so". As I realized that this was a bad situation for me I dropped my mail, turned from the car and started running. He was already too close to me and knocked me to the pavement. He was in my face yelling "Give me all your money!" I was in such shock that all I could think to do was to get up, knowing that being on the ground is not a power position and a hard one to defend yourself in, so I did, he pushed me down again, I got up again, and this went on for a couple of times. I remember looking at his face one time and then I didn't look again for fear of seeing that he had a gun or a knife. I was terrified.

Have you ever had a dream where you were extremely frightened by something but you couldn't scream? You tried, but no matter what, nothing came out. I used to have those dreams all the time growing up and upon waking I gave much thought to the matter. This was a real concern for me, I used to watch a lot of horror movies and was convinced that at sometime in my life I would need to shriek like they did in the movies. But what happens to you if you just can't manufacture noise? I used to even go outside and scream just to make sure that I could.

Well, I don't concern myself with this quandary anymore. Because out from somewhere deep inside me came a noise so loud, so thunderous that I actually think that I scared the guy. I still can't believe that I can make that much noise. I know that the sound was coming from me but I still don't feel like I was the one creating it. I screamed this way without a thought to taking a breath until he ran across the parking lot, over the fence and into the darkness.

The reason I am telling you this is not so much a lesson in safety, although after this experience I have rethought my actions many times, but when I got back to my apartment and was left with my shock and fear, I realized that I wasn't alone when I was in the parking lot and I wasn't alone then. I felt a very strong presence there with me. I knew my guardian angels had been there during the ordeal. I started talking to them and expressed my anger that they had not protected me. I was very upset that they had allowed this to happen to me, how could they be considered guardians if I was attacked!

Now, I am not very proud of being angry with my angels, but what amazed me is that I was alone in my living room having a conversation with 2 spiritual beings that were so real to me right then that I must have looked crazy had anyone seen me. I had never felt such a strong presence of something in a different dimension of reality like I did at that moment. Of course, over the next few days I came to realize that guardian angels don't exist to disrupt the flow of events, but rather to assist us in times of need. That man had free will and attacking me that night is how he chose to exercise his will. Fortunate for me, I had the help of my angels who gave me the signal to turn around to see what was happening and then they helped me with the strength to scream and fight. Who knows what other ways they helped me and I don't even realize it. Because, let's face it, things don't always turn out so good for young women who get attacked in dark parking lots. Especially in that apartment complex where in the next few months 2 women were found dead, one suspect fitting the description I gave police that night.

Some may find it odd that I look upon this experience as a good memory, but I do. I don't think so much about the what-ifs as I do the closeness I felt to spiritual beings that night. I don't want to wait for another traumatizing event to occur before I recognize their presence. They deserve to be recognized for the work they do no matter what the situation. And by remembering this experience and reflecting on how they really were there for me, I am able to remind myself that they always will be.

I find the subject of guardian angels fascinating. It is hardly a secret that many people believe in angels. There's angel jewelry, clothes, bedding, home décor items, perfume and there is even an angel lingerie line. For most people angels are a lovely thought, especially around the holidays. Isn't it interesting that angels are so commercialized and at the same time people are so truly unaware of their presence? Personally, I don't find much comfort in the serene image of a fair skinned Elizabethan woman strumming a harp when I need some serious help in this world. What I do find comforting is the guardian angels immense strength and ability to guide and protect us humans. Not only do they display attributes of strength and power that aid us, but they also develop real affections for us. These are truly magnificent creatures!

There are certain groups of people that do actually have personal angels assigned to them. For normal human beings seraphic assignments, from a group of volunteering seraphim, are made with respect to the attainment of the circles or the person's intellectuality, spirituality and destiny. Those who are in the 7th circle have one guardian angel and a company of assisting cherubim looking over them for every 1,000 mortals. Those in the 6th circle have 2 guardians and a company of cherubim assigned for each group of 500 mortals. Those in the 5th circle have 2 guardians and a group of cherubim for every 100 humans. For those in the 4th circle there are 2 guardians and a group of cherubim for every 10 mortals. And finally, when a person reaches the 3rd circle they are assigned 2 personal guardians to assist them in this lifetime and beyond.

If a person is of supernormal mind – defined in the *Urantia Book* as “those of great decision and undoubted potential of spiritual achievement” then regardless of the circle they are in, they may be assigned personal guardians. This could happen if either they become a member of any of the reserve corps of destiny or if the human makes the ultimate decision, when there is a real promise to the Adjuster, the eternal commitment do the Father's will.

There exists no being that has the authority or ability to interrupt a human's free will. Angels are no exception to this rule. They exist to help guide and protect us while influencing us in areas of our lives only if it is consistent with the dignity of our personality. They act independent of our requests and appeals, but consistent with the mandates of their superiors. I find it comforting that our guardians are not interested in our moods or passing whims yet function always in a manner that is for the greater good, much like the ways of a responsible parent, not necessarily aligning their actions with the desires of the child but rather basing their decisions on what is the best for the child and everyone else involved.

Most of the time the guardians work behind the scenes. With the assistance of the midway creatures and the physical controllers, they are able to function on behalf of human beings in many different ways and even could make actual contact with mankind, although this type of occurrence is very rare.

Our angels stay with us throughout this lifetime. Upon death our guardians preserve all of our values that relate to our future existence, including our records, identity specifications and the soul. These are the values which survive and that make up the real you. The guardians of destiny proceed to the first mansion world and there they will wait for our repersonalization. Your adjuster will identify you, your guardian will repersonalize you and then re-present you to your thought adjuster. Upon awakening on the mansion world, we are able to finally see our guardians and to become truly conscious of the presence of our thought adjuster.

On the morontia spheres the seraphim are not only our companions but they help us along the way to attaining spirit status. Our first assignment after mortal death and upon resurrection will be as an assistant to our guardian angels.

Our angels stay with us up until we reach Havona. At this point some of the destiny guardians will follow our course through Havona. Other guardians will not follow the path through Havona but will meet up with us again on the shores of Paradise. Then angel and mortal may or may not stay together, but no matter where the angels are destined to be, they are always in communication with their once mortal companion. They will always be affectionately attached to us and they will never forget us. The most important service a seraphim can perform is to guide their human companion to Paradise. Therefore the assignment of guardian of destiny is the highest honor and duty of all seraphim.

We are not alone on this incredible journey. I was not alone that night many years back and I am not alone now. The guardians are just 2 of the many magnificent spiritual beings pulling for us to reach Paradise. We are told in the *Urantia Book*, "To accept the guidance of a seraphim rarely means attaining a life of ease. In following this leading you are sure to encounter, and if you have the courage, to traverse, the rugged hills of moral choosing and spiritual progress". Is accepting the guidance of your angels hard work? You bet! Is it worth it? That's an understatement!

Angels

I find the subject of guardian angels fascinating. It is hardly a secret that many people believe in angels. There's angel jewelry, clothes, bedding, home décor items, perfume and there is even an angel lingerie line. For most people angels are a lovely thought, especially around the holidays. Isn't it interesting that angels are so commercialized and at the same time people are so truly unaware of their presence? Personally, I don't find much comfort in the serene image of a fair skinned Elizabethan woman strumming a harp when I need some serious help in this world. What I do find comforting is the guardian angels immense strength and ability to guide and protect us humans. Not only do they display attributes of strength and power that aid us, but they also develop real affections for us. These are truly magnificent creatures!

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The SPIRIT OF TRUTH

K. B.

1106 – “There are two basic reasons to believe in a God who fosters human survival. Human experience, personal assurance, the somehow registered hope and trust initiated the indwelling Thought Adjuster. The revelation of truth, whether by direct personal ministry of the Spirit of Truth, by the world bestowal of divine Sons, or through the revelations of the written word.

The Spirit of Truth is also called
Spirit of the Paradise Bestowal Sons
Comforter of the bestowal worlds
Spirit of Micheal on Urantia

ORIGINS & QUALITIES

One of three local universe spirit circuits
Intelligence Ministry, including the seven adjutant mind spirits
Holy Spirit
Spirit of Truth

380 - One of three ministering spirits
Holy Spirit – Infinite Spirit
Spirit of Truth – Son
Adjuster – Father

The Spirit is inherent to the Creator Son
377 – Creative Mother Spirit is its universe focus & center – even if Michael is away the Spirit still functions in the local universe.

HOW WE GET IT

647 - Eternal truth is the ministry of the Paradise Sons, whether it be an Avonal, Magisterial or Creator Son

The Spirit of Truth is granted to a world only after a successful bestowal of a Paradise Son upon that world.

These Sons appear in the flesh, or are born of mortals during this bestowal.

Their mission is the spiritual uplift of mortal beings, the release the Spirit of Truth, and to effect the universal coming of the Thought Adjuster.

When a bestowal son passes from mortal life, he ascends to the Universal Father on the 3rd day, and - the mission accepted – returns to the local universe headquarters.

Then the Creator Son, the bestowal son, and the Creative Mother Spirit send the Spirit into the bestowal world.

The Creator Son bestows himself on only one inhabited planet in his local universe.

Upon completion of his mission, he achieves sovereignty of his kingdom, and bestows the Spirit on that planet. In this universe that planet was Urantia.

HOW IT FUNCTIONS

1187- Acts as a spirit coordinator allowing the Adjusters' indwelling upon the first moral decision and the activation of the 7th adjutant mind spirit (worship). This is the beginning of the capacity for spiritual attainment.

379 – When the Son liberates the Spirit, all normal mortal minds are prepared for the Thought Adjuster.

- It is a force that draws us to the personification of truth in the local universe – Michael

1949 – It is a force that draws truth-seeking mortals to one another in love

1254 – It acts to overcome the effects of the quarantine on our planet. As a world we are removed from universe broadcast circuits, but as individuals we all have this gift of clear seeing if we choose to follow its guidance.

1931 – It gives us the faith realization of the sonship of God.

1641 – It illuminates the human mind, and with the aid of the Thought Adjuster helps us to more fully worship God. It's said that to worship a thing makes us more like that we worship

It fosters the Truth in all things, and enables us to grasp the reality of spiritual values.

MICHAEL AND THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

In the book of Urantia there are over 20 quotes from Jesus in direct reference to the Spirit of Truth. He promised over and over that when he left this life, he would leave behind another teacher... a guide and a comfort for his followers. That his Spirit would be poured out on all flesh, and that they would not be left adrift.

At the Last Supper he blessed the third cup of wine as the symbol of a new ministry of grace and truth - the bestowal the divine Spirit of Truth.

Even after Jesus' resurrection he appeared to his followers, asking them to wait in Jerusalem until he ascended to the Father.

And after he did this, on the day of Pentecost, the spirit was sent into the world.

Pentecost is celebrated seven weeks after Passover.

It is a festival of baptism, and the phrase "baptism in the spirit" was the acknowledgment that the Spirit has been received.

SIDE NOTES

The bestowal of the Spirit of Truth first and foremost opened the way for the universal reception of the Thought Adjusters, but that's not all...

Upon the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth, Urantia was assigned its first governor general, along with twelve corps of master seraphim to work on our planet.

The governor generals are members of the twenty-four planetary supervisors, and their assignments rotate every 100 years of Urantia time.

(They won't tell us who it is.)

Also - at Pentecost all power was stripped from rebel spirits. The midwayers were at this time imprisoned.

Caligastia and Daligastia, the planet's former prince and his associate, were stripped of earthly power in the face of the Adjusters and the protective influence of the Spirit.

Regardless of the presence of the Adjusters, the pouring out of Spirit of Truth alone prevents any disloyal spirits from ever again possessing the minds of humans.

CONCLUSION

Like so many spirit influences and helpers, the Spirit is limited (or unlimited) by your personal acceptance, decisions and cooperation.

It says in the Urantia papers, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

2060 - The Spirit is a living truth - truth that applies to all people in all times.

It gives us the faith recognition that we are indeed children of a God that loves us.

It is our assurance that Michael is with us always.

P.383 - §2 Having started out on the way of life everlasting, having accepted the assignment and received your orders to advance, do not fear the dangers of human forgetfulness and mortal inconstancy, do not be troubled with doubts of failure or by perplexing confusion, do not falter and question your status and standing, for in every dark hour, at every crossroad in the forward struggle, the Spirit of Truth will always speak, saying, "This is the way."

Pg 1949 – The Spirit of Truth

Pg 2059 – Bestowal of the Spirit of Truth

RECONCILING AMBITION WITH SPIRITUALITY

P. C.

Almost from birth, we're impressed with the importance of success and, therefore, of the need for ambition. Our society casts a critical eye on those who seem to lack ambition.

The Urantia Book itself posits the importance of ambition and material success when it says, "*A cultural civilization is only derived from those conditions of material prosperity which foster leisure combined with ambition.*" It also points out that "*During past ages, war was a social ferment that pushed civilization forward; this result is now better achieved by ambition and invention.*"

Clearly, ambition is important in the scheme of things, at least on this planet, at this time. But as we know, language has dimension, and the word ambition has come to possess a rather unsavory flavor. The dictionary defines it simply as the pursuit of a goal. But in these times, it has become associated with people who place their own power, wealth, comfort and prestige above all else, regardless of the cost to others.

The book says ambition can be a force for positive change in our world, and I personally have no problem with the word. However, I had begun to wonder if there might be an alternative – a word that carries a similar meaning, but is more expressive of a striving for spiritual growth as well as material prosperity.

I found it in an unlikely place – a book about a 1960's sci-fi TV show (and no, I don't mean "Star Trek"). The program was called "The Outer Limits."

Every episode began with the screen going fuzzy and an otherworldly voice intoning, "There is nothing wrong with your television; we are controlling transmission." After the commercial break, the voice opened the evening's adventure with a short prologue.

At the beginning of an episode entitled "The Bellerophon Shield," the voice said, "*There is a passion in the human heart that is called aspiration. It flares with a noble flame, and by its light Man has traveled from the caves of darkness to the darkness of outer space. But when this passion becomes lust, when its flame is fanned by greed and private hunger, then aspiration becomes ambition – by which sin the angels fell.*"

That's it, I thought: *Aspiration* in place of *ambition*. Even though their definitions are practically the same, there is a subtle contextual difference between them, much the same as that between two other frequently confused terms: *self-esteem* and *self-value*.

Ambition is to self-esteem as aspiration is to self-value. Ambition is about finding a way to take; aspiration is about finding a way to contribute. Ambition demands. Aspiration inquires.

Ambition is about the pursuit of money, power, influence, prestige – the reward as the end in itself. I consider aspiration's goals to be the acquisition of knowledge, experience and skill, leading to ideas, improvements, invention, advancement and personal growth with *accomplishment* as its reward. Aspiration may well produce all the rewards ambition seeks, but they won't be the objects of the pursuit – and will be all the sweeter for it.

