

# THE ARENA

## ANZURA

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### THE MIND ARENA OF CHOICE

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

## From the Cocoon of Christianity

Christianity, "*the cocoon in which the kingdom of Jesus' concept now slumbers*" (p. 1866) is our world's most visible assembly of souls aligned with Michael. Millions upon millions moved to respond by Michael's spirit of truth, have settled upon some manifestation of Christianity as the appropriate way in which to express the love and allegiance they feel towards the One who gave them life. We can assume the *angels of the churches* have worked hard to achieve this, and such robust foundations must surely feature in the plans laid out by the *angels of progress*. Those of us who have received the fifth epochal revelation, and volunteered to help evolve the cultures of our world, may see the uplifting of Urantia's existing religions as an exhilarating opportunity.

Thus many of us will be inspired and challenged by Julia Elischer's article, beginning on page 6. Julia urges Urantia Book readers to actively engage Christianity, to share in the fellowship of worship with our fellow lovers of Jesus, and to become part of the process by which this great religion may be further evolved and perfected. Rather than remain a tome penetrable by a precious few, Julia maintains that the gifts of the Urantia revelation must be made digestible to modern Christianity so as to enrich and enliven the religion that Jesus inspired, and which carries the hope of billions around the world. It is an impassioned and telling argument, especially for Urantia Book-readers with a Christian heritage.

While Christianity even now is perhaps the greatest *human* force for good in the world, the UB describes it as the cocoon in which Jesus' deepest and truest teachings slumber. The global "witnessing" evoked by the recent departure of Karol Wojtyla, Pope John Paul II, illustrates the transformative power of the religion *about* Jesus, as well as the mighty potential for human unification that it represents. If such a religion is but a cocoon, what manner of human-divine collaboration might emerge?

On the other hand we must ask to what extent do the errors inherent in Christianity limit this potential? From atonement to the virgin birth the UB tells us that Christianity has got it wrong. How much does this actually matter? After all is it not truth rather than facts that are spiritually important? When Jesus was asked about Jonah swallowing the whale (p.1428) he sensitively chose not to argue the *facts* of the event with the young Gadiah but

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rather to discuss the truths of loyalty and devotion to God's will that the story clearly represented for this man. Jesus' bodily resurrection or his walking on water seem similarly harmless and unimportant misconceptions. These stories and others like them may underlie a believer's faint faith, in which case there is more to be gained discussing the truths they contain, rather than pointing out errors of fact.

And yet there are Christian beliefs that must be challenged. How has the doctrine of the Virgin birth affected Christian ideas on sexuality and innocence? Has belief in the devil, the *evil one*, propagated fear and mistrust? How has the unfortunately rather central Christian tenant that Jesus suffered and died for the sins of man affected Christian philosophy and openness? Is the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man *fully* at the centre of the contemporary Christian message?

We know that Jesus was not backward in coming forward when challenging doctrines that needed to evolve. As can be seen in his public teachings, He was not afraid to openly challenge the cherished beliefs of Judaism—to discredit the superstitions inherent in the greatest religion of His day.

So what does that mean for us? Perhaps those with the background to collaborate with the angels of the churches, and the delicacy to work simultaneously with the angels of progress, might actively participate in Christianity's continuing mission to bring man to God, while challenging Christianity to shake off its bondage to human dogma, to rid itself of divisive ideas, and to move ever forward into our Father's eternal truth.

Julia is inviting us to be a part of that evolution.

## An Invitation to Join in the National Study Day – 28 May 2005

It's that time of year again when readers from all over Australia and New Zealand will be gathering on the same day to study the same topic from *The Urantia Book*. If you would like to participate in this year's National Study Day, check the list of study group hosts on the back page of this newsletter and contact the host closest to you for details about the local meeting.

## Paper 50 – page 572 The Planetary Princes

This year we will be studying *The Planetary Princes* and contemplating the struggles and tests of faith the Lanonandek Sons encounter when inaugurating a planetary civilization.

*Being quite alone as representatives of divinity on the individual planets, these [Lanonandek] Sons are tested severely... (p.572:5)*

*That the Father is not personally present in the local universe also imposes a certain test of faith and loyalty on all these Sons. (p.573.1)*

And when it comes to Urantia (and other quarantined worlds) – the story is altogether different.

