

# JOURNAL



URANTIA.

*A News Journal for Readers of The Urantia Book*

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# Urantia Book Internet School (UBIS)

DOROTHY ELDER, DIRECTOR, UBIS, USA

## Outreach Around the World

The UBIS, an Educational Outreach service provided on the Urantia Foundation website, will begin its fifth year of study courses on September 22, 2003. Ten courses are already being planned for the 2003-2004 school year.

In the past four years, sixteen experienced readers have served as Teacher/Facilitators for 37 courses in English, and courses are also presented in Finnish, Spanish and French. *The Urantia Book* is truly making its way around the world. Forty-five students participated in the English classes this past Semester. Readers from Spain, Canada, Great Britain, Iran, Bolivia, Mexico, and the USA studied and fellowshipped together.

## Teacher Training

The UBIS staff has developed a "Teacher's Handbook" which is also available to the new teachers in electronic form. The UBIS considers the training of teachers a high priority, and it has used the methods of teacher training from *The Urantia Book* as its guide.

Information regarding the courses for the September Semester will be posted on the Urantia Foundation website ([www.urantia.org](http://www.urantia.org)) on August 1, 2003. For additional information about the UBIS, please contact [delder03@sprynet.com](mailto:delder03@sprynet.com)

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Finland  
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Canada  
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France  
<http://www.urantia.org/france>

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# Truth

TOM BURNS, PH.D., USA

PRESENTED AT THE UAUS NATIONAL CONFERENCE, JUNE 2003

It was a little after six o'clock in the morning, just a few minutes past dawn in that part of the world in early April (1987:1). The Roman procurator of Judea was, as usual, annoyed at the Jews. He had not slept well, having been asked late the night before to supply a Roman guard to arrest some Jew who was making trouble. He hadn't wanted to do it, but did so to keep the peace. Indeed, keeping the peace had become his main purpose during his tenure as the Roman governor over this difficult and contentious people. Perhaps he thought detaining the man overnight might give the agitated Sanhedrin a chance to cool off, and he could get away again without having to make a real decision (1973:1).

His last feeble hope that they would not come back in the morning was not to be, and he was up early to deal with a problem that just wouldn't go away. "If only this could have happened a little later," he must have thought. "I wouldn't even be here." He had only come to Jerusalem for the Jewish Passover, after which he would return to Caesarea, the Roman capital of Judea (1983:9). He would have preferred not to have come at all, but he well knew that the large gathering taking place in this holiest of cities at this holiest time of the year could stimulate emotion, volatility, and even the political instability that had become his greatest fear (1973:1).

He had learned his lesson in trying to rule this truculent and disagreeable country, having had his administrative nose bloodied more than once by the zealous Jews. They had quickly taken his measure as a moral coward, and knew just how to intimidate him (1988:1). Again, he found himself in the middle of a conflict he little understood and about which he cared even less.

He found this man unsettling, a feeling that was, later that day, to be greatly elevated by a note from his wife Claudia, who urged him not to kill

this Jew (1994:2).

But now he had this prophet Yeshua all to himself, with only one of his followers present. He asked the man about his beliefs—particularly ones that constituted the basis of the charges leveled by the Sanhedrin (1991:1). This examination is described for us on page 1991:

*Pilate then turned around to question Jesus further, saying: "And now about the third accusation against you, are you the king of the Jews?" Since there was a tone of possibly sincere inquiry in Pilate's voice, Jesus smiled on the procurator and said: "Pilate, do you ask this for yourself, or do you take this question from these others, my accusers?" [1991:2]*

*Then said Jesus to Pilate: "Do you not perceive that my kingdom is not of this world?" [1991:3]*

*"Then you are a king after all?" said Pilate. And Jesus answered: "Yes, I am such a king, and my kingdom is the family of the faith sons of my Father who is in heaven. For this purpose was I born into this world, even that I should show my Father to all men and bear witness to the truth of God. And even now do I declare to you that every one who loves the truth hears my voice." [1991:4]*

*Then said Pilate, half in ridicule and half in sincerity, "Truth, what is truth—who knows?" [1991:5]*

What is it indeed? When examined for itself, it tends to disappear, like a dim star that can only be seen by not looking directly at it.

When the concept of truth itself is examined, one is immediately lost in paradox. Of late, I have decided that a really good test of whether something is true or not is if there is a paradox at

the center. If there is—if there is mystery—then I become more confident that I am dealing with some aspect of truth. Efforts to know truth directly are doomed to failure, since it is an absolute and we are finite creatures. But the efforts are worthwhile, because we are transformed by them. Our efforts bring us into the presence of an absolute, and we can be, and are, changed simply by being in that presence. We cannot avoid a reaction to it, and our reaction changes us.