Ambition can be seen as a product of ego, the outward manifestation of fear and insecurity – the idea that one must grab all one can while one can.

Aspiration, on the other hand, originates in the certain knowledge that one has a unique place in the cosmos; it induces the individual to discover what he or she can best contribute.

Once I keyed to this concept, I began to look for examples in life, and soon found a striking example in the women's figure-skating competition at the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.

I saw the difference between aspiration and ambition in the performances of Sarah Hughes and Michelle Kwan. Michelle was touted as the likely Gold medallist and went into the long program favored to win. Sarah Hughes went into it in fourth position, not even likely to win a Bronze, and therefore had no expectations riding on her. Because of that, I believe, Hughes was able to focus exclusively on giving the best performance she could. She was there for the pleasure of the crowd, for the thrill of simply being in the Olympics. She had only one aspiration, and that was to do her best.

Hughes' was stunning, perfect. She flew across the ice, as if she had an angel under each arm (and maybe she did); her leaps were effortless, weightless. You could see the joy in her face: the realization that she was reaching beyond herself, giving a performance even she didn't think she was capable of.

In contrast, Kwan's performance was stilted, uninspired. Her leaps were half-hearted, her feet like lead. I think it was because she had her mind on the prize. Instead of trying to give a great performance, she was only trying to avoid mistakes.

Don't misread me. My intention is not to cast aspersions on Michelle Kwan's character or skills or to suggest that Hughes is a better person or a better skater. I know Kwan was under tremendous pressure to win, and on another day, the roles might well have been reversed. Nevertheless, on that day, I think Kwan was brought down by ambition, while Hughes – who won the Gold – was exalted by aspiration.

We can all find examples in our own lives of times when we were guided by aspiration, others when we were led by ambition.

In my life, specifically in my distant youth, I aspired to be a radio disc jockey. I believe it was aspiration because I know that money and fame were not much on my mind. I doubt that I was motivated by a need to be in the spotlight, either, since I never really enjoyed public appearances and found more satisfaction working behind the scenes.

For whatever reason, I just loved radio – still do – and thought I could contribute something to it. I read every book I could find, subscribed to the industry trade magazine, visited radio stations, talked to anybody who knew anything about the business. I did everything I could to study and prepare. Aspiration manifested as *dedication* and *preparation*.

This does not mean I became a target-fixated monomaniac. I stayed open to other potentials. I developed my writing and photography skills, studied theater and drama, filmmaking, journalism and other interests. I stayed open to the idea that there might be other paths available to me. I was almost more of an interested spectator, waiting to see which door would open first.

As it turned out, perhaps because my steady preparation and dedication indicated my sincerity, the doors to radio opened very quickly and relatively easily, and indeed, I was able to make meaningful contributions to the stations I worked for.

There are times when I think those were the best years of my life, at least from a career standpoint, simply because I loved what I was doing and had goals for self-improvement – goals that also benefited the people I was working for.

Did ambition ever overrule aspiration? You bet. There were plenty of times when I was convinced that I could do the program director's job better than the program director. When I became a program director myself, I quickly learned that I had much more to learn.

Maybe that's a key difference between aspiration and ambition. With aspiration, there's always more to learn, always room to grow, always another step along the path.

DO WE HAVE A PURPOSE?

G. C.

Do we have a purpose? It is a question that we ask ourselves every day. Maybe not in those exact words, it may be more along the lines of the song title "Is That All There Is"? Do we find the answer every day? Some say yes, I've found it in my religion. Many more say no and continue to look, while others don't care at all. If we continue to ask the question in some form or another, the answer will be brought to us. We each received our answer in how we came to know about the Urantia Book and began to learn that there was indeed a purpose, a reason for our existence.

The Urantia Book and my teacher came into my life in March of 1995. At the time that the class began, I hadn't realized how much I had started searching for an answer. Organized religion didn't work for me anymore. I hadn't realized how scared I was of so many things – about myself, my life, my future. It was so gratifying to learn that ["There is in the mind of God a plan which embraces every creature of all his vast domains, and this plan is an eternal purpose of boundless opportunity, unlimited progress, and endless life.](#)

What did knowing about this plan change in my life? Understanding that ["... The events of time and the struggles of material existence are but the transient scaffolding which bridges over to the other side, to the promised land of spiritual reality and supernal existence ..."](#) makes it somewhat easier to deal with day-to-day struggles. Our challenges help to prepare us for our future growth. It is how we deal with challenges and making our decisions on a daily basis that will help us to understand the complexity of our Father.

Knowing that I have a place in God's plan helped me to start letting go of the fears and negative selves that had me doing a pendulum swing from positive to negative. I was able to stop worrying about the future and learn to live in the now and enjoy it. In the years that I have been in class, I have had 3 major medical/hospital situations. With my growth, I have progressed from being scared -- almost to the point of dying – to becoming a positive example of determination in my rehab. In class, I was told that I as I continued to grow, negative people would become uncomfortable around me. Over the last four years in my work environment, all the negative people have been replaced with more positive and upbeat people. It was interesting to realize that the opportunities for my personal and professional growth could be boundless, and that I was the one holding myself back. In learning about my negative selves, I realized that some of them didn't want me to succeed. They wanted to keep me where I was at and tell me that I didn't deserve anything better. It has been such a liberation to learn that you can modify those selves, so you can continue to work on the big plan. One of the best parts of learning about the plan or purpose for our lives, was a rediscovery of the awe and wonder that I had as a young child and early teen about sharing eternity with our Father.

As we continue with our daily existence, we must keep in mind that we have a higher purpose. ["Man cannot hope to live up to his highest ideals, but he can be true to his purpose of finding God and becoming more and more like him."](#) What an ambitious plan for us! A chance to tell all those negative selves to take a hike! An ability to show the Father everyday how much we love him and honor him. We have the opportunity to be a living example of becoming God-like. Becoming more God-like doesn't mean just being good and going to church on Sunday. It means that there are some new things we have to learn about and deal with. We have to take care of details, make our decisions for the greater good, learn to let go and let God and learn to keep balance in all things. We will never realize how many lives we have touched over the years with just a kind word, a smile or an uplifting thought. If our purpose is to be come more like our Father, we must become love because God is Love. Our Father loves us and has made this purpose for us to better understand him. If we will only abide in his love, we will spend eternity with him.

RECREATION AND LEISURE

B. C.

In my preparation for this weekend, I tried to pick a topic that I felt was appropriate for the occasion, the occasion being a weekend of fellowship, relaxation and fun among friends. I could think of no better topic than that of leisure as addressed in the Urantia book.

Recreation is a necessary part of our existence, not just here, but throughout our Paradise ascent.

Paper 84 #8 p.942.6

“Advancing celestial beings all enjoy rest and the ministry of the reversion directors. All efforts to obtain wholesome diversion and to engage in uplifting play are sound; refreshing sleep, rest, recreation, and all pastimes which prevent the boredom of monotony are worth while. Competitive games, storytelling, and even the taste of good food may serve as forms of self-gratification.”

The Reversion Directors are the humorists of the Morontia worlds. They are a group of volunteers, recruited from beings ranging from Havona natives, to the Messenger Hosts of space and Ministering Spirits of time, to the Morontia progressors from the evolutionary worlds. They also assist in memory recapitulation. They serve an important role on the Morontia worlds in balancing out work and play.

Primitive man had little time for recreation, because he was on the move constantly looking for food and shelter. It's hard to think about enjoying yourself when you are busy trying to survive. But as human kind evolved, and learned to tame the elements, he was afforded more leisure.

Paper 81 #2 p.902.4

“The savage is a slave to nature, but scientific civilization is slowly conferring increasing liberty on mankind. Through animals, fire, wind, water, electricity, and other undiscovered sources of energy, man has liberated, and will continue to liberate, himself from the necessity for unremitting toil. Regardless of the transient trouble produced by the prolific invention of machinery, the ultimate benefits to be derived from such mechanical inventions are inestimable. Civilization can never flourish, much less be established, until man has *leisure* to think, to plan, to imagine new and better ways of doing things.”

Here we are alerted to the true importance of leisure. This leisure time affords for thinking and inventing. Through leisure time our human race has been able to create new and better ways to live and our world has thus advanced. Where would we be if Thomas Edison had been out every day searching for food? Even language did not develop until man had learned to live well enough to allow for times of rest and relaxation.

Of course the point of leisure is not always to progress science and industry. In early times of humanity on our planet, when feeling oppressed by peace, young men of neighboring tribes engaged in war as a form of recreation; this was a more, semi-friendly type of battle. It is a natural urge of mankind to need to release his tensions in some way. Some of these tensions are a part of our animal legacy, stemming from our self-preservation instincts. This is another way that leisure is very beneficial to our existence. By creating games and contests, man has devised a healthy way to compete and let loose his accumulating emotions and energies.

As we continue to progress as a society and our leisure time increases, we must remember to be productive. We grow even in our recreation activities.

Paper 84 #8 p.943.1

“Let man enjoy himself; let the human race find pleasure in a thousand and one ways; let evolutionary mankind explore all forms of legitimate self-gratification, the fruits of the long upward biologic struggle. Man has well earned some of his present-day joys and pleasures. But look you well to the goal of destiny! Pleasures are indeed suicidal if they succeed in destroying property, which has become the institution of self-maintenance; and self-gratifications have indeed cost a fatal price if they bring about the collapse of

marriage, the decadence of family life, and the destruction of the home--man's supreme evolutionary acquirement and civilization's only hope of survival”

This warning reminds us that as we find more ways to relax and enjoy ourselves, we must not lose sight of the big picture. We must not focus on our selves and our own self-gratification. That can truly destroy our civilization. I think this can be seen in some of our movies and television as well as the attitude that some people have towards competition. Hopefully as we further evolve, humanity will begin to understand the importance of leisure and how to make the best of that time. But at least let us remember to make the most of our recreation time. Enjoy a game, create something; just remember to be a good sport and have fun.

“LIVE FROM SALVINGTON, BUT WE CAN’T HEAR YOU!”

URANTIA’S QUARANTINED BROADCAST SERVICE

J. C.

Rebellions are a difficult way for beings to learn what God’s will is all about. An unfortunate aspect of our Lucifer rebellion is that Urantia and other inhabited worlds in our local system have experienced what is called spiritual quarantine from broadcasts. At the very start of the Lucifer rebellion, broadcast service and all other avenues of interplanetary communication were suspended by the action of the system circuit supervisors. What do they mean by broadcasts? What is broadcast service?

Broadcasts are simply communication, an exchange of information. With a universe that is never-ending, we cannot even imagine all the communication that has to take place. Paradise to super universes, super universe to super universe, super universe to local universe, local universe to constellation, and so on. The Urantia Book mentions a few specific broadcasts:

Universal Broadcast
Paradise Broadcast
Paradise-Havona Broadcast
Uversa Broadcast
Salvington Broadcast

Another word used to describe a broadcast is a “Space Report”. Communication cannot begin to be useful without a vehicle to carry it. Broadcast Service is just one of the ways that super universes, local universes, constellations, systems, and worlds, such as Urantia, send and receive information between each other {Who can name another way information is sent and received? Gravity Messengers, Reflectivity & Solitary Messengers – pg. 259, Energy Transmitters – pg. 327}. Broadcast Service can also be used by higher order beings to communicate with each other.

Broadcasts are for the most part audible only except when reflectivity is added to the broadcast to produce both audible and visual. The signal is waves of energy. These waves are sent by sending broadcast stations and received by receiving broadcast stations. At the local world level, such as Urantia, the broadcast waves penetrate our atmosphere. There is a gas shield high within our atmosphere which prevents the escape of these broadcast waves, in turn, reflecting them earthward when they strike this gas belt. In this way broadcasts are held near the surface as they journey through the air around your world. (pg. 520)

On page 522 of the Urantia Book, we are given a description of a receiving broadcast station on our system headquarters of Jerusem. We are told the broadcast is a Paradise-Hovona space report received at Jerusem in liaison with Salington, the headquarters of our local universe. On Jerusem there are three distinct groups of receiving stations with each one adjusted to the reception of broadcasts from different location. For example, one of the receiving stations receives broadcasts from local worlds such as Urantia, another is set up to receive broadcasts from constellations, while the third receives broadcasts from the capital of our local universe. Each receiving station is encircled by an enormous amphitheater that holds 5 billion beings plus other spiritual personalities. Sometimes you will find these facilities mentioned as “Sea of Glass” because of the polar crystal used in the technique. The Sea of Glass is a favorite place for beings to spend their leisure time.

At the present time, we can only hope and pray the quarantine will be lifted soon. Broadcasts will gradually be able to reach our world. And when we find our Sea of Glass, we’ll hear:

LIVE FROM SALVINGTON, WE HEAR YOU!!!!

ON A MISSION FROM GOD

T. C.

The Truth of the Thought Adjusters, our own fragment of God, is the main factor from the revelation of God in the Urantia Book that first got and held my attention. It confirmed my belief in a direct relationship with our Universal Father for each and every one of us. It also confirms that we are never alone, no matter where we may find ourselves in this universe of universes.

One of the many references to our partner/guides on our eternal journey of life is found on page 42:8 – "... the isolated mortal of time and space coheres in God the Father through the direct relationship between the indwelling Thought Adjuster and the Universal Father. Man's Adjuster is a fragment of God and everlastingly seeks for divine unification; it coheres with, and in, the Paradise Deity of the First Source and Center."

Prior to my introduction to Jean's book and to this wonderful revelation of God (the Urantia Book teachings), I most assuredly tormented my Adjuster with many of my unthinking actions, which excluded God from my focus on life. My guardian angels were being forced to work overtime just to keep me alive long enough to realize that I really did have a wonderful future and that I am now becoming more real as a part of God's family of God-loving and God-seeking beings.

Even though I felt that I was being truthful, honorable and selfless through most of my actions in life, I was really being selfish by doing what I thought was best for me, my family and my friends, rather than putting God first, stepping back and looking at the bigger picture, then doing what was the best for all concerned. I lacked real self-value and was a slave to many fears.

The knowledge of the existence my Thought Adjuster and the fact that God knows my every intention motivates me to keep my thoughts in a positive mode, to become more and more objective and to be more spiritually minded. Living this better way of life on a consistent daily basis has, paraphrasing Jean's book, "brought me a personal relationship with my God Fragment that is so profound that I cannot put it into words and – I *know* is real!"