*But isolation of these spheres affords their races a unique opportunity for the exercise of faith and for the development of a peculiar quality of confidence in cosmic reliability... (p.578.6)*

Keeping in mind the theme of our upcoming International Conference that is being held in Sydney in July 2006 – *Rewards of Isolation* – this paper will give us a chance to grapple with the often difficult and trying conditions that prevail in a Universal plan that fosters growth by experience and encourages loyalty in uncertainty – where the rewards – for higher and lower personalities alike – far outweigh the consequences of error.

We hope you can attend one of the study groups and wish you all a happy and rewarding day.

## A Call for Workshop Leaders for the 2006 IUA Conference Sydney, Australia, 14–18 July 2006

*Dear Friends,*

I hope you have had a chance to contemplate making the trip “down under” to Sydney Australia in 2006 for the next international conference for the IUA that will be held 14-18 July 2006.

The ANZURA conference planning committee has been busy, and exciting ideas for the program are unfolding. With help from the IUA team, this conference will become a rewarding and educational experience for serious students of *The Urantia Book*.

Our theme will be: “Rewards of Isolation – Small Teams in Deep Waters”. As there will be a lot of focus on teamwork in relation to the dissemination of revelatory truth as well as the efficacy of small teams pulling together for common goals, we aim to emphasise the workshop/study group components of the program. There will still be quality plenary sessions that will set the tone for each day's theme, but we are allowing plenty of time for smaller discussion groups so that readers may choose those areas of study they feel most drawn to and make the most of the opportunity to fully explore their chosen topics.

The plenary sessions and workshop topics have been designed to tease out various aspects of this broad and

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fascinating theme. We have decided to categorise the workshops into three “streams” to allow for a diversity of choice:

1. The “**Reward of Experience**” stream – making sense of how things work. This stream will explore the rewards of isolation from a universe viewpoint and attempt to discover how having a ‘big picture’ understanding can strengthen the effectiveness of the work we do.
2. The “**Reward of Life**” stream will explore how so very much depends on an enthusiastic and effective load-pulling spirit and how revelatory truth has relied on committed teams to keep the light of truth alive on our planet. Discover the heroes of the past, present and future and “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” [Margaret Mead]
3. The “**Reward of Faith**” stream – touching the source. This stream will explore ways of finding the values and meanings to launch ourselves all the way to the Father. It will focus on the individual dealing with the fact of isolation and how to grow as a team player. It will discover ways of proving that prayer and worship are antidotes to feelings of isolation.

Naturally, we will need input from some of you good folk to help us make this a successful conference. **We need workshop leaders to present and facilitate these workshops** to help us make this an educational and rewarding study experience for conference attendees. Therefore we would like to invite you to volunteer your services in leading the workshops during the conference. Below is a list of workshop topics with a brief description that gives an overview of the purpose of each one. (Some of the workshops have already been spoken for, but if two or more of us feel strongly moved to present a topic, we are free to adjust arrangements to accommodate such enthusiasm!)

Please feel free to contact us on [anzura@urantia.org.au](mailto:anzura@urantia.org.au) to express your interest in leading a workshop and stipulate which topic you would like to present. We’ll do our best to match you up with the topic of your choice, but we can’t guarantee it if we have multiple contenders for the same workshop. (If you don’t feel drawn to this avenue of service there will be plenty of opportunities for other avenues as more detailed plans on logistics unfold. We’ll keep you posted.) For more conference information and registration details, please visit the website, <http://www.urantia.org.au/anzura/IUAconference2006>

*Warm regards,*

*Merindi Swadling*

*Chair, 2006 IUA Conference Planning Committee*

## Workshop Topics and Descriptions for the IUA Conference, 2006

### *Reward of Experience Stream*

#### **Personality in the Grand Universe Age**

The Urantia Papers reveal “personality” to be so fundamental—as the source of everything and the destiny of all—that the Father did not delegate its care. They describe how the Father is using the current transitional age to unfold the potentials of personality in seven great isolated nests, evolving each superuniverse uniquely to a breathtaking culmination.

#### **Succeeding in the Search for God**

*The search for God is the unstinted bestowal of love attended by amazing discoveries of new and greater love to be bestowed.* (p.1289:2) The human opportunity is personal, and involves learning how to love. The Father’s own first circuit ripens by one degree as each of us aligns to its purposes, and tunes to its loving source. In the end, our free-will choice to join the circuit of the Father is our one significant, essential, act. And recall, our final reach for the universal Father, we make alone.

#### **How Deep Are the Waters?**

Our determined struggles to stay afloat in the relative shallows of space-time equip us, as finaliters, to sail upon the vast reaches of the master universe. Once there, a new cycle of struggle and success may move us into deeper waters still, even as they grade into the unfathomable depths of the absolute.

