



A Glimpse of God

DAVID E GLASS
United States

The God-knowing man describes his spiritual experiences, not to convince unbelievers, but for the edification and mutual satisfaction of believers. [30 :5]



Photo: Alain Cyr

THIS IS A MINI-ESSAY and it is about a mere “glimpse of God.” As a fellow believer, I will describe a spiritual experience I had, for our mutual satisfaction—such is my motivation.

The following is a near stream-of-consciousness presentation of thoughts, ideas, and descriptions which refer to a coherence and unification of experience and thoughts from throughout *The Urantia Book* which occurred to me during the night of June 12-13, 2006. It will be a more or less “edifying” experience for you depending on whether the dimension of my personal religious experience, which is proportional only to my level of receptivity capacity, is one which is “satisfying” to you. The words recorded herein are but the shadow of the

experience itself, which I hope will be worth your time and interest dedicated to this purpose.

The experience began with my response to an email concerning having to live with one’s undesirable experiences and how “the

unlovely” won’t themselves remember anything which has to do with their “bad memories” once they awaken on the mansion worlds. Since this is a truth, we can simply collapse the time involved between then and now, and the individual afflicted with bad memories can be delivered from them while still in the flesh. While this idea may not be very surprising to us readers of *The Urantia Book*, its

impact can be substantial upon those to whom it comes as an original idea.

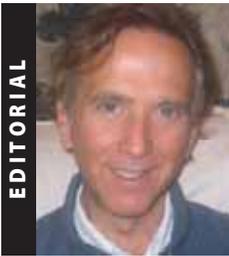
In response to the Zen idea that “first thought is best thought,” I have decided simply to record the email as it unfolded in its originality, amending the “flow of thought” and clarifying it where it appears to skip from one idea to another:

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I believe that a foretaste of eternity, or an experience of actual eternity, is indeed possible in the “here and now.”

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Why should we go in partnership with God?

Dear readers of The Urantia Book and of the UAI Journal,

HOPE THAT THIS ISSUE of the *Journal* finds you in great Spirit, the Spirit of God, our Father that lives within each of us.

Have you ever experienced the Urantia Book Internet School? What a great way to live the union of our souls; what a great way to expand our cosmic consciousness and enhance our spiritual perception. In our current Fall class, here is one of the questions that were asked:

What do the revelators tell us about Jesus' use of his divine powers before the event of his baptism? Why is it important for us to understand this?

What would be your answer? Since knowing that sharing our spiritual life is divine, here is my answer: Jesus

When man goes in partnership with God, great things may, and do, happen [1467:5]

powers before his baptism because he wants to fully experience the life of a human being as a human being. He was a man amongst men. He was the "Son of Man." It is important for us to understand this because we can, as human beings progressing towards our divine nature, live a similar life spiritually because God has given us all the tools necessary to achieve that. God lives in each of us and God is our Father and as Jesus, if we love God, we can become more than man.

God first loves man and confers upon him the potential of immortality—eternal reality. And as man loves God, so does man become eternal in actuality. And here is mystery: The more closely man approaches God through love, the

greater the reality—actuality—of that man. The more man withdraws from God, the more nearly he approaches nonreality—cessation of existence. When man consecrates his will to the doing of the Father's will, when man gives God all that he has, then does God make that man more than he is [1285:3].

Jesus gave all he had to his Father as we can give all that we have to God, our Father; and in His Infinite wisdom, God has given us that ultimate decision, a perfect expression of His love and trust in us.

In this issue, you will get a 'Glimpse of God' then you will find out how to improve your study of God through a 'Study group method to enhance communication with your Indwelling Spirit' in order to serve God. It might start as an 'Awkward Practice,' but if you decide to stick with 'The Master's Program,' you will succeed and always be opened to 'Celestial Opportunity' and live more and more the spiritual brotherhood of man as many of our siblings did last summer down under, which you will relive through the 'Personal Impressions' of our Australian sister.

When we decide to go in partnership with God as Jesus did, great things may, and do, happen:

That which the enlightened and reflective human imagination of spiritual teaching and leading wholeheartedly and unselfishly wants to do and be, becomes measurably creative in accordance with the degree of mortal dedication to the divine doing of the Father's will. When man goes in part-

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nership with God, great things may, and do, happen [1467:5].

Have you started your partnership with God within you ...yet?

May the love and light of our Father be with you and within you always.