By living my life one day at a time, by planning each day's activities based on what is presented to me that day (living in the now) and basing all my actions, in a broader perspective, on what is best for all concerned, I am now living a life of peace, stability and happiness that is affecting others around me in a positive way almost every day.

I now know for sure that I am truly on a "Mission From God" (to become divine) – that being, "Be you perfect, even as I am perfect" – as are all of us who choose to live and survive and to take up the eternal quest of unification. This mission encompasses transcending our selves, attaining cosmic mind, fusion with our Adjusters and becoming truly immortal. Hopefully, fusion with our Adjuster can be accomplished here, demonstrating to all that if you live the teachings of the Urantia Book to the utmost, that the most wonderful things can happen to you and everyone around you, including translation in the place of natural death. Next on this mission is acquiring morontia mota and attaining the first psychic circle on the mansion worlds, becoming a Jerusem citizen, traversing the constellation and all the levels of morontia life, attaining the threshold of the spirit world on Salvington, becoming a first stage spirit during our sojourn in the Minor Sector, advancing to second stage spirit when translated to the Major Sector, achieving third stage spirit when going forward to the Central Training worlds of the Superuniverse, attaining fourth stage spirit after reaching the sixth circle of Havona, attaining fifth stage spirit after finding the Father on Havona, becoming sixth stage spirit after taking the Oath of Finality, and very possibly becoming a Trinitized Son of Attainment as one of Those Without Name and Number, as Jean believes to be the case for many of us, to begin serving in the executive branch of Superuniverse governments for the Ancients of Days, and with the

Perfectors of Wisdom, Divine Counselors, Universal Censors, Mighty Messengers and Those High in Authority and possibly with the Perfections of Days in the Superuniverse Major Sectors. Throughout this long experiential adventure we are helping every other potential ascendant being to become perfected so that we can all realize the emergence of the Supreme Being sooner, rather than later, while awaiting our ultimate destiny in the outer space levels.

If only everyone with whom we come in contact could be made aware of the existence of their Thought Adjusters and realize that they too have a direct, personal relationship with God every second of every day, this world and all other worlds would be such better places in which to live with and love one another as we should. So, everyone get out of yourself so that God can come in and be a significant part of you, as you *are* a part of Him.

The Michaels Foundation Retreat 2002

D. C.

She was raped then murdered by strangulation in her own home. She was seven years old. Her attackers were her own nine-year-old brother and her eleven-year-old male cousin.

Thirteen-year-old Nathaniel shot and killed his teacher the day after that teacher had given him detention for having water balloons in class.

Fourteen-year-old Wanda was sentenced to juvenile detention by an administrative judge of the St. Louis Family Court for missing 51 days of school. When questioned why she missed so much she answered "I don't care about nuthin'." Her mother says disgustedly, "She thinks she needs counseling because her sister got shot and killed."

Homicide is the number two cause of death among 10-24 year olds according to the U.S. Department of Justice- Bureau of Justice Statistics. Granted the above examples I mentioned are extreme, the statistics are frightening. The statistics show a rise in overall violence, violent crime, suicide, drug use (including alcohol and tobacco), directly proportional to the decrease in school success of children- particularly ages 9-15 in grades 5-9.

I have worked in the public school system as a nurse for over twelve years. The last three years I have worked almost exclusively in the Junior High area which is composed of grades 6-8 with students ages of 11-14. (This is lovingly referred to as the rude, crude, with attitude age!) Since becoming a registered nurse 27 years ago I never aspired to working with children, especially adolescents and pre-adolescents. However Our Father in his infinite wisdom placed me where I was needed and where I needed to be to gain this experience and knowledge. I can tell you first hand the downward spiral of our children is real. An increasing percentage of our young people care less and less about their educational success, personal well-being, and self-value. These children are self-mutilating, self-medicating, eating disorders and gang related behavior abound. I have been very concerned at the number of children I see in the hallways and playground with sad eyes and unsmiling faces when they should be experiencing the joys of childhood. Our children are calling, no screaming out at the top of their lungs for help. Are we doomed as culture? I do not think so. Is there a reason for this problem or a possible solution? Yes to both questions.

A closer look at the majority of our children's problems point directly to the parents. As bitter a pill as it is to swallow, as much as we want to blame drugs, movies, guns, and other outside influences for our children's problems (and many of these are valid concerns) we need to realize the number one cause is that our parenting and parenting skills have and are failing. The parental influence and example is the biggest criteria for the molding of the young child. If the parents do not take their responsibilities for their children, if they are not involved in their children's lives 24-7, spiritually, socially, physically, and educationally; if they put their own urges, lures, and desires before their children--- the children are set-up for failure. It has been said children do not come with an owner's manual like your DVD player or VCR, and we all know how many of us are successful at programming those! It is also said parenting has no blue print. These statements are not exactly true. This is where you and I come in ladies and gentlemen. All of us in class know the Urantia book and the seven cornerstones of living outlined in Transcendence of Self is a Way of Life are excellent blue prints and teaching manuals.

The primary solution to the problems is teaching the children. That is why is so critical to get The Michaels Academy started as soon as possible. All of us are potential teachers and the opportunity to guide the children on the right path and help our planet evolve is daunting and awesome. In addition I would like to see us tackle the problems from the other end so to speak, by teaching parenting classes. I am a firm believer in parenting classes and if I could influence the public school system, I would like to see parenting classes be a graduation requirement for all students. Alas, I am not in a position of national influence, but hopefully we will be able to incorporate this into the academy. Parenting is a job, a hard and often thankless job, that requires lots of work, but with very worthwhile results. Our children require proper parenting and home life. Page 1175-76 of the Urantia Book says, "Without the genuine love of a home, no child can achieve the full development of normal character." Our children are our future. The proper teaching, parenting, and home life of our children is essential to help this planet evolve. Our

mission to do what is for the greatest good of all and to spread the word of the Fatherhood of GOD and the brotherhood of man is very clear. Page 942 of the Urantia Book says, "But even more, a true family-a good family- reveals to the parental procreators the attitude of the Creator to his children, while at the same time such true parents portray to their children the first of a long series of ascending disclosures of the love of the Paradise parent of all universe children."

One of the ways I feel passionately about helping to do the Father's will is by teaching the children and their parents on family and home life.

In conclusion I would like to leave you with a quote not from either book, but from Fredrick Douglas, "It is easier to build up a strong child than to repair a broken adult."

WORSHIP

B. F.

Our experience with worship has its humble beginnings in the act of counting our blessings and soars to amazing heights on Paradise. This divine time is extremely important to our growth and the quality of our relationship with God. It is a unique and powerful experience that is distinctly different from prayer. So what is true worship, why is it important and how good does it really get?

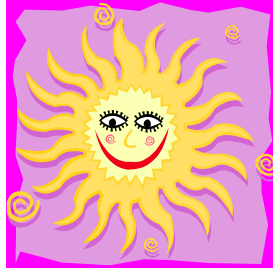
Worship is spiritual communion with God. It is an outpouring of love and appreciation for God, as we perceive him to be. It is our attempt to fraternize with the great God within us and allow his love to touch our innermost being. His love has the power to heal the emotional wounds of our hectic lives and the tatters of our fears and insecurities. Like a true friend he is always there for us even when we neglect to keep in touch.

Worship is a retreat to the most holy part of us. It is a time of sublime peace, our fountain of spiritual refreshment. It is the manner in which we regenerate our soul energies and awaken the spiritual forces within us. Worship is our citidel of strength, our Bastille of power and courage reminding us of exactly how strong we really can be. I believe it is the difference between having faith and truly knowing God. When you have felt the loving presence of God, you know from where you speak.

The element that distinguishes Worship from prayer is the fact that it is not self-seeking. We are asking nothing from God. We simply want to be close to him and feel his loving presence. The moment we shift our focus to making a petition of self-interest the experience becomes prayer. "Worship is for its own sake; prayer embodies a self-or creature-interest element; that is the great difference between worship and prayer. There is absolutely no self-request or other element of personal interest in true worship; we simply worship God for what we comprehend him to be."

The quality of our worship is determined by the depth of our sincerity and adoration. However it may be enhanced by immersing yourself in nature or a place of beauty. The Urantia Book refers to Michael's time on Urantia, "He preferred to commune with the Heavenly Father amidst the trees and among the lowly creatures of the natural world." "When it is not possible to worship God in the tabernacles of nature, men should do their best to provide houses of beauty, sanctuaries of appealing simplicity and artistic embellishment so that the highest human emotions be aroused in association with the intellectual approach to spiritual communion with God."

The Urantia Book makes some powerful statements in reference to our future satisfaction while in worship. "The act of Worship becomes increasingly all-encompassing until it eventually attains the glory of the highest experiential delight and the most exquisite pleasure known to created beings." "Sometimes all Paradise becomes engulfed in a dominating tide of spiritual and worshipful expression. Often the conductors of worship cannot control such a phenomenon until the appearance of the three fold fluctuation of the light of the deity abode, signifying that the diving heart of the gods has been fully and completely satisfied by the sincere worship of the residents of Paradise."



Are you Happy?

C. F.

Happiness is a Journey, not a destination. Happiness is not something stumbled upon nor can someone else give it to you. We all want to be happy, feel good, and feel balanced. We want to be that Happy person that even through hard times can stand strong and still come out on top. To find inner strength at times we never thought possible. Can you buy happiness? Can you give birth to Happiness? I think not! To be happy is to have earned the right to be. For true Happiness is having self-value, not self-esteem, and we all know self-value has to be earned. Earned by making the conscious effort to be that better, and balanced individual God intended us to be. As stated in the Urantia Book “Happiness.. Always for those certain about god.” And rightfully so. For me, the first sign of Happiness in my life was when my husband Bobby introduced me to the Urantia Book. For once in my life I had answers to questions I had so longingly searched for after being raised a Southern Baptist in South Louisiana. At the young age of six years old I was already questioning the contradictions of this religion, As well as disagreeing with the scare tactics infringed upon people in order to get them to commit to God. Praying to Jesus every night for judgment day not to come until my teen years is not something a normal 6 year old should be praying for. So after rejecting my parent’s wishes as a child to go to church, I never thought that I would know God. Therefore, I can say that although family and friends were always there for me, I went through my childhood, adolescent, and part of my adulthood, not really knowing what it meant to be truly happy. Then God set my life up with series of events that brought me to class.

There are too many individuals who feel material things can bring them joy and happiness. What they are trying to do is fill a void they don’t understand is there. In quotes, “In Jesus’ time and since, Happiness has all to often been associated with the idea of the possession of wealth.” “Happy are the poor in spirit. - The Humble.” If it’s not material things, then they are looking for the perfect job, the perfect spouse, the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd baby. All of these things are fun or fulfilling in the beginning. But then after the newness wears off they are back to where we started from, empty.

Where can you start to achieve Happiness? The first step is to understand that there is no better time to be Happy than Right Now! There is Now Way to Happiness. Happiness is THE WAY! Ask yourself, are you happy with your relationship with God? Are you working on a daily Basis to establish that close relationship? When I started class I was just happy to be evolved with people that actually talked about God and how loving and powerful he is. Now I can’t imagine my life with out him. Other questions though your journey of happiness could be are you having enough fun? Do you find something to laugh about every day? In quotes, “Humor is the divine antidote for exaltation of ego.” Are there any apologies you need to make? Have you been carrying the past with you clouding your ability to be happy? Can you do anything about the past? Possibly, by saying your am sorry for something you might have done. But then let it go! Live in the Now!

Do you spend too much time worrying about something you can't control? Probably. But do you work hard not too? How can you be happy if you are worrying all the time? What's your outlook? Do you embrace new experiences, challenges, and change? Or do you avoid the unfamiliar and stick to what you know? Without change there are no challenges. And without challenges there is no growth. Growth is happiness, and growth with change has value. Which is what we are trying to achieve. That Growth that has value which can be added to our soul.

The key to Happiness is Sincerity. Sincerity and more sincerity, which is the lack of ego, the lack of fear. To be sincere is to ask yourself, "When did you last walk in someone else's shoes?" "Are you being objective?" "Are you patient?" "Are you being compassionate?" "Should you try and see things from a different perspective?" In quotes "Strong characters are not derived from not doing wrong but rather from actually doing right. Unselfishness is the badge of human greatness. The highest levels of self-realization are attained by worship and service. The happy and effective person is motivated, not by fear of wrongdoing, but by love of right doing."

At this point in my life, I can truly say I have much Happiness within. This Happiness has only surfaced by being a God loving and God knowing individual. In quotes "Happiness are they who hunger and thirst for the Righteousness, for they shall be filled." Our class has brought me much happiness and is so rewarding and fulfilling because we are learning what God intended us to learn "*THE TRUTH.*" Jesus sums it up by saying "Our religion is throbbing with new life and new meanings. Those who accept this teaching are filled with Joy and in their heart are constrained to rejoice even more."

Five Minutes

T. F.

Start with pathway intro and discuss how met Jean and the class. Elaborate on those details (the items leading up to going to Flagstaff and then the lack of sleep and then the wrong lecture hall and finally the correct place for the lecture) and lead up to the present with the group and the phone class and how it has grown. All of these people WANT to be there. You can sense the motivation and the unity of purpose. And it is just fantastic to be a part of it!

The class does many things for but one of the main things for me is the constant retaining of my focus. For me Monday night is class night. I structure my other routines and requirements about Monday evening. I typically prepare for class by looking over what we will be talking about that night and formulating any questions that I might have. Also in class I particularly like it when the other students ask questions. Many times I get an additional perspective and deeper insight from the questions, the answers and other students responses.

So that brings me up to now. And here I am together with this unique group at this retreat.

What I have said so far introduces me to those of you that are relatively new and lets you know my pathway up to this point. And pathway is the key concept I want to talk about here. Those of us here are on THE pathway. And we know it. We know that we know. There is no fear, no God fearing but rather God loving and the realization of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

When that reality sinks in then shortly thereafter we want to share this newfound perspective with just about everyone. We want to tell all the world. There is a divine plan. We are indwelt by a fragment of God. Thus we try to align ourselves with the universal trend – to go with that flow to position ourselves to not only live in greater harmony with our Father but also to be more aware of our spiritual brothers and sisters that we encounter and offer them our exciting insight.

The first time I went through this was many years ago. I'd had the book about 3 years. My idea then was to get some extra copies of The Urantia Book and give them to people I "knew" would be receptive to the information. I was very, very excited about all this.

The ensuing reactions to my Urantia Book givings were stunning to me. Instead of people sharing my enthusiasm I got reactions ranging from what is this crap, to where did you get that, to is this some sort of cult, to how can you understand it nothing makes any sense. So after I got over being so taken aback I realized that my technique for sharing was totally out of sync with what I had intended. The intent and the result may correspond and they may not.