#### **Universe Uncertainties – the Close Calls**

The challenge of remaining resolute in the face of enormity. We can scarcely imagine by what slim margins some of the successes of the supreme creator personalities are won. The end may be certain, but that’s the very end. The processes through which that end is established are full of struggle, challenge, and uncertainty. Things go wrong and must be compensated for; imperfection lies around every corner, and only the Father’s love is dependable. Faith triumphs, but sometimes only by the skin of its teeth.

#### **Echoes of Eden**

The Adamic default made our isolation complete. All planetary administration and cultural reference points were gone. All progress from that day on would be home grown, and unique to our world. Now 37,000 years have passed, and we must begin to synchronise the mindscapes of Urantia with the ways of Jerusalem. The Urantia papers are well-tuned to help bridge current planetary beliefs with the worldview Adam attempted to seed in Eden.

### The Benefits of the Lucifer Rebellion

In the darkest of places and deepest of waters, struggling small teams have the chance to shine bright. For “seven long years” the whole of Nebadon was moved by the steadfastness of a struggling band of their youngest ascendant fellows: “What of Amadon of Urantia, does he still stand unmoved?” On page 619, the Melchizedeks are said to teach “that the good resulting from the Satania rebellion is more than a thousand times the sum of all the evil.”

### Sub-Infinite Penetraters

By surfing a wave of love tuned to carry us across the grand universe age, we may arrive at our first true destination—the brink beyond which lies an absolute arena. Our finite struggles and success equip us to penetrate these deepest of waters, and ensure we are sufficient not only to endure such unbounded experience, but to enjoy it too!

## Reward of Life Stream

### Agondonter Dreaming

Those souls evolved by faith alone. The priceless benefits of believing without seeing. Consider how planetary isolation has fostered exquisite differentiation, providing unique variation in creature experience and capacity. What marvelous contributions such souls will make to the versatility of teams engaged in tasks where unquestioned faith and sublime confidence are essential to success.

### Van and Amadon – the Power of Persistence

The extraordinary sagacity of Van in being prepared to question his superiors. Contrast with the equally sincere but mistaken loyalty of the rebellious staff members to Caligastia. Amadon’s sublime faith and trust in both Van and his heavenly Father.

### How to “...fatten upon disappointment and enthuse upon apparent defeat”

The essence of our own human and then morontial growth involves facing the new or the unexpected, learning how to proceed, then succeeding with the struggles that ensue. While such change is individual—a soul alone that chooses—the presence and support of a friendly team helps smooth the way. Eventually the very struggle to grow becomes a delight.

### The Flowering of the Evolutionary Races – a Garden of Variety

The six Sangik specialisations of Urantia’s human type each possessed the potential to create complete and characteristic civilisations. Natural tribal antipathy led to the separation of these races, setting the stage for each to flower in isolation. Had all gone well, Adam would have had a full palette of evolutionary cultures to integrate into

a planetary civilization, to impregnate with his Violet blood, and to seed with the ideals of Eden.

### From herds to brotherhood: the adjutants and the Spirit of Truth

Our adjutant inheritance includes the urge to mingle and cooperate with whichever group we come to know. Such gentle feelings are often swept aside by animal needs, or by local ideologies burning bright. But for 2,000 years, such drives have been amplified by the Spirit of Truth, and given meaning by our adjusted response. Taken together, these urges, desires and insights are helping to lay foundations for the brotherhood of all mankind.

### From the Cocoon of Christianity ...

... Jesus’ spiritual kingdom has begun its beautiful unfolding. The intellectual mistakes of the Christian Church have not interfered with the spiritual progress of individual believers, and the Spirit of Truth has produced, in modern Christianity, a new and updated version of the gospel. The religion of Jesus is alive and moving in many 21st Century churches! Fellowship with the living Jesus is destined to unite the various groups of His followers in a spiritual brotherhood that will work together to transform society and pave the way for the recognition of the brotherhood of man. Let us help to glorify and uplift our beloved Creator in the Church that bears His name.

### Teamwork and Epochal Revelation

Each epochal revelation on Urantia has been entrusted to small teams, and each initially appeared insufficient in every way: that first mighty team of two, Van and Amadon, the Sethite priests, the Salem missionaries, the apostles and disciples of Jesus. Each proved able to maintain the thread of spiritual continuity, and kept a spiritual flame alight. Will those of us entrusted with the fifth revelation be ready and able to carry such a torch?