A great hurdle in understanding Truth is our language. In the mid-1900's, two linguistic researchers, Edward Sapir and his student, Benjamin Whorf, advanced a theory of linguistic determinism, proposing that not only does language serve as a medium of expression, but its structure and form can actually shape ideas. Required to express ourselves within its rules and concepts, to some degree it sculpts our thoughts even as they are formed into verbal structures.

When I first started thinking about this talk, I thought that I would begin with a definition. I certainly thought I knew what a simple word like that means. "Let's see, now, 'truth....'" Intuitively, I began to think in terms of truth being a faithful representation of reality. But when we talk about the Absolute concept of truth, we are talking about the standard itself. Any meaning gets lost in the circularity of saying that truth is a faithful representation of truth. After I got over my headache, I realized that the only knowable aspect of truth will be in the experiential understanding of truth as a dynamic and living process rather than as a static concept.

In English, as it is in Russian, German, and many other languages, Truth is a noun. Nouns tame wild things and give us a sense of control. In the Old Testament, men were re-named as they came to submission to God. Nouns are butterflies on pins. But as we have looked at truth, perhaps we should think of it more as a verb than as a noun. Perhaps that is why we cannot look upon it directly. Like Heisenberg's electron, when we try to stop it to study it, it becomes something different. The quotes below tell us that it is knowable only through faith-action.

On page 1459, *The Urantia Book* tells us:

*Truth cannot be defined with words, only by living. Truth is always more than knowledge. Knowledge pertains to things observed, but truth transcends such purely material levels in that it consorts with wisdom and embraces such imponderables as human experience, even spiritual and living realities. [1459:2]*

*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. [1459:4]*

*But truth can never become man's possession without the exercise of faith....Faith is the inspiration of the spiritized creative imagination. [1459:5]*

*Faith acts to release the superhuman activities of the divine spark, the immortal germ, that lives within the mind of man, and which is the potential of eternal survival. [1459:6]*

Although truth may be definable intellectually and pursued through disciplined thinking, we do not fully apprehend it without experience. It is the absence of this that makes Pilate's question so vacuous and cynical. He reduces it to a lifeless butterfly on a pin. How much less than a butterfly that is. It is impossible to say too much about the importance given to experience by *The Urantia Book*. Indeed, it may be about nothing else besides this. In its pages we are told that:

In the infinite, titanic past, God produced a crack in the universe in which time and space may dwell. For what?

Millions of worlds exist for millions of years with millions of mortals living lives and dying on each. For what?

Free will is granted to creatures who barely have the ability to make moral decisions. They are allowed to do unspeakable things to each other and to even rebel against their own creator. For what?

God downsteps himself to touch these creatures and fragments himself to dwell with them in their very minds. He experiences with

them their pain, their failure, their triumphs, their crushing defeats. For what?

He creates an ascension plan that allows the lowest creature to find its way to Paradise. For what?

It is all to allow for the attainment of experience, both ours and God's. As infinite and ultimately unknowable as they are, none of the Absolutes have any life without experience. It is only through experience that they can be known, and only through experience that they can be expressed.

As He participates in the experience of his creatures, God himself, by his own design, is changed. As God pours himself through the lives of a near infinite number of creatures having a near infinite number of experiences, he becomes God the Supreme, the evolutionary, experiential face of the One God of all. The sacred Hindu book of the *Upanishads* teaches that the present universe age will end when everything that can happen has happened. Perhaps "everything" here means every possible mortal experience. This stupendous plan comprising the experiential universes of time and space is God's way of growing. Casting aside for the moment the theological paradoxes produced by the idea of God growing, it would seem that God could do aught else but grow. He is a personal God, we are told, and we are also told that we are created in his own image. It is through our experience (or perhaps more accurately, his experience of our experience) that he has chosen to grow. Perhaps analogically, the existence he has created for us has growth as its centerpiece also. It is both our purpose and our destiny.

Throughout *The Urantia Book* we are instructed that we grow toward perfection through the experience of faith in action. We have said earlier that being in the presence of an absolute has a transformative effect on us. This is what happens in certain types of prayer and meditation. In such activity we are changed not only by the reception of spiritual energy, but by the perception of the experience itself, by the personal awareness of the Absolute. But mainly, when we encounter Truth, we encounter decision—we must decide whether to believe or

not. Believing is a decision for faith, and decisions, we are told, one on top of the other, constitute the developing spiritual structure of our very souls. If we encounter truth, but we decide, as Pilate did, that embracing it would be too disruptive to our temporal lives, our temptation is to ignore it. We choose the temporal over the spiritual. We will have made a faithless decision and one, ultimately, that results in our becoming somewhat less real. We have a name for that in psychology; it is called denial. We literally deny reality.