A few years later as a member of FSUB, an organized group of readers, I helped man booths at book fairs where our purpose was to make those that were interested aware of The Urantia Book. I watched as different readers who participated in our efforts spoke with the inquiring public. I saw some people blast their greater truth so strongly, so brightly as to overwhelm those they were speaking with. I saw others speak softly, as questions and drop little kernels of truth and communicate with those they were speaking with. This was the effective way.

I realized that I had to become much more aware of others reality and receptivity. I had to meet others on their current level of understanding, in other words, where they were in their present evolutionary state.

For me an important realization was to accept that evolution is the way the universe unfolds and perfects. Evolution cannot be hurried. Even Adam and Eve failed to deal with this reality properly and that led to the Adamic default. The next thing I realized is that I was part of the evolutionary process. With that in mind I wanted to play a part and to offer what I could to those that were receptive to the greater truths I had become aware of.

This was an important realization for me. It gave me a clearer focus. Evolution is in effect. It cannot be expedited. We are all playing a part in this great unfolding. For me it then became a matter of doing what I could do in any given situation. I had to become patient with God. If The Father works through one of us at a time then so must I do the same.

This really clarified things for me. I had gone from attempting that which was not effective to having a new perspective, a perspective that allowed me to do the doable. I had gone from an approach that was overwhelming and chaotic both for myself and those I wished to communicate with to an approach that was effective. It was much softer and subtle. I had fully realized that I did not have to present the people I encountered with advanced and blinding information. I just had to meet them on a common level and it does not have to be complicated.

Let's look to the Master for an example of how easy that can be. In paper 159 on page 1764, Jesus and John are talking one on one after a day of preaching and Jesus responds to a question from John with "I tell you that, even when a cup of cold water is given to a thirsty soul, the Father's messengers shall ever make record of such a service of love." Such a genuinely small gesture, such a small act of random kindness and yet so effective.

Page 1875 "most of the really important things which Jesus said or did seemed to happen casually, "as he passed by." And it behooves the Master's followers in all ages to learn to minister "as they pass by" – to do unselfish good as they go about their daily duties."

I could mention some specifics but I think it better, more effective not to. Let each of us in our own way via our very own methods and techniques find a way to be of service, to minister "as WE pass by."

I feel if I mention specifics then it might put a limitation on your creativity, your spontaneity in discovering for yourselves your very own personal opportunities. If a cold cup of water or a friendly smile are effective so are many, many other efforts. With that in mind let us seek out and rejoice in extending service to others.

First we have to be sincere. As Jean would say, sincerity, sincerity and more sincerity. This cannot be faked. Others can read us regardless of seeming differential in status, intellectual capacity or educational levels. We simply have to manifest our spiritual fragrance to others. Now, think about this. Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care. Again, nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care. It's a catchy little phrase and it kind of stays with you but it IS true. When we are sincere, when we emit a spiritual fragrance that's when others truly know how much we care.

So, let us all follow our inner leading and develop an awareness of those around us that can use a little of our help, our ministry "as we pass by." Let us quietly go forth and do our duty.

A few weeks ago in preparation for this retreat presentation I spoke with Jean about a topic. I asked her for a suggestion. She did not offer a specific. She said something would come to me. I called her back again and said nothing was coming and I needed to get something started. She then said, "Well, if you really need to know what you should talk about I think you should talk about five minutes." Well, ladies and gentlemen it's been about five minutes.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

B. H.

Page 64 of the Urantia Book says that the “proof of our fraternity with God consists totally in the nature and extent of the fruits of the spirit which are yielded in the life experience of the individual believer. By their fruits you shall know them.”

Just what are the fruits of the spirit – and how do we get them?

Building a friendship with God creates a foundation of self value and peace. Having God in your life everyday gives us the courage to fight the fears and change the negative within each of us. It gives us the knowledge of just how much God truly does love each and every one of us, what an absolutely magnificent future we have, and how valuable and important each one of us truly is to his plan.

We gain an understanding of how the universe works - cause and effect. We learn to make decisions the right way – for the greater good - and how to learn from the mistakes we still make because we’re not perfect. We can identify the fears we’ve each created – and modify them. We’re able to look at life (our own and others) with a new perspective – objectivity.

This growing alliance with our Father shows itself in so many ways – patience, the ability to enjoy each moment, a sense of peace, compassion and understanding, a willingness to help others, objective caring advice when its asked for, and responsibility for our own behavior and decisions. We have an appreciation for things and moments of beauty, an ease for meeting and being with people anywhere and everywhere, and we have the guidance and objectivity so we can say the right thing to people at the right time.

You can even hear evidence of the fruits of the spirit in our basics reports: “I handled this; I took a look at myself and saw what I did wrong; I can laugh at myself; I messed that one up but understand it now; I saw what someone else did and I don’t want to be that way.”

There are fruits from the material world that come too – as we earn them. A comfortable welcoming home, dependable cars, trips, a challenging job with opportunity to grow and learn more about how God wants us to do things – new fun adventures every day. I never in my wildest dreams thought I would have a house, much less one as nice as it is. It’s something I thank Him for every morning. And though we all sometimes get frustrated and grind our teeth at our job, our financial needs are met – over and over again.

The soil we grow from is our animal origin. With the right combination of God’s light, spirit – the water - and nurturing – our desire to grow, something of greater value can grow from that soil – and we can reach beyond our animal nature toward the beauty of spirit.

We’ve each made a commitment by attending these classes. We said, “You know God, I’ve done it my way and it only worked some of the time – or maybe not at all. Now I want to do it your way.” We’re each looking for the fruits of the spirit – the benefits of a life where God is first.

The changes we so desperately wanted before finding these classes are today the natural outgrowth of a profound inner experience.

So what’s happening to us every day?

It’s because we are striving to climb the psychic circles, paying attention to the right way to do things, changing our habit patterns, that those around us can see the transforming power of this spirit within us. The proof that God is in your life, that He is your friend, is seen in how you choose to live each and every day.

(Page 1733) “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.”

Why is this so important? Very simple. Every decision we make affects more than one person. What you do touches others – more so than we often realize. We are so blessed with the knowledge about

God, knowing our purpose – what we’re supposed to do with this life – and proof that this way works. It’s our job to make changes in our own life. It’s up to us to grow, because as we do, the environment around us will also change. Fear is destructive, and anger is like a buzzing hornets nest – but harmony and truth create a contagious atmosphere. If the fruits of the spirit within us show to those around us, and we’re living the truth – and real truth is beautiful – then our lives can be beautiful. And one day, one person at a time, this world can be beautiful, too.

Jean said in one Sunday class that what lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us. The benefits of our growing relationship with God – the fruits of the spirit - what we each display in our everyday routine, can inspire others to make changes.

We have an editor we work with several days every month. He is extremely creative, with video editing, music, graphics and operation of the equipment as well. I’ve never seen anyone as fast as he is. But this man – he’s about 50 – was so opinionated he was bitter and almost a bigot. When he worked, he worked, and with a smile, but when we all went to lunch --- oh boy. He would always find something negative to say about any issue in the news, politics, and telemarketers, how someone acted, why someone did something. There was something wrong with the way everything was done. I put up my hand to stop him and disagree with him so many times you’d have thought it was spring-mounted. And as creative as he was, we were all getting so tired of listening to his attitudes. I was ready to book someone else, even if the editing took longer and wasn’t done with the same style.

After we came back from our staff meeting trip to California, he had been editing and I went in to look at the segment. We got to talking, and I have no idea how it came up, but all of a sudden he said, “I want you to know I’ve decided to change – I’m going to be more patient, I’m going to quit letting things bother me, I’m going to enjoy every minute more.” He said a few other things and I think my mouth was open so I didn’t hear him real well. Karen, my coordinator, was sitting at her desk and later told me she had also heard him, was equally astounded, and thought the funniest thing was the silence she heard from me, knowing full well how surprised I was.

But you know the best part – you really can see the changes in him. And he is happier.

But having my friend God sit on my shoulder every day helped me learn to not worry about whether he liked me or not, or anyone else at the lunch table for that matter. And being the coward in front of confrontation that I’ve been all my life, He helped quit being afraid to stand up for what’s right. I can’t take credit for Jim’s decision – it was HIS decision. But we did create the positive, peaceful atmosphere to encourage that decision.

My other story is about Sabra, my production assistant, and her grandmother. Her grandmother has been sick, and was recently moved from her assisted living facility to a rehab and nursing home and told she only had a few weeks to live. She doesn’t get along well with her son and his wife or any other family members. Apparently she’s quite negative and Sabra is about the only one she’ll talk to. Well, one night, she was very agitated and called Sabra about every two hours, and Sabra finally got it out of her that she was afraid to die because she knew God was going to send her to hell for killing her husband. Sabra’s granddad had died of a heart attack 15 years ago – they were shopping at the mall one day, he didn’t feel well, told the grandmother he wanted to leave, she said she wanted to stop at one more store, he said fine, I’m going to the car. When the grandmother got to the car, he had had another heart attack and was dead. And all these years she has blamed herself for his death. And because of her religious beliefs, she was afraid she would go to hell for what she thought she had done.

Sabra got no sleep that night, and was very upset the next day at work. She wanted to comfort her grandmother but didn’t know what to tell her. She had gotten advice from others but didn’t feel their suggestions would help. As we were sitting there talking at lunch, it just popped in my head – why not tell your grandmother that her angels were looking out for her and your granddad that day? What if they had left when he wanted to, and he’d had that next heart attack while they were driving? The accident could have killed the grandmother, and anyone else in another car.

Well, Sabra called her grandmother, got her in conversation and asked her if she’d ever thought about things this way, that she’s really not to blame for her husband’s death, and that she’s put herself through hell already. Her grandmother got quiet, and almost in tears, asked, “you mean I have angels looking after me all this time?”

. And what's more, Sabra said her grandmother is more at peace now, easier for everyone to get along with, and has actually been doing a little better physically in the last few weeks.

That story didn't come from me. He put me in the right place to help someone, and I was open to let that idea come into my mind and be able to help someone. But it never would have happened if it weren't for what we're learning in these classes.

Jesus said to his apostles, "Remember, I am the real vine, and you are the living branches. He who lives in me and I in him, will bear much fruit of the spirit and experience the supreme joy of yielding this spiritual harvest. If you will maintain this living spiritual connection with me, you will bear abundant fruit. If you abide in me and my words live in you, you will be able to commune freely with me, and then can my living spirit so infuse you that you may ask whatsoever my spirit wills and do all this with the assurance that the Father will grant us our petition. Herein is the Father glorified: that the vine has many living branches, and that every branch bears much fruit. And when the world sees these fruit-bearing branches, my friends who love one another, even as I have loved them – all men will know that you are truly my disciples"

**Live each moment as if your life has just begun and it will end with this moment!
This can be more rewarding and fulfilling than you could have ever imagined.**

M. H.

I'll start with a quote from the Urantia Book:

The more completely man understands himself and appreciates the Personality values of his fellows, the more he will crave to know the Original Personality, and the more earnestly such a God-knowing human will strive to become like the Original Personality. You can argue over opinions about God, but experience with Him and in Him exist above and beyond all human controversy and mere intellectual logic. The God-knowing man describes his spiritual experiences, not to convince unbelievers, but for the edification and mutual satisfaction of believers. (Page 30 paragraph 5)

Live in the now. Four very easy words to say. They just roll off of the tongue. This is easy to do. Everyone does it. They have no choice. Now is what's happening all of the time. But you have a choice. You can either just exist in the now, or you can choose to really **live** in the now.

Each of these moments, we have been given, can truly be a treasure. And these treasures can either be wasted and forgotten forever, or they can be made into things of value and become a gift you can keep forever.

I am 43 years young, because I choose to be. In this moment, and in the next. I choose to be a child, a child of Gods.

I can remember learning to ride a bike for the first time, riding a horse for the first time, driving a car for the first time, and being in love for the first time. All of these I remember as if they were a moment ago. When I lived these moments, they lasted a lifetime. That's what our life is. A lifetime of moments, that can be **moments of a lifetime**. Sadly, as the years passed, I had forgotten how to live this way.

Since age 10, 33 years ago, my Father has given me 1,084,050,000 moments to make into something of value. Gifts that my Father gave with all of His love. And I never even looked at almost all of them. Now I have learned, **again**, to open my eyes, ears, and mind. In the past few years, I have had more adventures than in the past 40 years.

In my job, I meet at least 10 different people every day. Our souls have the chance to touch, if only for a moment. I have that moment to strike a spark. A chance to uplift. Most likely I will never see these people again. I can only pray that I have done some good and leave the rest to my Father.

When I ask the store clerk "How are doing today?" I really mean it! I do care how they are. I genuinely feel a yearning to touch this person's soul. To take this moment and connect with another fragment of my Father. It is amazing how shocked, then happy and open they are. I meet people now and know their whole life's story before we part. And these people, who were strangers a moment ago, say good-bye as if we were lifetime friends.

A sad look, in a customers eyes as she was closing the door... In the past would have gone un-noticed. Instead, after 5 minutes, 5 insignificant minutes that I chose to make into something of value, I learned of all of the great things this person had done, all of the friends and family she had had. Now she was the last, no more friends or family. She was alone now. I told her she was never alone, and we continued to talk for what seemed like an hour. I thanked her for sharing her story with me and that I had learned that she was a very kind and caring person and I was very honored to have met her. This woman of about 85 years of age,

that I had met only a moment ago, threw her arms around my neck with a grip Swartzenager and Stalone together couldn't have broken.

After her tears had soaked my shirt, she let go and said "God bless you". I told her that He had, He sent me to her.

This is a great story. At least it is for me. This happened about 2 years ago, just before Christmas. What time I spent with her had to have been at least an hour. I just knew that my employer was going to be mad. I looked at my watch and new it had to be wrong. I had only been on the call 5 minutes longer than it normally should have taken.

This is the first time I truly understood the extraordinary gifts my Father has given me. I look forward, every morning, to the gifts he has for me to unwrap in the coming day. And I find it extremely difficult to express my gratitude each night.

In a moment I had, while I was getting the oil changed in my truck, a guy asked if I was born again. I said "yes, each and every moment of every day"! At first he was shocked and puzzled, then he smiled as if I had just handed him a million dollars.

Our Father has blessed us with a very exciting journey. He has enabled us to enjoy the experiences that he has decided that He wanted to experience. In living with this knowledge, we become teachers and students. It is exciting to see the faces of people light up when you share this knowledge and they really get what you are saying. You get to share in the experiences of another's life, kind of like the way our Father shares in our experiences.