### What’s Different About Planet Urantia?

How did we come to be isolated? In what ways, really, are we alone? What compensation awaits us for enduring such unique and acute struggles? While Urantia may lack the benefits of a planetary culture and shared beliefs, our personal spiritual circuits are all in place. All we need do is believe without seeing. What does it take to do this? Why are *agondonters* so special?

### The Dynamics of Teamwork

Why are some teams more effective than others? Why are some teams like the “A-Team” and others more like dysfunctional, loosely woven committees? How does effective leadership influence the dynamics of a team? *One of the most important lessons to be learned during your mortal career is teamwork.* (p.312:1) *In civilization much, very much, depends on an enthusiastic and effective load-pulling spirit.* (p.911:2)

### Change of Latitude, Change of Attitude

Discover and investigate the benefits stemming from the isolation of worshipful meditation—the greatest of all

methods of problem solving that Rodan learned from Jesus. Vexing situations can all but disappear after a 'time-out'. Revisiting an old problem with a new attitude can reveal an obvious solution that escaped our frantic mind.

### Harmony in the Face of Diversity

Learning to work with one another in a spirit of unity for common goals despite sincere differences of ideologies and opinions. *Always we may have diversity of intellectual comprehension and interpretation, even varying degrees of socialization, but lack of spiritual brotherhood is both inexcusable and reprehensible.* (p.1866:3)

### What the United Midwayers Undertake, the United Midwayers Do

An example of an effective small team in VERY deep waters. The actual citizens of Urantia are persistently working for the progress of their planet. They are anchored here till establishment of the era of Light and Life. Consider their chief work today of unperceived liaison-associates of those men and women who constitute the planetary reserve corps of destiny.

### Human Nature and the Twelve Apostles

A study of the cross section of personality types and human characteristics – their strengths and weaknesses. Understanding our fellows helps us to work more effectively with one another. *Love is only born of thoroughgoing understanding of your neighbor's motives and sentiments.* (p.1098:3)

### Preparing Small Teams for the Dissemination of Truth

Learning to articulate the teachings of *The Urantia Book* in a way commensurate with people's intellectual development. Look at how the small teams were prepared in Dalamatia, Eden, and Salem and explore Jesus' methods.

### The Salem Missionaries

*The lives and experiences of the men and women who ventured forth from Salem, Mesopotamia, and Lake Van to enlighten the tribes of the Eastern Hemisphere present a heroic chapter in the annals of the human race.* (p.1021:6) *You who today enjoy the advantages of the art of printing little understand how difficult it was to perpetuate truth during these earlier times; how easy it was to lose sight of a new doctrine from one generation to another.* (p.1022:2)

### Inoculation Against Disappointment

Enduring the disappointments of life. Standing up after a fall. Getting stronger as a result of disappointments. Maintaining focus. *The universe of your origin is being forged out between the anvil of justice and the hammer of suffering; but those who wield the hammer are the children of mercy, the spirit offspring of the Infinite Spirit.* (p.100:2) *Loving and intimate human associations tend to rob suffering of its sorrow and hardship of much of its bitterness.* (p.1776:2) **Remember**, ...sometimes your most disappointing disappointments have become your greatest blessings. (p.555.4)

## Reward of Faith Stream

### Love – the Interaction of Personality

Minds can share words and ideas but only persons can love. You learn love in worship and you exhibit love with other personalities.

### Loyalty in the Face of Adversity

Discover how the ability of faith insight can transcend the sometimes tragic circumstances of earthly life. *Only a poet can discern poetry in the commonplace prose of routine existence.* (p.557:6)

### Personal Rewards – with the Father you're never alone

*When you feel that you are alone in the world, I will know of your isolation...* (p.1954:3). *...the Father is not very far from any one of you; he dwells within you, and in him do we all literally move, actually live, and veritably have our being.* (p.139:1)

### The rewards of isolation as opposed to the dangers of isolation

*Salvation is the reward of faith, not merely of works.* (p.1802:0) *Only sin is isolated and evil gravity resisting on the mental and spiritual levels. The universe is a whole; no thing or being exists or lives in isolation. Self-realization is potentially evil if it is antisocial.* (p.647:5)

### How to turn adversity into opportunity

Life's circumstances can swamp the individual. Consider how faith can overcome even the most trying of life's circumstances. In a world where experience is its own reward remember, *... the greatest affliction of the cosmos is never to have been afflicted. Mortals only learn wisdom by experiencing tribulation.* (p.556:14)