The apprehension of truth is intrinsically experiential, inherently personal, and deeply profound. Our only hope of understanding truth is through personal experience. Truth does not have its balancing effect on us unless there is some sort of experiential apprehension. We know from personal experience, however, that actually living out a truthful existence is easier said than done. We are stymied by our fears and crippled by our lack of faith.

We are told that Pontius Pilate asked his question *half in ridicule and half in sincerity* [1991:5]. Both are important, because his question, asked the way it was, captures the essence of this topic. Pilate immediately translates the word Truth into a philosophical concept, one which had been argued over by philosophers of all the great civilizations both preceding and including Rome. By externalizing it, he consigns it to the tame and often sterile arena of the intellect. In that world, he could bandy that question about with the best, having no doubt been trained in the various philosophies in the Roman schools, where he probably had to do that very thing. In asking that question he yielded to the amoral relativism that is so often the refuge of the Godless. He relegated his own question to the intellectual scrap heap of the unknowable. Truth is a wild thing—and humans are typically scared of wild things. Truth might take you places you hadn't figured on going, and to which you might not want to go. Better to put the butterfly on the pin. Any reader of *The Urantia Book* has had to face some moment when they have had to decide: "Is this the truth?"

But what about the half of his question that was asked *in sincerity* [1991:5]? In that we see in Pilate some hope, however weak, that perhaps

there is something real here, something to believe in. Although he obviously did not realize that he had standing before him the very Man who could take him the rest of the distance to the Truth that part of him hoped for, he obviously sensed something, because we are told of his futile, desperate efforts to avoid having this prophet's blood on his hands. Almost pathetically, when all of his efforts to dodge this pivotal moment in his life had failed, he actually publicly washes his hands, trying to get this decision off of him. He declares himself to be removed from it when he orders a basin and some water, and washes his hands, saying: *"I am innocent of the blood of this man. You are determined that he shall die, but I have found no guilt in him. See you to it. The soldiers will lead him forth."* [1996:6] If only it were so simple—to be able to declare ourselves innocent of responsibility and then to be so.

Courage is required to seek truth, because of our tendency to identify with our beliefs. We have a choice to make when confronted with a better idea: we can adopt it and discard ones we have held (and perhaps cherished) or we can deny the truth.

In the final analysis, there is no way to know truth without living truly. You cannot measure something without a standard. But what do we mean by the phrase "living truly?" It is something that can only be done by embracing the truth. But this brings us back to Pilate's question. How do we know the truth? Depending on the perspective chosen, there are a number of answers to that question. We have said earlier that it is impossible to know the truth as an abstract concept, because it is an absolute and we are finite. Living truly, however brings up truth's fearful wildness.

But why all the fear? Why are we afraid to be ourselves? Why do we have so much of this pestilence in our lives? On page 103, we are told: *Too often, all too often, you mar your minds by insincerity and sear them with unrighteousness; you subject them to animal fear and distort them by useless anxiety* [103:5].

On page 1243, the Chief of Seraphim writes: *The angels really find it hard to understand why you will so persistently allow your higher intellectual powers, even your religious faith, to be so dominated by fear, so thoroughly demoralized by the thoughtless panic of dread and anxiety*

[1243:2].

And again on page 712: *After Andon and Fonta had decided to flee northward, they succumbed to their fears for a time, especially the fear of displeasing their father and immediate family* [712:1]. How difficult it is to follow truth when it causes disappointment to those important to us. But again, why? Perhaps the answer lies in our sense of belonging.

This may come from our rearing. It may come from how welcomed we felt as we entered this world, or how cherished we were while young. It may just come from this unfortunate world that, by the necessity of our brutish past, came to measure our value by what we can do and contribute rather than by the unique creatures we are created to be; the world that, in the words of John Bradshaw, makes us into human doings rather than human beings. We develop the notion that we do not own the space we occupy on this planet, but that we must pay rent on it by giving, doing, producing, and achieving. Our permission to exist becomes conditional on these doings, putting us on the treadmill of a driven life.