I sincerely pray that each one of you can know the excitement and real joy of living this way, to be able to connect with another soul, to create a spark that can be felt throughout all that exists, the ultimate joy of fulfilling our Fathers dream.

I want to thank, most of all, Jean, but each and every one of you for choosing this path, and for sharing this moment with me, the chance for your souls to touch mine. I know that what we do makes us who we are. What we are all doing makes us who we are to become. I want to say thank you to our Father for blessing me with each of you. It is a true honor to be part of this group and I look forward to each and every moment we will have on our never ending journey together that He has blessed me with, true moments of value that I will be proud to take back to my Father.

MY JOURNEY TO THE LAST SUPPER

J.J.

Unlike many first-time Urantia Book readers, I deferred reading Part 4 until last. What a wonderful surprise to find the life of Jesus presented in a whole new light. My journey to that point spiritually had been a long one, starting with early religious training as a Lutheran. The most formal part of this training was preparation for an oral examination covering the entire churches' teachings. Our minister lead these classes over a period of four months, explaining in detail the reasons for all teachings and encouraging discussion. It was during these classes that I first verbally questioned church dogma. That minister would have a major impact on me, confessing his own small doubts and encouraging me to not disregard my intuitions while continuing to search for spiritual understanding. I was still questioning the true nature of the God, the purpose of the church and the nature of the Last Supper when the Urantia Book came into my life. It opened my eyes and when I got into the last part of the book, I was very taken with Michael's life story as an example for us and especially the truth of the Last Supper.

The Last Supper is certainly one of the most dramatic episodes in the life of Jesus. It is no wonder that the story is shown on our televisions each Easter, it had all the makings of a Hollywood script including ceremony, symbolism, friendship, jealousy and betrayal.

The famous, life-size mural of the Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci is probably the most recognizable image of that event in our modern world. The scene is of our Creator Son seated at the middle of a long table with the disciples at both sides, attended by servers. It was the custom in the Roman world at the time of Christ to eat while reclining on couches and this has been verified in the Urantia Book. [1] da Vinci took artistic license to make the mural both artistically pleasing and socially correct for his late 15th century patrons. The organized Christian religions have done the same thing over the centuries to the true story of Michael's life on Urantia.

Jesus often made use of symbols in his teaching of the most important and difficult spiritual truths. His intent was not to be vague but rather to minimize the intentional bending and breaking of these truths in the future. He also wanted the individual to have his own personal concept of the subject, like the author of a book can invoke an individual vision in each reader's mind, in a way that a visual media can only limit. Unfortunately dispute his attempts, the symbolism of the Last Supper has been perverted and firmly bound in Christian tradition. [2] We are however blessed to have the actual words that Michael spoke during the Last Supper regarding these symbols, allowing each of us to create our own spiritual concepts even today.

Of the symbolic cup of wine Michael said:

"Take this cup, all of you, and drink of it. This shall be the cup of my remembrance. This is the cup of the blessing of a new dispensation of grace and truth. This shall be to you the emblem of the bestowal and ministry of the divine Spirit of Truth." [3]

Of the symbolic broken bread he said:

"Take this bread of remembrance and eat it. I have told you that I am the bread of life. And this bread of life is the united life of the Father and the Son in one gift. The word of the Father, as revealed in the Son, is indeed the bread of life." [4]

The Last Supper celebrates the new bestowal, the coming of the Spirit of Truth for Urantia and the revelation of God as the loving Father. This is no sacrificial death necessary to reconcile God and man [5], symbolized by the bloodless Passover [6] and replaced by the revelation of us as children of God. With the Spirit of Truth comes the possibility of the Thought Adjuster indwelling all normal human beings on Urantia [7].

The only thing that Jesus ordained us to do is to gather and partake in the remembrance supper and celebrate his bestowal life on Urantia. [8] It is an honor for us to do so, to thank him for the gifts of his bestowal and to rejoice in the knowledge that for the spirit-conscious, Michael can actually be present during this ceremony. [9]

Midwayer Commission summed up the importance of Spirit of Truth as follows:

"Jesus lived on earth and taught a gospel which redeemed man from the superstition that he was a child of the devil and elevated him to the dignity of a faith son of God. Jesus' message, as he preached it and lived it in his day, was an effective solvent for man's spiritual difficulties in that day of its statement. And now that he has personally left the world, he sends in his place his Spirit of Truth, who is designed to live in man and, for each new generation, to restate the Jesus message so that every new group of mortals to appear upon the face of the earth shall have a new and up-to-date version of the gospel, just such personal enlightenment and group guidance as will prove to be an effective solvent for man's ever-new and varied spiritual difficulties." [10]

References

- [1] Paper 189:4.1 p.2025.3
- [2] Paper 179:5.4-5 p.1942:3-4
- [3] Paper 179:5.1 p.1941.6
- [4] Paper 179:5.3 p.1942:2
- [5] Paper 103:4.4 p.1133.4
- [6] Paper 125:2.3 p.1379.5
- [7] Paper 20:5.3 p.227.7 & Paper 34:5.4 p.379.4
- [8] Paper 99:5.10 p. 1091.9
- [9] Paper 179:5.6 p.1942.5 & Paper 179:5.9 p.1943.2
- [10] Paper 194:2.1 p.2060.7

Midwayer Commission

"This group of papers was sponsored by a commission of twelve Urantia midwayers acting under the supervision of a Melchizedek revelatory director. The basis of this narrative was supplied by a secondary midwayer who was onetime assigned to the superhuman watchcare of the Apostle Andrew." [Paper 120:0.0 p.1321.0]

WHAT DOES THE URANTIA BOOK SAY OF ISLAM?

C. J.

Islam today is the religion of about one billion people. Recently there has been a surge of discussion about Islam, and I have noticed that more and more non-Muslims are seeking to find just what Islam is all about. As students of the Urantia Book, let's look to what light the revelation can shed on this relatively new religion, which was only founded in the 6th century after Christ.

I was surprised to find several references to Islam and its founder Muhammad in the book. Paper 92, line 119: "Mohammed founded a religion which was superior to many of the creeds of his time. His was a protest against the social demands of the faiths of foreigners and against the incoherence of the religious life of his own people." This statement of "the social demands of the faiths of the foreigners" refers to the nearby Jewish community within Muhammad's homeland, as well as the nearby Christians to the north. And the statement of "the incoherence of the religious life of his own people" refers to the rampant polytheistic and superstitious beliefs common in his day. The book also praises Islam's strength in bringing monotheism to the people of North Africa, southeastern Asia, and the Levant. It states that Muhammad defined Allah as the one and only God, and also mentions that the followers of Muhammad were unable to grasp the concept of the Trinity during his time. The Urantia book is clear to state that it was the traditions of Judaism along with Christianity's teachings that led Islam to be monotheistic.

Since there is not a brief overview in the Urantia Book, I would like to touch on the basics of Islam before going on. First, Islam is an Arabic word which translates to "submission to God's will." A Muslim is one who has submitted to God's will. The Qur'an is the book that God is to have revealed to Muhammad through Gabriel. Unlike the New and Old Testament, the entire Qur'an is presented as a single piece (not different books or sections by different authors) which is the recitation of God's message through Gabriel. An interesting note, but not a main focus within Islam, is its view of previous prophets. Basically, the idea is that Islam is the true religion that God has been trying to reveal to humans since the beginning. Many prophets, like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, have been chosen to bring this message to us, but something has always gone wrong- whether it is the corruption of the texts through translation or a mistake of the prophet. What makes Muhammad different is that God decided to make sure he would get the message right, and there are even cases of God coming back and telling Muhammad of mistakes he made understanding the revelation so they could be fixed. This notion is called the infallibility of the Prophet. The Qur'an states that Muhammad is the last of the prophets, and Islam is the true religion.

Back to the Urantia Book now and an interesting observation that may not be surprising to you. The Urantia book makes a clear reference to the militancy associated with Islam. Paper 95, line 145: "The strength of Islam has been its clear-cut and well-defined presentation of Allah as the one and only Deity; its weakness, the association of military force with its promulgation, together with its degradation of women." This statement about force no doubt refers to when the Muslims overtook much of Arabia and south Asia, while at the same time spreading their religion. For instance, Paper 94, line 60 reads, "Buddhism finally gave way in northern India before the onslaught of a militant Islam with its clear-cut concept of Allah as the supreme God of the universe."

Although these statements are about Islam's force in the past, they may help to shed light on the much of Muslim world of today, which as we know is still often associated with force and violence. It is important to note historically that before the establishment of Islam these people, who later identified themselves as Muslims, existed in a world frequently plagued by wars, raids, and violence. Although Muhammad's message in the Qur'an did not explicitly encourage more force, it also did not focus on trying to end the it. Instead of adopting Jesus' message of "turning the other cheek", Islam rather presents a message of violence more similar to that found in the Old Testament of Judaism and Christianity.

Finally, you'll remember from the previous quote that the Urantia book makes reference to Islam's degradation of women. It is true that Islam's message did not help to uplift the status of women a great deal within its followers. Again I would like to point out that like the force and violence issue, it was not that Islam came preaching a specific message of disrespecting women, but rather it did not advocate lifting women from the lower status that was their social norm of the time. It is true that Muhammad convinced

his people that infanticide of female babies was not God's will, but other than that, he taught little that uplifted their status.

DEFINING MOMENTS

T. L.

It was several years ago that the “Iron John” movement came into the limelight. If for nothing else, it brought into consciousness the importance of “defining moments” in one’s life. One of the reasons this movement was popular, was that it purported in today’s society there were no defined moments for boys to become men, or girls to become women. As American society becomes arguably more civil, young men aren’t drafted into war, we no longer have tribal culture that calls for boys to go on the hunt, we don’t send them into the wilderness for survival, or visionary quests to return as men. There is no “coming out” for girls in which they are presented as women. Because there are no longer pre-determined cultural transitions for boys to become men, and girls to become women, the thinking in this movement was that people needed to get in touch with that element of them selves that connected them with their “basic” nature. They had lost touch with their masculinity, or femininity. We no longer have initiations, or moments that define us as men or women. It was a concept that a lot of people could relate with, and was the subject of a lot of discussions around a lot of water coolers throughout the country, and is the cause of some discussion and debate even today.

At least we’re trying.

I would argue that while the search for those moments, and “connecting” with ourselves is highly important, it is in many cases misplaced. A movement such as “Iron John” actually serves to point out how important the search for our selves has become. Isn’t the existence of gangs, for example, one of the many replacements society has inadvertently cultivated to foster a sense of self, importance, and belonging? While the Iron John movement may contain nobler intent than becoming a member of a gang, and might even become a part of the process to transcendence, a stepping stone perhaps, it is not the end of the journey. It falls short of replacing the defining moments so many felt they were lacking.

As our culture matures, however, perhaps it’s the types of moments that change. Consider the idea that life is a series of defining moments. We start to define ourselves with our first moral decision, and from that point on we have the privilege of defining, and hopefully refining, ourselves. Taking that concept a little bit further, every living moment becomes a defining moment. Everything we do, say, feel, think, and experience becomes a defining moment, becomes a thread in the fabric of the tapestry of our life, and in many instances, our soul. Even mistakes help us assimilate the information we acquire in our life’s experiences that lend to the metamorphosing definition of ourselves. It’s not the fact that we make mistakes that’s important, but what we come away with from them that contributes to our growth.

It doesn’t take much time pondering that idea to come to the realization how important each and everything we do and say and think and feel and experience is. Everything!

When one actually confronts the fact that the process of defining ourselves is a constantly occurring and changing process, and that we need to remain conscious of it, it can become a little daunting, so much so that we tend to hide from it. Fragile and imperfect beings are not predisposed to change, and this kind of knowledge carries with it what appears to be an enormous amount of responsibility. At times attaining this kind of knowledge feels a little like opening Pandora’s box. You can’t be sure of what you’re getting into, so maybe if it is ignored, then all that responsibility will go away.

It doesn’t. What is now presented to you is what I call the Hamlet moment. To be or not to be, that is the question. Do I devote myself to God, or just pretend? The matter that lays in your lap, and dances through your mind, is probably one of the most important defining moments you will face in the third dimension, and at its’ core is whether you will live your life to the fullest, and align yourself with God’s will, or merely skate through it.

God in His wisdom and mercy gives us more than one chance. He allows us to experiment, see what really works. I am thankful for failure, for the falls I've taken, because of the contribution they make to progress. All that is asked of you in this process is to remain conscious, think about it, and be brutally honest with yourself. Easier said than done sometimes, but very doable if you practice. Personally, I cannot tell you how grateful I am to have been afforded so many opportunities; I guess I needed them.

God had granted me glimpses of how things would improve if I would act responsibly. Consciously make decisions based on the greater good for all concerned. When I started practicing even a little, some of things I had intellectualized for years, I saw massive improvements in the quality and enjoyment of life. Personal relationships improved, my relationship with God improved, my relationship with me improved, work improved, and I was able to enjoy work more, because all of these things were put into better perspective. My little world actually improved as my view of the universe, and of my responsibility in it enlarged.

These glimpses would come and go, sometimes lasting a few moments, other times a few days, some even lasted weeks. I still had many lessons to learn, and they were learned the old-fashioned way...by falling back into my little world, narrowing my focus, losing my contact with God, and retreating back to what I thought was "comfortable". Two steps forward, one step back.

It rather felt like God was teasing me, these moments were like the carrot on the stick in front of the mule, coercing him to move forward. It wasn't fair that God would show me these glimpses of greatness and then take them away. Problem was, he never took them away. It was I, taking them away from myself by falling into old habits. However the glimpses have become longer and longer with just a little more effort on my part.

The paradox is that while I was expending all this energy and conscious effort to live right, to do the right thing, the effort required to actually enjoy living, lessened. It lessened because God became more "visible". God became recognizable in all aspects of life and living. In what is chosen to surround yourself with. All the "effort" became secondary, like breathing, it becomes another part of your "tapestry". The effort is actually the rungs of your ladder to transcendence. It is a beautifully orchestrated process that carries with it the power of inspiration. Your defining moment is not a moment at all, but the experience of going through this process. It becomes even more beautiful because once you allow yourself to move in God's time, with God's flow, so much becomes automatic.

Ascendance becomes a forgone conclusion. Change becomes a welcomed challenge, and fear evaporates. There is no end to the adventure, and I have not found anyone, who is being honest with themselves, that is not in awe of the incredible journey that we have embarked on. When given the opportunity, there is nothing like sharing what we know to be true. Therein lies another paradox of human manufacture. The responsibility I spoke of earlier is not a huge weight to be carried. The responsibility is simply to love and share with each other. To allow ourselves to be bathed in the essence of love, the essence of God, and to allow His essence to shine through everything you do.