### Let faith replace fear

Fear is a lack of faith. Humility enables us to become truly exalted; the aim is to show true humility toward God. Humility and sincerity go hand in hand to strengthen faith. Sincerity is the sign of a pure heart, while courage is at the very heart. *"Fear not" was his [Jesus'] watchword, and patient endurance his ideal of strength of character* (p.1982:1). *Man might fear a great God, but he trusts and loves only a good God.* (p.40:5)

### Prayer – the antidote to feelings of isolation

*Prayer has been the ancestor of much peace of mind, cheerfulness, calmness, courage, self-mastery, and fair-mindedness in the men and women of the evolving races.* (p.998:3)

### The greatest religionist and His perfected soul

The way he lived allowed Jesus to make "extraordinary progress in the conquest of the human mind." (p.2093) By unbroken communion with his Paradise Father, he attained the mortal goal of human existence.

## Christ's Living Water Seeks the Lowest Places

*Julia Elischer, Australia*

*(All quotations are from The Urantia Book)*

As the small, isolated mountain streams that we Urantia Book readers are, we know that it is our destiny to reach the great ocean of humanity at large. Spiritual growth is preparing us for dynamic service and there is much work to be done in bringing God's will to earth in and through His Creator Son, our very own Jesus of Nazareth.

This brings us to some very important questions that I will explore in this article. What *is* God's will for us? Where will the indwelling spirit lead us? How and whom do we serve? How is Christ operating and what is he orchestrating on our planet?

Individually, we become instruments for God's grace in the world when we embrace a living relationship with Him. By allowing prayer and worship to open "the human end of the channel of God-man communication, mortals make immediately available the ever-flowing stream of divine ministry to the creatures of the worlds."<sup>1</sup>

Working in isolation, however, "tends to exhaust the energy charge of the soul",<sup>2</sup> and just as lonely mountain streams must join the great river, so too does life progress through established channels.

Below the small streams, on lower ground, there runs the Christian 'river of truth' - Christ's traditional interface for raising spirit-born mortals dedicated to continuing his work on earth. Despite its flaws, and even though Jesus did not establish the church, **"he has, in every manner consistent with his nature, fostered it as the best existent exponent of his life work on earth."**<sup>3</sup> This is an important fact if we are interested in the way in which Christ is designing his architectural plan for our time. As the current level of, "human evolution and spiritual progress are hardly sufficient to enable all men to dispense with religious authority",<sup>4</sup> **"Do not overlook the value of your spiritual heritage, the river of truth running down through the centuries."**<sup>5</sup>

*"Christianity is a mighty religion" and "contains enough of Jesus' teachings to immortalize it."*<sup>6</sup>

Local Christian churches and missions are the earthly vehicles through which Jesus is glorified, and his plan for making possible a pathway for humanity to grow into heavenly citizenship, is implemented. Christians pray to, and worship the Father through Jesus. They save and heal and build in the name of Jesus. Whether read from the Urantia Book or the Bible, Jesus has the living words that change lives. The Urantia Book clarifies and expands the

Biblical truths that Jesus lived the perfect earthly life as the Son of God and that the spiritual benefits of the risen Christ will flow into the lives of all believing sons of God according to their capacity and desire to claim them.

*"The spiritual bank of the kingdom of heaven will be paying out faith, hope and moral security to all who draw upon it in His (Jesus') name."*<sup>7</sup>

Our task, as receivers of the fifth epochal revelation, is more than just believing the Urantia Book and fostering the spread of its teachings. We are being called to become the new disciples of Jesus - spiritually empowered leaders who embody Christ's liberating message and take it into the world. **"Jesus' disciples should be more than conquerors, even overflowing sources of inspiration and enhanced living to all men."**<sup>8</sup>

*"Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings."*<sup>9</sup>

Now, mountain streams are very pure, very fresh, and as they trickle down into the world, they don't necessarily like the idea of flowing into the big, murky, old river that threatens to engulf them and subvert their purity and autonomy. So they build walls - mental barriers - that impede the flow and, in the short term, allow them to retain their sense of individual superiority. In time, however, the living water of Christ begins to stagnate and then to die, for **"Static truth is dead truth."**<sup>10</sup> The brilliant plan for pouring out a new, enlarged revelation of Christ that would reach the folk floundering in the depths of the ocean, is thwarted by human mind not daring to let go of itself.