Whatever the cause, it is within the darkness of this disconnectedness that our fears can grow and flourish. For those finding themselves in the driven life, in whatever form it takes, there are usually three options: the first is to continue it. There is danger of increasing physical or psychological dysfunction in this option. It will be a life out of balance, and therefore more difficult and in danger of increasing imbalance. A second option is the "opting out" option. During the sixties, Timothy Leary invited us to "turn on, tune in, and drop out". Many did. Today we are not so likely to put flowers in our hair and become hippies, but dependence on intoxicants, emotional numbing, and preoccupation with work, play—even religion—can be a way of opting out. The third way—reconnecting (or, perhaps connecting for the first time)—is clearly the best, but how do we do that?

First, we must realize that God does not make junk. Indeed he makes perfect things. In this arena of time and space, he may make that perfection occur across time, but outside of time, we must realize that he has made us perfect, even though from inside time, that is a process that must

continue to completion. From page 21: *God-knowing creatures have only one supreme ambition, just one consuming desire, and that is to become, as they are in their spheres, like him as he is in his Paradise perfection of personality and in his universal sphere of righteous supremacy. From the Universal Father who inhabits eternity there has gone forth the supreme mandate, "Be you perfect, even as I am perfect."* [21:3]

We must also realize that he has made just one of us. What a profound truth that is. In all the worlds of time and space, among the countless mortal creatures that have, now, or will inhabit them, that there is only one you. Your personality was designed by God to be just you and no one else. We do not have to earn our space, we are gifted it—we own it—fee simple—we own it. We don't have to justify our existence to anyone in order to keep title to it. It is eternally ours for as long as we wish to continue to inhabit it. How special that makes us—to be personally designed by God to occupy one You-shaped space in this mighty universe.

Our next—and pivotal—step in reconnecting is to take these awarenesses with us as we seek to be in the presence of the source of Truth and all absolutes. Remember what was said earlier about being in the presence—that it can transform us. We are perhaps accustomed to always be doing something in our prayer life, usually either petitioning for something or asking for forgiveness for something. Being in the presence is quieter than this; it asks nothing and seeks nothing other than presence.

In fact, some of my most pleasant times in life have been just hanging out with people. Not going to parties, necessarily, or even being entertained—just hanging out. Now I don't suppose it sounds

very reverential to speak of hanging out with God, but it is that less-frenetic, more peaceful approach that re-establishes our basic identity and source. Fears find it very difficult to lodge there, and we go forth from that place renewed in our unassailable identities and belongingness. To draw on the admonition of the apostle Paul, we do good works not to be saved, not to justify our existence and pay rent on our space, but because, with our identities intact, we cannot do otherwise. Through the faith that flows from our kinship, good works flow from us naturally and organically.

On page 1124, we are told: *This same purposive supremacy is shown in the evolution of mind ideation when primitive animal fear is transmuted into the constantly deepening reverence for God and into increasing awe of the universe* [1124:1].

Being in the presence of God is healing, like being in the presence of a kindly and infinitely skilled physician. We must, however, sometimes approach a physician naked, without our external trappings being in the way. Spiritually, we should try to leave the external trappings of our roles, anxieties, and notions on what God should do for us behind, when we take ourselves to that experience of truth.

It is reassuring to know that we can do this, and probably need to, as often as we wish. It is in this place that we may be elevated by the ministry of the gift of Christ Michael that was poured out upon all flesh at Pentecost, the Paraclete, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth.

Now I must end. I leave you with the admonition I hear every Sunday at the end of the service: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

#### Bibliography:

Sapir, E. (1941). *Culture, Language, and Personality*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

The information from John Bradshaw was taken from a workshop he gave in Atlanta.

# The Lightkeepers of IUA

JANET QUINN, USA

In this era of spiritual awakening, sincere believers of all creeds are working to transform the world. Each has a part to play in the spiritual renaissance. Billions of us believe in an Almighty; millions know Jesus as their personal savior, share his gospel as they know it, and dedicate their lives to his service. Some tens of thousands even now embrace the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, each reader fostering the brotherhood of man by living and sharing the revelation as each thinks best.

Some truth seekers have been moved to express an even deeper commitment. Such dedicated men and women constitute the membership of the International Urantia Association. This organization is unique insofar as each individual member has pledged their full cooperation and loyalty to the universe plan for disseminating the revelation, and to uphold the precepts set forth in Urantia Foundation's *Declaration of Trust*.

*The Urantia Book* teachings stand as a beacon of truth to all spiritual pilgrims as they search for deeper meanings. Many of us have caught sight of this beacon during trying times, following its bright beam past dangerous shoals to safe anchorage. Some of us, in gratitude, have pledged to help our unseen benefactors keep this ray of truth shining clearly abroad. The success of their plans for the revelation depends upon our dedicated cooperation.