Truth & The Spirit of Truth

V. M.

The Validation of Truth that lives in us!

This is in two parts, definitions & experience

Truth is elusive. Truth is forever. Truth is relative. There is no substitute for truth. "To thine own self be true." Shakespeare and Jesus. Truth is mans everlasting quest that lives on today as much as ever.

Webster's definition of truth: Sincerity, trustworthiness, genuineness, honesty, faithfulness, consistency, certainty. The quality of being in accordance with experience, facts, or reality. That which accords with fact or reality. Agreement with a standard or rule.

Urantia's definition of truth: Pg 1459p2

"Truth cannot be defined with words, only by living!!! Truth is always more than knowledge. Knowledge pertains to things observed, but truth transcends such pure material levels in that it consorts with wisdom and embraces such imponderables as human experience, even spiritual and living realities. Knowledge originates in science; wisdom, in true philosophy; truth in the religious experience of spiritual living. "

Cont'd pg 1456p3

"Man tends to crystallize science, formulate philosophy, and dogmatize truth because he is mentally lazy in adjusting to the progressive struggles of living, while he is also terribly afraid of the unknown. Natural man is slow to initiate changes in his habits of thinking and in his techniques of living. "

Cont'd pg 1459p4

"Revealed truth, personally discovered truth, is the supreme delight of the human soul; it is the joint creation of the material mind and the indwelling spirit. The eternal salvation of this truth-discerning and beauty-loving soul is assured by that hunger and thirst for goodness which leads this mortal to develop a singleness of purpose to do the Fathers Will, to rind God, and to become like him. There is never conflict between true knowledge and truth. There may be conflict between knowledge and human beliefs, beliefs colored with prejudice distorted by fear, and dominated by the dread of facing new facts of material discovery or spiritual progress.

Cont'd pg 1949p5

"Truth is a reality value experienced only by spirit endowed beings who function upon supermaterial levels of universe consciousness, and who after the realization of truth, permits its spirit of activation to live and reign within their souls."

Any sincere search for truth always leads to God. Without God, there is no truth. And Ultimate truth is God.

The Spirit of Truth will become your Power Multiplying Fulcrum. The Fruits of the Spirit pour out of you as your sincere and loving service to mankind as you become a mighty social lever uplifting them from darkness into the light.

Experience: My Mother always took my sister & I to Church & Sunday School in the Methodist Church where she taught S.S. & Vacation Bible School in the summer. As a child she read Bible Stories to us every night & sang religious songs to us frequently. I joined of my own accord with a very deep conviction at the age of twelve. It was the habit of some of my girl friends & I to visit each other's churches in our small town. So I was familiar with the Presbyterian & Baptist church customs & procedures for worship. In Junior High or High School S.S. class one year, we toured various churches & synagogues in Dallas. I can't tell you who arranged it, who I sat with on the way or where we went for lunch or any of the details, but I shall never never forget the great experience of seeing how & where others worshiped This one experience had inspired & begun my life long search for truth about God for I could hear some truth in all of the doctrines but I wanted ALL of the TRUTH & nothing but the truth!!!!!!!!!!!!!! From that moment on I have had a thirst and hunger for truth that would drive me for many years.

As a young adult I continued as my Mother did taking my children to Church & S.S. teaching Vacation Bible School. I also read any thing I could find on other religions & had studied other cultures in college, so I delved into Islam and the Koran, Hinduism and the Vedas, the various Buddhist sects, Zoroasterism, Confucianism, studied Gibran's Spiritual Writings, The Rosacustianists, I even came to Dallas with a friend to attend Rev. Moon's lecture one year. We left before it was over. I looked everywhere & prayed only for the Truth. I prayed not to keep anything in my mind that was not Gods Truth.

I kept looking after I moved to Dallas attending classes on Tarot Card reading and Astrology, even went to Psychic Fairs. I prayed sincerely & hard visualizing myself pounding on the door, asking let me in, thinking about the verse in the Bible ... "Seek and you shall find, ask and it shall be given, knock and the door shall open unto you. " So I kept pounding, praying, and visualizing, many times with tears in my eyes begging to be let in.

Then one evening I went to dinner with some friends from our old hometown before we moved to Dallas. They know I had been attending classes & interested in very different things. Jerry told me that Jean Barr was teaching 'some kind of classes' in their apartment complex that had helped his boss & that I might like to meet her & look into the classes. I asked, "Men can I meet her?" He said, "As soon as we get back to the apartment building. " He had mentioned this to me 2 or 3 months before, but I had not heard him.....!!!! I was not ready until that moment. We all know, 'When the student is ready the teacher appears.' Jerry introduced me to Jean & he left. We began talking & I knew that I was finally in the right place at the right time doing exactly what I was supposed to be doing. All the puzzle pieces of my life fell into place during that meeting. Jean gave me a Urantia Book & I stayed up all night reading. I could hardly wait for classes to start. And still I can hardly wait for each class. There is no doubt in my mind that the Spirit of Truth faithfully directed me ail these years in my search.

ABOUT PRAYER

A. M.

Let us pray. Where did your mind go when you heard those words? Did you quiet your thoughts to make a connection with your Father? Isn't it an amazing blessing that we can do that?! Did you think of something you want for personal reasons (dear Lord let me win the lottery)? Or did you think of something that needs an altruistic solution or someone in need of some comfort? Or did you just align your thoughts with God's will?

What began in primitive man as merely a wish for good luck, has transformed into a reach for God-consciousness. And that includes awareness of God within you, your Thought Adjuster. Prayer has aided mankind to evolve socially, morally, and spiritually. But it is different than any human association, it is a spiritual connection in both reception and recognition. In its truest form, prayer actually is a communion with your Maker.

But what makes prayer work? Let's explore what Jesus taught his apostles effective prayer must be:

1. It must be unselfish- not alone for oneself. Don't seek for a selfish advantage over your fellows. Prayer should be about transcending your own materialistic goals and reaching out to proffer good intentions in harmony with God's will. And do not pray from fear, praying should not be begging.
2. Believing- according to faith. When a prayer is made in true faith and with sincere expression the book tells us it "never fails to expand the soul's capacity for spiritual receptivity." Don't you love that? Ask and you shall receive. When I pray I often ask for clarity, and by praying effectively, ethically, and earnestly, God is already answering me.
3. Sincere- honest of heart. Prayer happens with a thought. Your words are irrelevant. What God reads is your soul's attitude. There is wonderful opportunity for growth here. First- do you ever feel that your thought process is limited by your vocabulary? Think about that for a moment. Prayer can bring about a realization of living in your mind. Focus on letting your thoughts define your true intent, don't worry about how you say your prayer. Don't let your words limit your thoughts. Praying is about realizing what is often too deep for words. Also, by being aware that your Father knows your actual intent, prayer is the perfect practice for truly being sincere. If you can be sincere of intent in this world, think what a powerful beacon of truth you can become! And remember what is the key to Paradise? Sincerity, sincerity, sincerity!
4. Intelligent- according to light. I've given up praying to be six feet tall and able to fly. Prayer is not a substitute for action. Let it be a stimulus to action!
5. Trustful- in submission to the Father's all-wise will. Know and trust His wisdom. The response to our prayers will come in His time. Do not be impatient for your answer. His will come.

Notice that in all these facets of prayer it is we that change, not God. The Chief of the Midwayers on Urantia says it so beautifully. "Prayer elevates man because it is a technique of progressing by the utilization of the ascending spiritual currents of the universe. Genuine prayer adds to spiritual growth, modifies attitudes, and yields that satisfaction which comes from communion with Divinity (which is? Truth, beauty, goodness). It is a spontaneous outburst of God-consciousness. It is the most potent spirit-growth stimulus."

Prayer is an extraordinary teacher to train your mind to see, feel, and express the reality around you, as well as honing your intent to the greater good. To transcend your own needs to petition for the benefit of others, opens up your receptivity to your Father's help. Don't forget, our Sonship is a gift. Be humble, be sincere. Pray for value and growth.

I'd like to read a prayer that Jesus revealed to His apostles:

Our perfect and righteous heavenly Father.
This day guide us and direct our journey.
Sanctify our steps and coordinate our thoughts.
Ever lead us in the ways of eternal progress.
Fill us with wisdom to the fullness of power
And vitalize us with your infinite energy.
Inspire us with the divine consciousness of
The presence and guidance of the seraphic hosts.
Guide us ever upward in the pathway of light;
Justify us fully in the day of great judgment.
Make us like yourself in eternal glory
And receive us into your endless service on high.

Please take a moment to make your own communion with our Father.

Think of the value poured upon this world as our souls expand and we realize and truly understand our brotherhood, and see God's hand in the solution. All this by simply asking Him for help.

URGES, LURES AND DESIRES

D. M.

As I was driving to work one morning I thought about what I wanted to talk about during our retreat. The point of all of us spending this time together is to enhance our Spiritual understanding, to celebrate the brotherhood of Man and most importantly to learn about God, our Father.

For this talk to make any difference in someone's perceptions, it has to have value, offer truth, and touch minds. That's quite a tall order. It's actually quite overwhelming.

As I drove toward town, I began to think of a self that I have.. It's not as prominent as it used to be.. but it's there. And it's clever. It can lure me into feelings of self doubt. It urges me to re-act emotionally, and it alters my desire for Spiritual mindedness to the desire of self - gratification. It's an ugly little beast.

To recognize this self is not enough. To understand its strength is not enough. To want to modify it into something better and good is not enough. Only action, actually going through the process of deliberate change will eliminate it. But for the modification to be successful there's another dimension that has to be desired. The thought processes where the negative self is simply repressed only adds to the delusion that it has been modified or conquered. The urge will come again, perhaps more cautiously, but it will still wield its power of persuasion.

Urges come in all shapes and sizes.. They disguise themselves as normal behavior and they trick us with self-deception. Too often we rationalize our desires and behaviors as normal. We often think we are "justified" in our actions. We are swayed by our emotions and we hide from too much self-examination. If we were to honestly look at our intentions .. Would they be for the greater good, or would they be for a false feeling of self-importance?

Are our decisions based on the fantasy that another person is to blame for our wrong behavior or that we need others to approve of us before we can approve of ourselves? That honesty and trustworthiness are only admirable characteristics when they don't get in the way of getting what we want.

The lures that tempt modern man are plentiful. But every time we make a decision, and there are thousands we make everyday, we have to ask ourselves will this decision lead me toward my Father or away from Him?

Am I willing to be honest with myself as to my true intentions and ask for guidance from my God Fragment? The law of God is simple, Do what is for the greater good for all concerned. But figuring out how to do that is difficult. We work without the advantage of foresight and a true understanding of the bigger picture planted firmly in our minds. We are beginning to learn about God, but we have a long way to go. We are dual natured beings. The inheritance of animal tendencies retards our progress, but we are also blessed with the high urge of spiritual endowment.

To actually convert animal urges to the art of social living and Spiritual growth, one must develop an actual interest in, and love for, a higher and more idealistic form of conduct. The desire to be better beings can only be completed through converting the lower and more animal - like qualities of human nature to the higher ideals of Spiritual thinking and living. A love of beauty, truth and goodness will inspire you take deliberate action. You will no longer have the urge to re-act emotionally, but instead will search for the lessons being presented to you and will act with objectivity and the desire to do what is for the greater good for all concerned.

Normally when I'm headed to work I have the radio on to catch some of the latest news, but this morning I wanted quiet to sort out these thoughts about Urges, Lures and Desires. About selves and decisions and

how they all play a role in determining how I perceive my place in this world. How a lack of self-value can permeate every decision, and how we all struggle with the divine command "Be you Perfect as I am Perfect". It seems an impossibility until I remember that in the mind of God I am already perfect. It is attainable - and it's not the destination that brings forth such great value, it's the journey.

The journey demands a certain strength from us. The choices we make determine our future. Will we mature spiritually, or will we languish in material inertia? That's one of the questions that helps us decide which path we want to take..

As humans, living in a world that is so filled with contradictions, it's easy to mistake what we desire for what we need. Many times our earthly desires are based on fears. The desire for more money, the fear of being poor. The desire for power, the fear of being emotionally enslaved. The desire for more things, the fear of having nothing. The desire for someone to complete us, the fear of being alone. But our needs are different. We need food and water. We need shelter. We need self-value. We need God. These are the needs that give us life. We need love. But we need more to give love. We need friends, but we need more to be a friend. When we can transform our human desires into spiritual desires, our soul grows. We are able to open our mind and our heart to our Creator. To worship and give thanks for all that we have, and to know that in this short journey we never walk alone.

While most of us can think of the dramatic urges we are tested with, the obvious lures that tempt us, the ostentatious desires that intrigue us.. I believe it is the smaller, more subtle, urges that determine our character. The choices we make when no one is around to see or hear or know. The decisions that we make in our minds and follow through with. I could take credit for this, even though it wasn't my idea. I could cheat on this, no one would know. I could lie about this, they would think it's the truth. I could ignore this; someone else would do it. I could choose to be angry, I have a right. I could choose to be spiteful, they have it coming. I could choose to be coldhearted, they don't deserve my kindness. I could choose to only think about me.

And I would truly be alone. For these kinds of thoughts and behavior diminish the light of my soul. They pull me farther from my Father. They leave me gasping for spiritual air. And they mess up the life that has been given to me.

I looked up the references to urges, lures and desires in the Urantia book. For urges there were 33, for lures there were 7, for desires there were 56. Most of the references for urges related to emotions and natural impulses. For lures they were temptations, but for desires some are about the wants or needs of man, but many are about God's desires.

In Paper 5 Section 1 paragraph 8... It states:

The Father desires all his creatures to be in personal communion with him. He has on Paradise a place to receive all those whose survival status, and spiritual nature, make possible such attainment. Therefore settle in your philosophy now and forever: To each of you and to all of us, God is Approachable, the way is open: the forces of divine love and the ways and means of divine administration are all interlocked in an effort to facilitate the advancement of every worthy intelligence of every universe to the Paradise presence of the Universal Father.

As I pulled into the parking lot at work I had to re-focus my thoughts and begin to think about the day's work ahead. But now I wanted to do the right thing .. To have a spiritual maturity that could transcend the temporary urges, lures and desires of day to day to living. I wanted to focus on God and how I might be able to please him that day. To give a little more, ask a little less. Thinking about God and the bigger picture gives me hope. It brings me peace. It shows me love and I want to return that love by caring about my planetary brothers and sisters, by honoring my husband, by cherishing my family and by being patient, loyal, compassionate and trustworthy.