*"Thinking man has always feared to be held by a religion. When a strong and moving religion threatens to dominate him, he invariably tries to rationalize, traditionalize, and institutionalize it, thereby hoping to gain control of it. By such procedure, even a revealed religion becomes man-made and man-dominated. Modern men and women of intelligence evade the religion of Jesus because of their fears of what it will do to them - and with them. And all such fears are well founded. The religion of Jesus does, indeed, dominate and transform its believers, demanding that men dedicate their lives to seeking for a knowledge of the will of the Father in heaven and requiring that the energies of living be consecrated to the unselfish service of the brotherhood of man."*

*Selfish men and women simply will not pay such a price for even the greatest spiritual treasure ever offered mortal man."*<sup>11</sup>

*"Truth often becomes confusing and even misleading*

*when it is dismembered, segregated, isolated and too much analyzed. Living truth teaches the truth seeker aright only when it is embraced in wholeness and as a living spiritual reality.”<sup>12</sup>*

To become one with God we let go of the intellect and take up our life on the spiritual path. The intellect then becomes the servant of life, the servant of spirit, and we become spiritually reborn. **“Unless you are born again, born of the spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of God.”<sup>13</sup>** For this we need the living faith of Jesus which gives us the ability to LET the good life flow through us. We become afraid to let go of the ‘security blanket’ of the intellect and grow up to live the spiritual life.

While the mind is critical and analytical, taking things apart, the spirit is integrating and inclusive, bringing things together. Our life becomes whole and holy through the experience of, not the theory about, the presence of God. When we begin to practice the presence of God we do not depend upon books in the same way. **“Only dead truth can be held as a theory. Living truth is dynamic and can enjoy only an experiential existence in the human mind.”<sup>14</sup>**

People will believe our faith because of how we live it, what they see us doing, and what we contribute, not because of what they hear us claiming. The world doesn’t really need more words, more knowledge. We have so much now that we are becoming confused. The world needs more understanding, more freely given love. It is frightening to give of ourselves spiritually, but the indwelling spirit will lead us. We’ll be shown if we are receiving Christ’s living water but are not pouring ourselves out, being enlightened but not taking Jesus’ light into the darkness. **“Freely you have received, freely give.”<sup>15</sup>** When we are reborn of the spirit, our life is meaningless without being an outpouring of His spirit into the world.

**“Even if the door to the way of life is narrow, it is wide enough to admit all who sincerely seek to enter, for I am that door.”<sup>16</sup>** Jesus clearly, is the path to our personal salvation, but he is also the very water that is to be poured out to the spiritually thirsty.

*“This Son of truth and righteousness shall rise upon the world with healing light and saving power; even that he will save his people from their sins, that he will really seek and save those who are lost...That those who believe in him shall have eternal life. He will pour out his spirit upon all flesh, and this Spirit of Truth shall be in each believer a well of water springing up into eternal life.”<sup>17</sup>*

How many people do you suppose are willing to take the time and effort to climb the high mountain peaks in

order to receive Christ’s pure water at its source? Most flock to the low-lying ocean waters, where you can’t drink and be nourished by living water, but it is fun and easily accessible. The small mountain streams are far, far away from this ocean of people, but the Christian ‘river of truth’ flows directly into it. And as the tides move, ocean water is drawn up into the river.

You can try standing on the beach proclaiming to the masses of people, the marvelous properties of the small mountain streams, imploring them to make the huge trek and see for themselves. Most people, however, are unable or unwilling to traverse the lonely, narrow, uphill path. But if they are thirsty, the river is right there feeding into the ocean. Its water may not be totally pure, but it is still the fresh, living water of Christ, enlivened further by the humble and self-sacrificing mountain streams that dared to let go and let God.

*“And like water, true goodness seeks the lowest places, even those levels which others avoid.”<sup>18</sup>*

### The Challenge of Servant Leadership

If, indeed, **“The hour is striking for presenting to...the peoples of all faiths, not the gospel about Jesus, but the living spiritual reality of the gospel of Jesus,”<sup>19</sup>** then our spiritual growth will be preparing us to courageously serve Christ in leading our planet into this next stage of light and life. His will is accomplished through the dedicated lives of His spirit-born mortals.