Like their material counterparts, spiritual

lighthouses require a great deal of upkeep. Someone has to keep the lamp filled and lit, the lenses polished, the foghorn booming, through fair weather and storm, running up and down those many stairs, night after night, year after year. Lightkeepers must be immune to distractions, impervious to persuasions, willing to work without guarantee of much in the way of material benefits or worldly reward. They must also act as gracious hosts to all who are drawn to the beacon without losing focus of their vital task. Fortunately, many hands make the work light. And the lighthouse **is** work. Our success is assured unless we become indifferent, undiscerning, negligent, or unfaithful.

The responsibilities of lightkeeping don't appeal to all spiritual adventurers. But our supernal task of disseminating *The Urantia Book* teachings according to the plans of the Revelatory Commission is drawing a rapidly growing body of committed, dependable truth seekers eager to be of assistance. Such a reservoir of consecrated individuals serves as a valuable, dynamic, and cohesive force for spreading spiritual illumination, letting our light *so* shine as to enable all who *so* wish to be guided by this beacon down through the oncoming ages.

It is my hope and prayer that when all the weary faith pilgrims seek safe harbors at last, they will find the steadfast lightkeepers of International Urantia Association still at their post, keeping alight the great beam of hope.

# The Joy of Finding Unity

GARD JAMESON, USA

PRESENTED AT THE FIRST NATIONAL IUA CONFERENCE OF MEXICO, APRIL 2003

My friends, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on a subject that is precious to my heart, the joy of finding unity. In a world that is being torn apart by human anger, human greed, and human fear, we are told by *The Urantia Book* that anger, greed, and fear can be transformed by the fires of divine union into peace, joy, and love. Indeed, in each human heart, Jesus, our Brother and Master, provides the comforting assurance that by the grace of God, anger can be replaced by peace, greed can be replaced by joy, and that perfect love casts out all fear. When God becomes supreme in our hearts, a sublime peace enters which leaves no room for anger, an adventurous joy fills the empty hole of greed, and the compelling power of divine love destroys the ignorance of fear. Indeed, my friends, the supreme adventure and birthright of every mortal being on this planet and throughout all the universes of time and space is to experience the peace that passes all understanding, the divine joy that truly is inherent in human existence, and the unconditional love of God as it flows into our hearts in worship and from there into the world by the hands and feet of those who would delight in the service of God.

On page 637 of *The Urantia Book*, we read: *God is unity* [637:1]. What does that mean? The only way that we can grasp the value of unity in the universe is to understand that unity is a God-given reality on the spiritual as well as material level. Unity is therefore a Supreme Reality. God has given each of us the sublime Mystery of Personality with which to explore that Supreme Reality. Anything less than this understanding is a façade of unity; it is not real unity. We can create a football team that will move a ball around a field. But the unity that comes from that effort centers itself solely about the momentary goal of the game of football; it is a superficial facsimile of the potential of real unity.

On page 29 we read: *Personality is the revelation of God to the universe of universes* [29:3].

The Unity of God and his Revelation through Personality are the two supreme pillars of all existence. The simple fact is that, as persons, we are each capable of experiencing ourselves as the beloved children of God; in experiencing ourselves as the beloved children of God we experience the unity of divinity, spiritual perception, and the unity of the cosmos, cosmic consciousness. This experience is a progressive experience which requires but two things: 1) that we consent to the consecration of our lives to the knowing of God in all God's depth and glory, to the adventure of divine union, and 2) that we respect personality wherever we find it manifest in reality, for personality is the most glorious and precious of all the divine gifts.

The unity of God's glory and the sanctity of personality are the very pillars of cosmic reality. That is why we are privileged to humbly submit ourselves each day to the transformative and unifying power of worship, and why we are privileged to lovingly commit ourselves to the service of other persons.

In the ancient culture of India we are told in their most sacred scripture, the *Vedas*, that God is one; the sages call him by many names (De Nicolas 1976, 1.164.46). In the ancient culture of China we are told that the Divine or Tao is One, and that this unity has manifested itself as the universe around us (Feng, 1972, ch. 42). Each of these cultures makes it clear, though, that the unity of the Divine is something that can only be understood as it is uniquely experienced by each person, one person at a time. Do you realize how significant you are? These cultures call forth each of us to commit ourselves to a spiritual discipline that will birth the realization of divine unity within us and around us.