For mankind perhaps the most difficult thing to do is to convert urges into the social art of living, transform desires into spiritual longings and to transfer lures into the higher realms of unexplored ideas and undiscovered ideals.

But if I don't try to do these things, then I will be sucked into a cosmic insanity that holds no hope, that offers no peace and that leaves me vanishing alone.

And that is not a pleasant thought!

I hope I have lured you into thinking about the challenges of Transcendence, urged to try and meet those challenges. For I desire that this world come to truly understand the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

I leave you with this prayer:

Our creative parent, who is the center of the Universe.
Bestow upon us your nature and give us your character.
Make us sons and daughters of yours by grace.
And glorify your name through eternal achievement.
Your adjusting and controlling spirit give to live and dwell within us.
That we may do your will on this sphere as angels do your bidding in light.
Sustain us this day in our progress along the path of truth.
Deliver us from inertia, evil and all sinful transgression.
Be patient with us as we show loving kindness to our fellows.

Shed abroad the spirit of your mercy in our creature hearts.
Lead us by your own hand, step by step, through the uncertain maze of life.
And when our end shall come, receive into your own bosom our faithful spirits.
Even so, not our desires but your will be done.

SELF-MASTERY THE FIRST STEP TO TRANSCENDENCE

M. P.

Hello everyone. My presentation is on self-mastery. God knows there are many things that I need to work on like exercise and proper nutrition. I am NOT PERFECT! But since August 4th, 1988, my first class with Jean, I have worked at mastery of self.

And I will continue to work on this until fusion. I do not claim to be the expert, but I understand how important this is. *Self-mastery is the first step to Transcendence of Self.*

Conquering-controlling Emotions

On The Michaels Foundation website, there are 3 bullet points under self-mastery.

The 1st bullet point says, “Self Mastery is the conquering-controlling of your emotions instead of emotions controlling you.” The best illustration that I can give is my own experience. I grew up in a very conservative, fundamentalist, Southern Baptist home. By the age of 19, when I moved out of my parents’ home, I went ballistic. I learned how to do many of those forbidden things, like drinking and dancing. During the first couple of years in college, I worked as a file clerk in the Registrar’s office. One day while I was filing transcripts with the other file clerk, I made a sarcastic comment in reply to her question. She liked the fact that I would spar with her verbally. I started hanging out with her crowd from the drama department. The art of verbal fencing became a honed skill. I also learned how to drink to excess and do other things that do not make me proud. Time passed and I developed many bad habits and negative selves.

It is truly a miracle that I am alive today. By the end of my 30th year, I knew that I should be doing something different with my life. A friend and I got together for dinner. He was different. I asked him what he was doing. He said that he had started attending a spiritual growth class. Throughout the meal he mentioned things. I’ll never forget him using the word “superuniverse.” The sound didn’t bother me. When he mentioned we were all children of the Father of Light, I hoped that this was the path that I had been begging my Heavenly Father to show me. I got the teacher’s number before dinner was over. I went home and poured all my alcohol down the drain.

Since that day my life has changed 180 degrees. I have learned from all these experiences how important it is to choose the people you spend your time with. I no longer do everything that “feels good.” I have learned what emotions are and how to control them. I am still human. I got frustrated at another driver as he almost drove right into me on the North Dallas Tollway, but I didn’t cuss or throw a fit!

Changing the Negative Selves

The 2nd bullet point says, “Self Mastery is the mastery of the negative selves – you learn to recognize and modify the negative within you and remove these from your mind replacing them with positive thoughts consistently – this changes the negative forever.”

When you realize that you are in a “blue mood” use your 15-minute positive scenario. Make sure that you play out the whole scene. When I have fallen off the track, it is because I have only played part of the scenario for only a few minutes, which doesn’t modify the negative self. Or, if you have a good book or movie, use it because that will also work to push the negative self out of your mind.

Tact in any Situation

The 3rd bullet point from the website says, “Self Mastery is the ability to be tactful in any situation – and not react!” Something that I am continually working on is what I say. Remember the verbal sparring? I had to break myself of that negative habit. I used Jean’s teaching of “Act with Tact.” She taught me that words are very important. I didn’t change my sarcasm overnight. First I tried to just keep my mouth shut. Then, after a period of time, I tried to stop thinking the negative thoughts. Eventually I was able to get out of myself enough to say the right thing. *Remember if you think something, you will say it. And if you say it, you will do it!*

In Transcendence of Self is a Way of Life, Jean Barr writes a whole chapter on Urges, Lures, and Desires, which deals with self-mastery. She says, “You must convert urges, transform desires, and transfer lures or evil, sin, and iniquity occur.” For example, if I want to buy something, I have to ask myself do I really need this or do I just want it. Boy, there were a lot of things that I wanted and didn’t need! This really helped my desire of material lures.

On page 1610 of The Urantia Book, Jesus taught Andrew a lesson on self-mastery. Jesus said many things but I would like to leave you with this,

You are justified by faith and fellowshipped by grace, not by fear and the self-denial of the flesh, albeit the Father’s children who have been born of the spirit are ever and always *masters* of the self and all that pertains to the desires of the flesh. When you know that you are saved by faith, you have real peace with God. And all who follow in the way of this heavenly peace are destined to be sanctified to the eternal service of the ever-advancing sons of the eternal God. Henceforth, it is not a duty but rather your exalted privilege to cleanse yourselves from all evils of mind and body while you seek for perfection in the love of God . . . Your secret of the mastery of self is bound up with your faith in the indwelling spirit, which ever works by love.

If I can do this, any normal minded person can do it. Thank you and God bless you.

MY FAITH

R. R.

One day in class, as I was copying from the board, I was hit between the eyes with the statement “Feed your faith and your doubts will starve to death.” As so often happens in class I am given just what I need at the time I need it and I am certain that this was put on that board just for me and for me only. It was not so much that I was in a place of lack of faith or disbelief or that I was questioning my faith in God at that time. It just seemed to speak to me and made me think about my faith. You see, I have never questioned the existence of God. I have always had a faith in God and a belief system that incorporated Him in my everyday life. I always knew that He was. I never denied His existence. I had read that part of John in the Bible that speaks of God and that He always was and that there never was a time that He wasn’t and that there will never be a time when He won’t be and I always believed it. I have never seen God, but through my faith, I believe that He exists, that He is real. But that little phrase got me to thinking. Did I really? Were the questions I was having about where I was in my spiritual growth a result of a lack of faith in God or just a lack of faith or just that ongoing battle with the myriad negative selves that I constantly wage. I knew that I should be studying the word of God. That I should be studying about God. I knew that I was in the right place to do that, but did I really have the right attitude about it? Was my approach to my spiritual growth really faith based? It got me to thinking about why I believe in God; why I have faith. Why I want to grow spiritually toward God.

In the American Heritage Dictionary faith is described as “**1. a.** Confident belief; trust. **b.** Belief in God; religious conviction. **2.** Loyalty; allegiance. **3.** A system of religious beliefs.”

To me, a belief in God must be a “confident belief” a “trust” and isn’t that then “religious conviction?” Wouldn’t that require “loyalty and allegiance” that would lead to “a system of religious beliefs?” It seems so to me and I feel, no I believe, that I do have faith. However, much of what I believe to be true, to be the truth, is based on my faith that it is true that it is the truth. It may not be real or may not exist in the same sense that a tree is real and does in fact exist in the same time space continuum in which I exist. I can prove that a tree is real and does exist. I can touch and feel a tree, I can see a tree, I can hear the many sounds of a tree, I can smell a tree and I can even taste a tree and therefore I know that a tree is real and does in fact exist because I can prove it. The wind, however, is something very different. I know that wind is real and that it does exist in the same time space continuum in which I exist, but I can’t feel it, see it, hear it, smell it, or even taste it. The proof I have of the existence of wind is based solely on the results of wind. I can feel the molecules that are being moved by the wind, I can see the dust being moved by the wind, I can hear the rustle of tree leaves as they are moved by the wind, I can smell all sorts of aromas and odors borne by the wind and I can even taste certain particles of matter that are moved by the wind, but I can not experience the wind itself. What I really experience are the effects of wind. My faith in God is much like my experiences with wind, except with God, I don’t require any proof of His existence because through my faith, I know that He exists. Through my faith, I truly can experience Him

As Jesus said in the Urantia Book on page 1602, “When the wind blows, you hear the rustle of the leaves, but you do not see the wind – whence it comes or wither it goes – and so it is with everyone born of the spirit. With the eyes of the flesh you can behold the manifestations of the spirit, but you cannot actually discern the spirit.” And so it is with my faith in God. I cannot actually discern Him, but I can behold his many manifestations. It is through my faith that I know that he exists, not through any physical proof of his existence.

As I grow spiritually and travel this wonderful path I have chosen to follow, I may question myself and I may question my ability to accomplish that which I must accomplish to stay on this path, but I need not ever question my faith. My faith supports my belief that my God wants me to do this, that this is the right thing to do, the right path to travel. Yes, there are times that I stray from my faith path and when I do or

when I am tempted to, I put a simple picture in my mind that represents my path to Paradise and it helps me get back on the path or stay on the path. It is a simple picture and I would like to share it with you. Just for a moment, close your eyes and in your mind, picture a blank piece of paper. On this blank page, draw a stick figure representing you in the lower left hand corner. (I have to use a stick figure because I can't draw a straight line without a ruler) Now, in the upper right hand corner of your mental blank page, picture that oval we can never get quite right, you know the oval that is 1/6 longer north south than east west, to represent Paradise. Next, picture a straight line from you to Paradise. That's the picture and you guessed it, the line is your path. Now, with that picture in mind, all you need do is determine whether or not the thing in question is on the line or not. I may not always be on the path, much of what I do or think or say may not always be on the line, but my faith tells me that the path exists, that it is real and that God wants me to be on it and on it I shall try to stay.

In the future, if I have any doubts, I will "feed my faith" merely by recalling all that I believe by faith and by remembering that God is all there is and since I believe in God through my faith any doubts I have must surely be left to starve to death.

CONSISTENCY

T. R.

When I am reminded of Jesus, I am told over and over again that during each and every encounter with humanity Jesus spoke precisely and was straight to the point always with patience, tolerance, compassion and love. In other words, he never used “flowery language.” Therefore, I will come straight to the point. Consistency, being consistent, is the key to our spiritual growth and that very spiritual growth must be a gradual and slow process inward toward our Father.

Before I proceed, further, let us take a look at the definition of the word consistency as it relates to our growth.

The dictionary defines consistency as:

Agreement or logical coherence among things or parts;

Compatibility or agreement among successive acts, ideas or events.

Consistency is more common than consistence in all senses and is almost always the form for those dealing with agreement of parts or harmony or regularity of action.

Now, why is being consistent so critical? And why must we be consistent? There are many reasons. First, because God is always consistent and we can always depend on Him. “The God-conscious mortal is certain of salvation; he is unafraid of life; he is honest and consistent. He knows how bravely to endure unavoidable suffering; he is uncomplaining when faced by inescapable hardship.” UB p. 1740-7. Second, Jesus was a rock of consistency. “Jesus always preached temperance and taught consistency – proportionate adjustment of life’s problems.” And third, consistency is making an irrevocable decision.

Actually, we are all consistent in our daily lives, but are we consistently making the right decisions and conducting ourselves in a manner, which honors our Father? Or are we acting on our animal heritage and doing merely what feels good at that moment?

What must we consistently do and what are the steps?

We must consistently take care of details no matter how insignificant they may seem to us.

We must learn to consistently take responsibility for our actions, thus the law of cause and effect. Our intent causes our effect.

We must learn to consistently make each and every decision based on the greater good for all concerned, not just merely what we want to do.

We must consistently convert urges, transform desires and transfer lures so that evil, sin and iniquity will cease to occur.

We must consistently work to modify the negative selves by keeping our minds clean and positive. We can’t control what comes into our mind, but we can control what stays in our mind.

We must learn to consistently let go and let God. In other words, we must live in the now. Every moment is precious. Live life to its fullest measure.

We must learn to consistently become patience, tolerance and compassion by acting, not reacting to our daily experiences.

To summarize the above Seven Basic Cornerstones of Living, we must slowly and gradually work consistently on a daily basis toward self mastery, transcendence of self and one day achieving fusion with our Thought Adjuster.

Previously, I mentioned that we are all consistent in our daily lives. As a matter of fact, in the past, I so consistently made the wrong decisions that I lived the first thirty or so years of my life filled with misery. Not taking responsibility for my own actions, not taking care of my details, thinking only of my wants and

desires, reacting all over the place, keeping negative trash in my mind and living my life afraid. I was without the completeness, joy, happiness and peace of mind that has now become a part of my life as a result of my individual relationship with our Father and by living these wonderful principles. I am not perfect, nor will I ever be perfect. I make mistakes, but I work every day to be better and to consistently live these principles. I can't think of another way of life. What about you? Try it, I promise you won't be disappointed.

In closing, I would like to leave you with this quote from the Urantia Book, page 317. paragraph three: "The more steadfastly you behold, and the more persistently you pursue, the concepts of divine goodness, the more certainly you will grow in greatness, in true magnitude of genuine survival character."



SERVANTHOOD – BEING SALT AND LIGHT

S. R.

The Urantia Book, p. 1572, paragraphs 2-6, from Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount":

"You are the salt of the earth, salt with a saving savor. But if this salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under feet of men."

In Jesus' time salt was precious. It was even used for money. The modern word "salary" is derived from salt. Salt not only flavors food, but it is also a preservative. It makes other things more tasty, and thus it serves by being spent.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a busbel, but on a candlestick; and it gives a light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and be led to glorify your Father who is in heaven."

While light dispels darkness, it can also be so "blinding" as to confuse and frustrate. We are admonished to let our light so shine that our fellows will be guided into new and godly paths of enhanced living. Our light should so shine as not to attract attention to self. Even one's vocation can be utilized as an effective "reflector" for the dissemination of this light of life.

Strong characters are not derived from *not* doing wrong but rather from actually doing right. Unselfishness is the badge of human greatness. The highest levels of self-realization are attained by worship and service. The happy and effective person is motivated, not by fear of wrongdoing, but by love of right doing.

Your Turn: Take a few minutes and answer these questions.

1. How am I "flavoring" things by being "salt" in this life?

2. How can I be "light" without blinding other people?

SERVANTHOOD – BEING SALT AND LIGHT

I'm Sheila Rhymes from Jean's Tuesday class. Most of us are practicing, functioning servants. We are mindful of others and their needs. Often we put others' needs ahead of our own. But what does it mean to really "serve"?