There are reported to be over 33,800 separate and distinct Christian denominations in the world today.<sup>20</sup> The



Urantia movement, presenting an enlarged teaching of Christ, constitutes another, albeit, unique and revelatory, stream of Christ's fragmented earthly enterprise. If we seriously seek to do God's will on earth, the indwelling spirit will lead us into a united embrace of our Christian fellows - **"The great hope of Urantia lies in the possibility of a new revelation of Jesus with a new and enlarged presentation of his saving message which would spiritually unite in loving service the numerous families of his present day followers."**<sup>21</sup>

*"The living Jesus is the only hope of a possible unification of Christianity. The true church – the Jesus brotherhood – is invisible, spiritual, and is characterized by unity, not necessarily by uniformity. ... Spiritual unity is the fruit of faith union with the living Jesus. ... And this brotherhood is destined to become a living organism in contrast to an institutionalized social organization. It may well utilize such social organizations, but it must not be supplanted by them."*<sup>22</sup>

Although the church as an institution has become marginal in contemporary society, it shows a history of being most vigorous when marginalised. The vibrant early church, while socially and politically isolated, wrote the entire New Testament within a period of about seventy years and spread to the furthest horizons of the Roman Empire and the known world.

Once again restricted in outward movement, the church is undergoing an intensifying of its inner life and a renewed openness to the spirit. Numerous denominations are uniting as the 'body of Christ' whose priorities are shifting from doctrinal authority to a reconnection of the human soul to the living God, immersed and fulfilled in the experience of community.

The result is an organised servant power that is becoming spiritually emboldened to breach old boundaries, be daring in its inclusiveness and fulfill its divine mandates. The servant church is indeed, bowing "before the cross it so valiantly extols, there to learn anew from Jesus of Nazareth the greatest truths man can ever hear – the living gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."<sup>23</sup>

*"There is great hope for any church that worships the living God, validates the brotherhood of man and dares to remove all creedal pressure from its members."*<sup>24</sup>

Modern Christianity is realising most of the values within the Urantia Book but expressing them in a different language. To lift up Jesus from a philosophical position outside the Bible and Christianity is 'confusing and misleading' to the people who abide in Him. The living



Jesus requires that we surrender ourselves to God and what he wants to do in and through us. Before he can realise the spiritual brotherhood of man, he must first unite his followers as a brotherhood in Christ.

*"The call to the adventure of building a new and transformed human society by means of the spiritual rebirth of Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom should thrill all who believe in him as men have not been stirred since the days when they walked about on earth as his companions in the flesh."*<sup>25</sup>

Our constant struggle, both as individuals and as groups, is against the exclusionist impulse that thwarts the divine plan for the spiritual union of humanity. When we embrace and respond to the truth of the Fatherhood of God as a living experience, not a theory, it is a monumental, life-changing process. To have a direct relationship with God is very powerful. It transforms you from a spiritual orphan into a son or daughter of God! The human race, in all of its wondrous variation, then becomes your beloved extended family.

The decline of institutional religious authority has meant that authority must now rise from deep within the character and soul of the leader, from their own relationship with God, for without an evident depth of integrity, church authority no longer carries any weight. Real authority certifies one as a Christ-like presence to others, a person of loving, prayerful, self-giving service to God, to the church, to the world.

Such servant leadership is characterised by its ability to compromise the ideal to the prevailing reality, to be the seed that dies so that abundant new life may issue forth. This was the very quality that ensured Christianity took root and flourished around the world. Its triumph was largely due to Paul and his successors being, "willing but shrewd and sagacious compromisers."<sup>26</sup>

*“They deliberately compromised the ideals of Jesus in an effort to save and further many of his ideas. And they were eminently successful. But mistake not! these compromised ideals of the Master are still latent in his gospel, and they will eventually assert their full power upon this world.”<sup>27</sup>*

Not so successful was Abner. “The Eastern version of the message of Jesus, notwithstanding that it remained more true to his teachings, continued to follow the uncompromising attitude of Abner. It never progressed as did the Hellenized version and was eventually lost in the Islamic movement.”<sup>28</sup>

Today, as Jesus’ new disciples, we face a similar challenge. Unless some of the ideas in the Urantia Book are compromised so that Jesus in the Urantia Book can meet and join with Jesus in the Bible, the uncompromising Urantia movement is liable to be labeled a cult and be lost in the nebulosity of the New Age movement.

This does not mean that we lose sight of the brilliant and advanced ideas in the Urantia Book, just that we are ‘sagacious’ enough to discern how to realistically progress the flow of its teachings, and tolerant enough to transcend our differences and work together for the glory of God and the advancement of faith in Christ.

Currently, over two billion people, one third of the world’s population, are professing believers in Jesus Christ.<sup>29</sup> By compromising what will be rejected outright by Christian tradition, we bridge the gap between the revelation *and* the people, in order to move the attitudes and attachments of the people up in the direction of the revelation. When this happens a new reality can be brought into being. Once we grasp the fundamental importance of



collaboration, then compromise means gain, not loss, because inclusion of the strength of others is enhancement for any important vision. Real power is an exchange of power.