In the words of the Psalmist:

How good and pleasant it is  
 When the children of God  
 Live together in unity!  
 It is like vistas seen  
 from atop a mountain  
 One has climbed...  
 Or like the stillness of a sunset  
 After a long day's work.  
 It is like a shimmering rainbow,  
 Breaking through a summer rain.  
 When men and women dwell in unity,  
 The star of Truth appears!  
 (Merrill, 2002, Psalm 133)

The birth of the realization of divine unity is in direct response to our willingness to commit our lives to being transformed in the fire of God's love. God sends the angels to help us and befriend us. God sends the spirit of the Creative Mother Spirit, the Holy Spirit, to help us. God sends the spirit of the Creator Son, Michael, the Spirit of Truth, to help us. God sends most wondrously a fragment of his own spirit, the Thought Adjuster, to help us realize divine union, cosmic unity. God has also established a celestial planetary government here on Urantia with a Melchizedek acting as regent to help us in the work of divine union. The greatest forces and powers of the universe dwell within us and around us to help us in this supreme journey toward divine union and experiential unity.

And God grants each of us the unique endowment of personality, *the one changeless reality in an otherwise ever-changing creature experience* [9:1] to help us unify our experience and to help us enter a relationship of divine union with his spirit. In personality we are given the power to reflect upon the values of the universe and then to make transforming choices in accordance with those values, to consent to divine healing and transformation. However, we are told that: *Even to approach the knowing of a divine personality, all of man's personality endowments must be wholly consecrated to the effort; halfhearted, partial devotion will be unavailing* [30:4].

I ask you today: can you find it within your soul to make that wholehearted consecration? In this world where anger, greed, and fear appear to

be the master of our history, our present moment, and our destiny, can you make the choice to commit yourselves wholeheartedly to the inward discovery of the unity which underlies all of reality?

As I tell my students of philosophy, there are fundamentally just two rooms in reality: one which contains anger, greed, and fear, which produces animosity, suffering, and pain. The other room contains peace, joy, and love, which produces good will and harmony. Which room do you choose?

In the Jewish *Talmud* we are told: Good will is the mightiest practical force in the universe.

As the universe looks upon us, there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who are trying to do God's will and those who are not.

During the twentieth century, over 100 million people have been killed in the name of ideologies of anger, greed, and fear. Most of those killed were non-combatants, civilians. I believe that *The Urantia Book* is here because of the concern of our spiritual friends in the universe about the acceleration of devastation that human beings have perpetrated upon their fellow human beings and upon the planet itself. It took billions of years to prepare the planet for the human experience and within a matter of a few decades the human experience is on the verge of destroying this precious planet which the universe has so lovingly brought forth.

My friends, we have a twofold mandate from our spiritual friends. This twofold mandate is expressed clearly on page one of *The Urantia Book*, that is: first, to grow in our appreciation of the divine unity and order of the cosmos, *cosmic consciousness* [1:2] and second, to enhance our personal *spiritual perception* [1:2] of the experience of the unity of divine values, to a personal realization of the sanctity of truth, beauty and goodness as it discovered in and through personality. These mandates from our spirit friends are expressed as a gracious invitation. One of my views about *The Urantia Book* is that it is nothing more nor less than an invitation to experience the fullness of our divine personalities in partnership with God, in other words, an invitation to experience cosmic consciousness and

enhanced spiritual perception.

The great Islamic poet Hafiz expresses the invitation in this manner:

*A Divine Invitation*

You have been invited to meet  
The Friend.

No one can resist a Divine Invitation.

That narrows down all our choices  
To just two:

We can come to God  
Dressed for Dancing,  
Or  
Be carried on a stretcher  
To God's Ward.

(Ladinsky, 1996, p. 3)

My friends, too many have already been carried on the stretcher. And many of those carried on the stretcher have gone by no fault of their own. I speak of the children. I speak of the innocents. This day I ask each of you to join me in making a consecration of choice to the doing of the divine will, to the journey toward divine unity.

With just an ounce of reflection we can perhaps see that world wars on our planet are no longer an option. In the name of all those who have died in war, may we pledge, each of us, to consent to the process of becoming a dynamic focus of peace, joy, and love, to submit our souls to the transforming fire of God's love to be found in the depth of silence within our soul.

Listen to what Miguel Hernandez says about war:

*War*

Old age in the towns.  
The heart without an owner.  
Love without any object.  
Grass, dust, crow.  
And the young ones?

In the coffins.

The tree alone and dry.  
Women like a stick  
Of widowhood across the bed.  
Hatred there is no cure for.  
And the young ones?

In the coffins.  
(Bly, 1993, p. 68)

When will we turn our swords into plowshares  
and our spears into pruning hooks?