Are we called on to give all of our "stuff" away a la Saint Francis of Assisi? Are we called on to sacrifice all of our creature comforts to serve the lowest echelon of society like Mother Teresa? Do we need to prove our faithfulness through self-sacrifice and pain like honoring the Stations of the Cross as we travel over rocks on our knees and lay prostrate on the ground? Are those sort of radical actions really necessary to sincerely serve God?

Not really..... While I wouldn't begin to detract from the nobleness of such actions or try to undermine the good intentions of those that use extraordinary means to express their desire to help or display their humility, I say it's just not terribly practical in today's world and certainly not what God requires of us. Neither do these actions meet the criteria of letting "our light so shine that our fellows will be guided into new and godly paths of enhanced living. Our light should so shine as not to attract attention to self." In my interpretation, that would mean steering clear of fanaticism and flagrant self-sacrifice.

My conviction is that we are to live our lives in such a manner that we literally live our servanthood as an expression of everything we do. If our intentions are solidly placed in the direction of the greater good for all concerned, we become a conduit of service.

Bizarre actions and freaky displays of opulent philanthropy are best left to the ego-endowed narcissists and the garish socialites driven by the desire to see their pictures in all the "right" newspapers and their names on all the "A" lists.

True servanthood is an inevitable consequence of consistently following the Seven Basics for Living. The next time you get a chance to read those deliberately and calmly, try to imagine doing even one of the basics and expecting someone to fawn over you and exalt you like you just won a beauty pageant. (Just a side note - Have you ever noticed just how very happy all the losers are for the one that won the beauty pageant? How sincere is their exaltation in light of the fact that they just got branded as a "loser"?)

This journey toward transcendence of self and creating your life to be the flavor for people you meet every day builds your light. We do not consciously stoke our level of luminescence except by the growth of our souls with every decision of value we make. There are no marching bands or well-attended sit down dinners to celebrate the growth of our light.

No, this is not a servanthood of expectations of grandeur. It is a smoldering creation of flavor and light grown slowly and deliberately as we learn how to see the world through our Father's eyes as our will becomes His.

In this quiet moment, take a few minutes for silent reflection on your own intentions and motivations in life. Are you expecting money, awards or strategic relationships as payment for your selfless actions? Or are you encouraging your ego and worldly ambitions to be replaced by the light-enhancing rewards that come directly from your Father? For whom are you being salt? For whom are you letting your light shine?

Prosperity is not measured in nickels and dimes but in spiritual growth for yourself and the people you encounter everyday. As I reflect on the 19 sets of beautiful brown and black eyes that put their total trust in me and look to me for every form of guidance they need in their young lives, I ask God to guide me and keep me mindful of the truth of true servanthood in every decision I make, big and small. I also want to share with you part of my "reward" in the form of a story written and illustrated by Oscar Yañez. In August 2001, Oscar could not read, knew almost no English and could not even write his name without seeing it on a piece of paper. This story is his re-telling of one I told them about a really big beetle bug that got in my car late one night. I did not help him write it at all.

Thank you for being here.

RESPONSIBILITY AND CLASS

M. S.

Hello! We've waited a long time for this day...where we can all get together for our retreat. This year is made even more special by those in attendance from Thursday night's class. We're grateful the door opened and Jean was willing and able to teach your class! Here's a Texas size **Welcome** to you...even though we're in Oklahoma!

We're sincerely glad you're here!

Jean mentioned that the 'new folks' were looking forward to what the 'veterans' had to say. And I guess I qualify as one of the older veterans. Well, my message has to do with responsibility and class.

First, the word from other veterans and Jean is that all you are doing **great** in class. Second, let's talk a little about responsibility. As your teacher stretches your mind weekly from the ultimatton to Infinity you also begin to realize the **responsibility** that comes with the privilege of class. As you grow spiritually you also realize that this honor is less about you and more about **your commitment to God**. You graciously accept that it's not what **I** think or what **I** want...it's all about the **law of God**...which is, as we all know, **making all our decisions for the greater good of all concerned**. Class and the **responsibility** that goes with it have been the best possible things that could've happened to myself and my family. Our love for each other in our family and for others in class is indescribable. And now, I believe **your** appreciation for the **opportunity** and **privilege** to attend class each week will grow, as does mine. Where else in the world does this exist? Nowhere!

In the beginning, after I began to grasp the truly incredible significance of the Urantia book, I wanted to shout it from the rooftops. "Hey World! Wake up and hear this! This is the most important book in the world! It's a revelation!" But alas, I learned that is not the way it is meant to be. Whether one is shouting from rooftops or the water cooler, trying to shove the truth down someone's throat will only hurt the cause and make matters worse. Your **responsibility** is to live it, not preach it! It is your **actions, decisions** and the example you set that will ultimately spread the truth. We're **all** teachers now...to the degree that we can be. You are **all** very special. I know that sounds trite, but it is *true*. Through your own **free will** you have chosen to be here. No one forced or coerced you. You listened to and followed your guidance to be here. Besides the good food and friendships, it's **so exciting** to learn about God. Even though we'll never learn everything about Him, we have a great time learning all we can! (And the more we know, the more we realize how much we don't know!) We have such an absolutely amazing future! But while we are living on this earth, we continue to grow through all our trials and tribulations. Our challenges here will help prepare us for our exciting journey! The book says, "Difficulties may challenge mediocrity and defeat the fearful, but they only stimulate the true children of the Most Highs" (pg 556).

We should all work hard at achieving and maintaining **balance** to live up to reaching our goal, which is fusion! Our loving Father gives us so much help. There is **no greater** privilege than serving your Father, so do it well! The job entails working **hard** to 'get your act together', but includes having fun too!

The most integral part of our responsibility is consistency. The book says, "Jesus always preached temperance and consistency – proportionate adjustment of life problems" (pg 1673). He was talking about balance! Keep your emotions in check,

work **hard** at getting rid of ego, which is the outward manifestation of your inner fears and insecurities.

You should be setting spiritual goals rather than material goals which is **critical** and what the world so desperately needs. The book says, "There is no sin in having honest possessions on earth provided your treasures are in heaven" (page 1821).

You must have curiosity and passion, and I believe you all do...or you wouldn't be here. You should strive to live your life with grace, style and class. You should try to be **the** example everywhere you go, because you never know who may be watching. You will find you can uplift and inspire others when the opportunity presents itself. You will understand the importance of spoon-feeding the truth to others. This is because your voice will become so powerful...that if you shout it from the rooftops you will scare others away. You live the basics everyday and strive to achieve and maintain balance. The book says, "The spiritual

forward urge is the most powerful driving force present in this world”(pg 2063). You feel as though you have a better and truer understanding of ‘the meaning of life’.

Do you remember the scene in the movie, “City Slickers” with Billy Crystal and Jack Palance...when Jack is telling Billy the meaning of life is this - and he holds up 1 index finger. Billy is confused as to what Jack means...and then Jack dies and Billy is left wondering what he meant? (holding up finger again). Well, I believe that **the secret of life is #1** of the basics, which is Take Care of Details!!! Yes, that’s what Jack meant! When we all give our basics, isn’t taking care of details one of the biggest basics used?! That’s because it is **SO IMPORTANT!!!**

In addition to enjoying learning from the book and each other, it’s also important to have fun! One of **my** ideas of fun is to travel, which also plays an important part of your spiritual growth. It helps to get you out of yourself, learn a tremendous amount, relax, see how and where other people live, and interact with others.

After Jesus left his family he traveled far and wide, exposing himself to different cultures and religions so he had a broader range of experience to draw upon. Our journeys with class have included many places on this continent and abroad. Any of the veterans that have been on these trips can tell you how important the experience was to them spiritually.

In conclusion, accept the responsibility, take care of details and have fun! Strive for consistency in doing God’s law...doing the greater good. We have so much to be thankful for! Remember, every day is a gift, every moment an opportunity.

DID CHRIST DIE FOR OUR SINS?

J. W.

I truly think one of the biggest obstacles for many people when they read the Urantia Revelation is that the book states Christ did not come to die for our sins.

My talk today is about Our Creator Son, Michael of Nebadon. Why did He come to earth and why did He become man?

“In theory you may think of God as the Creator, and he is the personal creator of Paradise and the central universe of perfection (Havona), but the universes of time and space are all created and organized by the Paradise corps of the Creator Sons. The Universal Father is not the personal creator of the local universe of Nebadon, the universe in which you live is the creation of his Son Michael.” (Page 24.4)

In addition to creating all there is in our local universe, He also chose to bestow Himself as one of His created beings. He does this seven times - He becomes one of His created beings - to live their lives, have their trials and experience their existence.

Once this is accomplished He is then settled in supreme authority and is known as a Master Michael.

And so it was with our Creator Son, Michael of Nebadon. His seven bestowals were.

(1) Almost one billion years ago Michael of Nebadon served as a Melchizedek Son in connection with his assignment to twenty-four missions of universe emergency. This bestowal lasted for twenty years of Standard Time (one hundred years of Urantia time)

One hundred and fifty million years later, Michael served as a Lanonandek Son, as acting System Sovereign of system 11 of constellation 37, pending the appointment of a new sovereign after the current System Sovereign had lead a rebellion. This bestowal lasted more than seventeen years of Standard Time.

The third bestowal was in service as a Material Son. This time Michael began his difficult career on a quarantined world of secession and rebellion. This Material Son effected the repentance and reclamation of the defaulting Planetary Prince and his entire staff and witnessed the restoration of the planet to the loyal service of the Paradise rule as established in the local universes. This bestowal lasted a whole generation of planetary time. In due time a Material Son and Daughter arrived to this rejuvenated and redeemed world.

The fourth bestowal of Michael was as a Seraphim and he was assigned to the corps of the teaching counselors. He was attached as a seraphic teaching counselor to twenty-six different master teachers, functioning on twenty-two different worlds. This bestowal lasted forty standard universe years.

The fifth bestowal was a little over three hundred million years ago, as time is reckoned on Urantia, Michael appeared as Eventod, an ascending mortal. He lived and functioned on Uversa for a period of eleven years of Orvonton standard time.

For His sixth bestowal Michael appeared on the headquarters of constellation five as a full-fledged morontia mortal of ascending status of Endantum. It was one of *the* most extraordinary and amazing epochs in Michael's bestowal experience, not even excepting his dramatic and tragic sojourn on Urantia.

For His Final Bestowal He chose Planet 606 of the Satania System.

This was his seventh bestowal. Tens of thousands of years later...after His sixth bestowal...Joshua ben Joseph, the Jewish baby, was conceived and was born into the world just as all other babies before and since - except - that this particular baby was the incarnation of Michael of Nebadon, a divine Son of Paradise and the creator of all this local universe of things and beings.

I recount these seven bestowals to try to explain why Michael of Nebadon became man (Jesus Christ). It was not to die for our sins and save us from a vengeful God. It was for Michael to experience each life of His created beings. This way He truly knows what we are going through for He has "walked in our shoes." It was in the normal progression of the universes - so that He could become a Master Michael.

In looking for ways to explain to family and friends why I believe Christ did not die for our sins, I have tried to understand how the "story" originated and became so deeply ingrained in the Christian religions of today. During the time of Christ the mentality of the people was to appease an angry God by offering a sacrifice. The sacrificial lamb was the custom of the day. The story of Abraham being "tested" to see if he would kill his son to please God. There once existed a world-wide and profound belief that it was necessary to offer a human sacrifice when anything extraordinary or unusual happened. At one time it was the practice to sacrifice the first-born son. Moses tried to do away with this practice by substituting a ransom, which was payable to the priests.

This was the mentality of that day. And man tried to understand why Jesus (if He was the Son of God) would die rather than strike down those who tried to kill him.

What they came up with was that he must have *had* to die. ("Not, my will, but Your Will be done"). The reason *must* be He had to die for *us*. So, it should not be a surprise that the reasoning became that Jesus *must have had to* die for our sins

But, why?

Well, since Adam and Eve were our parents and they committed the first sin - *it must be to atone for the sins of Adam and Eve*. To wash away that "Original Sin."

They thought because we are the children of Adam and Eve, we must be stained with their sin and cannot get to heaven unless the supreme sacrifice is made to God. They assumed Jesus had to intervene for us before God would forgive us.

And, since The Holy Spirit was given to mankind after Jesus died, then God must have been waiting for Jesus to make this sacrifice - The Human Sacrifice - so God could send us the Holy Ghost - otherwise - He could not.

Don't you see, it all fit so perfectly.

EXCEPT: As the Urantia Book teaches, and most faiths believe today, no other person can atone for our sins. And no other person can CAUSE us to sin. (The devil made me do it). And no sin is your sin unless YOU commit it. We are TOTALLY responsible for our actions! We are not responsible for our parent's sins nor are we responsible for our children's sins.

We could not be "handed down" the original sin of Adam and Eve.

So God did not “give His Only Begotten Son.” Christ Michael chose to become a human, like you and me, so he could more fully love and understand us. He **chose** to experience the experience of death. To me, this means more - that Christ Michael not only chose to become a mere human being as his Final Bestowal - but he chose our planet where all the “normal” plans of the universe had gone astray: Our Planetary Prince, Lucifer, rebelled - taking thousands of our created helpers with him; our Material Son and Daughter, Adam and Eve, had “tried their own plan,” which failed. And yet he chose us, probably because we needed Him so desperately. One world in 10 million gets a Creator Son, and He chose us.

Now, we must teach a new understanding of Why Christ Michael became Man. The main reason He became man was to complete his seventh bestowal and to bring to Earth the Truth of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

The Urantia Book offers this explanation of the crucifixion:

“It was man and not God who planned and executed the death of Jesus on the cross. True, the Father refused to interfere with the march of human events on Urantia, but the Father in Paradise did not decree, demand, or require the death of his Son as it was carried out on earth. It is a fact that in some manner, sooner or later, Jesus would have had to divest himself of his mortal body, his incarnation in the flesh, but he could have executed such a task in countless ways without dying on a cross between two thieves. All of this was man’s doing, not God’s.”

(Page 2002. 3)

The salvation of God for the mortals of Urantia would have been just as effective and unerringly certain if Jesus had not been put to death by the cruel hands of ignorant mortals. If the Master had been favorably received by the mortals of earth and had departed from Urantia by the voluntary relinquishment of his life in the flesh, the fact of the love of God and the Mercy of the Son - the fact of sonship with God - would have in no wise been affected. You mortals are the sons of God, and only one thing is required to make such a truth factual in your personal experience, and that is your spirit-born faith. (Page 2003.3)