By entering the Christian ‘river of truth’, the servant leader is in a position to receive Christ’s living water from its high mountain source, and simultaneously, to reach into the ocean, to the lowest places of human despair where, like Jesus, we bring hope to the broken and wounded, the spiritual orphans who are drifting about, lost without a knowledge of their Father’s unceasing love.

Maintaining the tension of this bridge is the cross, born by all the courageous individuals who dare to do Christ’s work on earth. Buffeted by the determined impulses of human resistance to change, all the rejection of the leader, all the fear of what is different, we share in the extremity of Jesus’ suffering, but also in his eternal victory. Such selfless love cannot be defeated in God’s cosmic design.

The Urantia Book has not been given to us that it might replace our Christian heritage, but rather, to evolve, enliven and unify it. Information can never replace the living water of Christ that has been pouring out to receptive individuals for over two thousand years. The Urantia Book offers us an enlarged cosmology and a deepened understanding of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit whereby a new, scientific age may discern the truth within the Bible and be led into a living relationship with their divine parents. The future of this revelation is not solely in the text itself, but in how the Creator Son can influence each believing soul who reads it. For it is as we are refreshed by God’s grace and gripped by its power that we will communicate it. Being graced, we can lead others into the living faith that results in the exhilarating service of Christ, for the medium will be the message.

*“Christianity has indeed done a great service for this world, but what is now most needed is Jesus. The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men.”<sup>30</sup>*

To the praise of His glorious grace!

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|-----------------------|--|--|
| <sup>1</sup> p. 1638  | <sup>11</sup> p. 2083                                      | <sup>21</sup> p. 1828                                      |
| <sup>2</sup> p. 1776  | <sup>12</sup> p. 2075                                      | <sup>22</sup> p. 2085                                      |
| <sup>3</sup> p. 2085  | <sup>13</sup> p. 1829                                      | <sup>23</sup> p. 2086                                      |
| <sup>4</sup> p. 2085  | <sup>14</sup> p. 1949                                      | <sup>24</sup> p. 1135                                      |
| <sup>5</sup> p. 2082  | <sup>15</sup> p. 2052                                      | <sup>25</sup> p. 2084                                      |
| <sup>6</sup> p. 2086  | <sup>16</sup> p. 2085                                      | <sup>26</sup> p. 2071                                      |
| <sup>7</sup> p. 2076  | <sup>17</sup> p. 2035                                      | <sup>27</sup> p. 2070                                      |
| <sup>8</sup> p. 2084  | <sup>18</sup> p. 1452                                      | <sup>28</sup> p. 2072                                      |
| <sup>9</sup> p. 2082  | <sup>19</sup> p. 1041                                      | <sup>29</sup> Barrett, David. World Christian Encyclopedia |
| <sup>10</sup> p. 1949 | <sup>20</sup> Barrett, David. World Christian Encyclopedia | <sup>30</sup> p. 2084                                      |

## Small Teams in Deep Waters

Our mortal struggles and experience reflect a theme playing at all levels of the current grand universe age: small groups of persons, high and low, finding themselves in unfamiliar circumstances, facing tasks that initially seem too big and too hard, but which somehow they eventually come to master. Like small teams placed in deep waters, and allowed to learn to swim.

Often these struggles involve isolation, and for mortals, they always involve faith. But there is a priceless result: each cycle of struggle and success ripens each person involved by a few degrees.

And once each context is mastered, this cycle repeats, in waters that are deeper, more marvellous and ever more complex. In this way the Father unfolds the potentials of all his experiential children.

But a deep question remains: **why?** Why bother with such elaborate evolution? What needs of the future motivate the Father to set up the entire grand universe, and devote this entire age, to experience and education? What is it about us finite evolving persons that could possibly contribute to the Father's long-term plan? How on earth might humans make a difference in the universe of universes?

Well, the papers tell of the magnificent perfection of persons populating the central universe, but imply that, while such perfection makes for a fine foundation, it is inappropriate, or insufficient, to confront the vastness of the Father's eternal infinity.

They then contrast such static completion with the main phenomenon of this transitional universe age: trillions of new persons, engaged with evolving themselves—created as near nothing, then given struggles and troubles and the time to master them—a sequence that allows the full potentials of each person to unfold.

And then the Father plays a wild card—fusing such surprising persons with a fragment of himself. He makes us sufficient to penetrate the place where he dwells, and there, to begin unimagined work by his side.

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