*The Urantia Book* indicates that an era of Light and Life is the destiny of an inhabited world. This is an era of unity that is born of the experience of divinity. It was extremely clear to the early leaders of the Urantia movement that the success of *The Urantia Book* as a revelation would be directly related to the level of unity that we achieve as a community of readers. Without unity of purpose by the vast majority of those who read the Urantia revelation, its success in the larger world is jeopardized and unduly retarded. In the words of the Psalmist: "When men and women dwell in unity, the star of Truth appears!" (Merrill, 2002, Psalm 133).

Working toward a much higher level of unity must therefore be our goal in this generation through the vehicle of thousands of study groups and, most importantly, by the consecration of our wills to the adventure of finding divine union within our souls. That should be the clear mandate of this generation. And if we take this revelation seriously, we must take that mandate seriously. *The Urantia Book* is not our project; it is not the work of an individual. Its authorship is celestial. It is an epochal revelation born out of a deep concern for the affairs of the world of the cross, the world on which Michael made his seventh and final universe bestowal, a world sanctified by his footsteps, a world that will be delivered by the gracious touch of his strong hand.

The approach to achieving a higher degree of unity is clearly described in *The Urantia Book*. On page 1732 we are told: *Human unity and mortal brotherhood can be achieved only by and through the superendowment of the religion of the spirit* [1732:1]. Such a religious attitude begins with an attitude of faith, which we are told on page 1573 and 1574

consists of four essential attitudes:

*Happy are the poor in spirit—the humble*  
[1573:9].

*Happy are they who hunger and thirst for*  
*righteousness...*[1574:1].

*Happy are the meek...*[1574:4].

*Happy are the pure in heart...*[1574:5].

These essential attitudes arise and are supported by a life which is *inwardly illuminated by worship and outwardly devoted to the wholehearted service of the universal brotherhood of all personalities* [1175:1]. The book makes an astounding statement: *Worship, taught Jesus, makes one increasingly like the being who is worshiped* [1641:1].

Unity is our mandate. It is the mission of each God-knowing person affiliated with this revelation to do everything within their power to foster such unity, in their own lives and in the life of the community. We are called to be a dynamic force of good will on the planet.

There are those who would hesitate at such words, saying that there are enemies at our door. To them I would respond: the battle cry of this new dispensation of the Master is and forever will be: *Peace on earth and good will to all men* [1569:0]. Jesus did not say “good will to those who are friends” or “good will only to those who support our purposes”. No, he said *good will to all men* [1597:2]. That means gratitude, compassion, and good will is to be extended to all personalities in a proactive manner.

There will be those who reject such offers of good will; that is their problem, not ours. Such manifestations of good will in this new dispensation can only come from love-saturated souls who clothe themselves in the spirit of worship and are motivated by the depth of that worshipful experience to serve, with compassion and forgiveness.

Unity should never be reduced to merely a political issue. Unity is a core existential reality and value. It is the underlying framework of all reality, both material and spiritual. It is the alpha and omega of our cosmic existence. As an existential reality, unity is a moral issue and must be addressed at that level, at the level of personality.

As an experiential reality, unity is our destination. Let us be about the good work.

We are told that the spiritual journey is a progressive one. We should not expect miracles of each other. But, what we should expect is lives who declare their core purpose to be founded upon the unconditional love of God, the forgiving mercy and compassion of the Son, and the unselfish willingness to serve others, even those others with whom we might disagree.

The journey toward unity takes us through several stages. A friend, Father Thomas Keating, refers to four stages of the journey in his wonderful text, *Invitation to Love: Acquaintanceship, Friendliness, Friendship, Divine Union*.

The beginning of the journey toward inner and outer unity necessarily begins with a sense of acquaintanceship with the divine, a vague familiarity and curious attraction. Somebody we believe told us that God loves us. Eventually we come to an experiential place where we realize that there is a deep and profound relationship that we are being invited to taste. Said the Psalmist: “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Merrill, 2002, Psalm 34). We may then have our own illumination or inner revelation as to the glory of that relationship. From there we commence our movement in earnest toward the depths of a real relationship, divine and eternal union.

It is a fool who reads *The Urantia Book* and chooses to remain at the level of acquaintanceship, of intellectual affectation, of mere belief, who does not coordinate his or her life plan in such a manner as to realize the depth of relationship to which we have been so lovingly invited.

The *Bhagavad Gita* of Indian tradition says:

Foolish men talk of religion  
In cheap, sentimental words,  
Leaning on scriptures:  
“God speaks here, and speaks here  
alone.”

(Mitchell, 1988, 2.42)

The Chinese Taoist sage Chuang Tzu says:

The fish trap exists because of the fish;  
 Once you've gotten the fish,  
 You can forget the trap.  
 The rabbit snare exists because of the rabbit;  
 Once you've gotten the rabbit,  
 You can forget the snare.  
 Words exist because of meaning;  
 Once you've gotten the meaning,  
 You can forget the words.  
 Where can I find a man who has forgotten words  
 So I can have a word with him?  
 (Watson, 1996, p. 142)

*The Urantia Book* is just words; it is a conceptual description of reality. Yes, it is a magnificent fount of inspirational words. These words describe a universe out there and a universe within each of us. At some point, however, instead of reading about Sagittarius as the center of the Milky Way galaxy, I would encourage each of us to go outside under the night sky and look at Sagittarius whose light that touches our eyes is 30,000 years old. Enter the imaginal realization that that light started its adventure across the galaxy at a time when camels, saber tooth tigers, great elephants, and giant sloths wandered across the ground of this planet, when our ancestors lived in caves and were filled with wonder at the awesomeness of creation, finding the divine in every manifestation.

At some point, instead of reading about worship, arrange your daily schedule to maximize your transformative experience of worshipful communion with divinity; make a divine appointment and keep it, every day, so that eventually, every moment of your life will become a beacon of the peace, joy, and love that emerge from the experience of worship.

We are all trustees of the precious revelation, the real revelation that lies, like a treasure, within the marrow of our souls. We are entrusted with an awesome power and responsibility to bring forth a new era. Let us take our trust responsibly. Let us be the harbingers of that new era, a time when future generations will live free from fear, free

from anger, and free from greed. Let us have the courage to seek and to dwell together in unity.

From Antonio Machado may I share the following poetic inspiration:

*The Wind, One Brilliant Day*

The wind, one brilliant day, called  
 To my soul with an odor of jasmine.

"In return for the odor of my jasmine,  
 I'd like all the odor of your roses."

"I have no roses; all the flowers  
 In my garden are dead."

"Well then, I'll take the withered petals  
 And the yellow leaves and the waters  
 of the fountain."

The wind left. And I wept. And I said  
 to myself:

"What have you done with the garden  
 that was entrusted to you?"

(Bly, 1993, p. 99)

We have been entrusted with a most precious garden, the garden of our souls, the garden of our community, the garden of our planet, wherein and whereon to grow magnificent roses whose seed is the love of God the Father, whose odor is the fragrant ministry of God the Mother. May we become increasingly aware of our role as gardeners in the precious garden of Joshua ben Joseph.

In this time of Easter, may I remind us that Jesus lives. He was crucified by our anger, our greed, and our fear. On the night before his crucifixion he prayed for unity among his followers. Prayed Jesus:

*And now, my Father, I would pray not only for these eleven men but also for all others who now believe, or who may hereafter believe the gospel of the kingdom through the word of their future ministry. I want them all to be one, even as you and I are one [1964:3].*

On Easter morning Jesus rises as the Prince of

Peace, the Bestowal of Joy, and the One who Loves and Cares for us as his very own children. May we have the courage to truly seek the unity that is the destiny of our planet, the era of Life and Light. May we have the courage to join Jesus'

prayer and pledge our lives to find inwardly, in our community, and upon our planet, the unity that Jesus asks of us, the unity that Jesus prayed for, the unity for which Jesus continues to pray.

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## The Book Sings

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, USA

When I first started to read *The Urantia Book*—I won't mention how long ago for fear of giving away my age—it was very important for me to believe that the book was not written by a person. I had to be absolutely convinced that not one passage, sentence or word had been placed into that book by a person or persons unknown. It was really important that it was written by the beings by whom it says it was written.

And so I believed for many years. But the day came when I wasn't convinced. I started to think that maybe someone on our planet did write it. And so I put it down for six months and fretted over whether I should try reading it again.

When I picked it up again I came upon one of those passages that **sings** like a choir. Do you know what I mean when I say that? There are times when I am reading the book, and I can be plowing through some mundane subject that's putting me to sleep, and all of a sudden the book starts to sing to me. The writer starts to talk about

something like the wonderful future awaiting us—the universe adventure. And it seems like a choir of angels has appeared in my room singing of heavenly things. This happens a lot. And the only way I can describe it is to say **it sings**.

And so I never put the book down again. And I stopped thinking about whether it was written by people or not. And instead of worrying about such things, I listen to the song.

You see, what matters to me is that the book **sings**. It sings to me of truth and of light and of life. It sings to me of God. And it sings to me of me. And that is what counts. Now, many people are raising questions about the book, the same as I had. And many people are criticizing it and many people are casting doubts about it. So what? It doesn't matter to me what anyone says. What matters to me is the book **sings**. And it keeps on singing, even when I have read it over and over again.

And the song I hear is more important than anything else.

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