Your brother in Spirit and in loving service,

—Guy ☐

A Glimpse of God

Continued from page 1

Said Jesus, *“Be not downcast by your failure wholly to forget some of your regrettable experiences. The mistakes which you fail to forget in time will be forgotten in eternity.”* [1739:3] What a promise! What a deliverance! But guess when eternity is: Eternity is NOW. Even *The Urantia Book* describes eternity in finite terms as the *everlasting now* [1295:1]. Eternity is not “temporal everlastingness”—a sort of linear endlessness which goes on and on, but rather a series of cycles within cycles in which experiences come around and around and are reacted to in better and better ways as the circles continue to be re-traversed. This progress may have to do, in human existence, with the traversal of the seven psychic circles or cosmic levels, wherein the individual is ever spiralling inward in consciousness toward that inner sanctum, the first circle, wherein conscious contact with the Great Adjuster becomes possible and more likely.

I believe that a foretaste of eternity, or an experience of actual eternity, is indeed possible in the “here and now.” This is probably made possible by the contact of the inner eternal Thought Adjuster in the superconsciousness of the individual who remains essentially a creature of time-and-space.

It is one interpretation of experiencing eternity, that “Eternity” doesn’t “start” for us “creatures of time” until we have traversed and completed the final Havona circuit, the final Havona world. When we awaken on Paradise we will be “creatures of Eternity.” However, subsequent to fusion, an ascender “in a sense” becomes a creature of the eternal past as well as of the eternal future, a revelator tells us (1212:5). This will no doubt be a far more delightful experience to have than to describe: “God is the greatest experience in human existence.”

Let’s look at the biggest picture, the grandest ideal we are capable of considering: Infinity. We read:

The human concept of the gradual experiential actualization of the Trinity of Trinities—the time viewpoint—must be supplemented by the additional postulate that this is already a factualization—the eternity viewpoint [1174:1] ... *No actual change has taken place in the Infinite; all apparent developments are due to increased capacities for reality reception and cosmic appreciation* [1174:5].

The Thought Adjuster is a fragment of Infinity, and Infinity is Eternal. I do not advance these ideas by way of instigating argumentation or even discussion, but rather for the purpose of making them available for any potential usefulness or consideration they might have. *“I know what I have experienced, because I am a son of I AM”* [1127:1]. The experience itself remains ineffable but perhaps can be suggested and hopefully even facilitated by the word-shadows I record here.

In Eternity, every son of God is innocent, sinless, perfect, because the mishaps and mistakes of time are

forgotten in eternity, and, again, eternity is NOW. In experiencing the eternal moment, the eternal NOW, we are delivered, even at this early stage, from the potentially problematic leftover responses to the past, as well as from any bewilderment about the complexities of uncertainties of the future. The command is not to “Become you perfect, even as I am perfect,” but better, to “BE” you perfect, even in “time” which is a subabsolute qualification of eternity.

We see this evolution to sinlessness in Jesus’ human consciousness when he makes the transition from “Why do you call me good?” to “Who among you convicts me of sin?” The thought might occur to us: That is well and good, but Jesus was a different order of being from us, a DESCENDING Son of direct origin in the Universal Father and the Eternal Son. But let’s go further: We are ASCENDING sons, true; however, are not our personalities of origin in the Universal Father and patterned after the universal personality pattern of the Eternal Son? Jesus was divine, but are we not indwelt with and destined (very soon, cosmically) to fuse with an actual fragment of that same God Himself—the I AM Source of the Universal Father, the Co-Source of Michael, and sole Source of our Adjusters?

Spiritual progress, personality progress, can be conceived of as the progressive discovery of oneness with Reality.

Likewise, let us recall that the “future” outer space zones of the “future” Master Universe Age will happen, but that, in another sense, those realities have “already” happened, being “prior-precursors” or “pre-echoes” of the present time echo we call the finite. Also recall that the Absolute Cosmos Infinite is “timeless.” We also read such statements as:

Man, a finite creature in an infinite cosmos, must content himself with distorted reflections and attenuated conceptions of that limitless, boundless, never-beginning, never-ending existence the comprehension of which is really beyond his ability.

Man can never hope to grasp the concept of an Absolute without attempting first to break the unity of such a reality. Mind is unifying of all divergencies, but in the very absence of such divergencies, mind finds no basis upon which to attempt to formulate understanding concepts.

The primordial stasis of infinity requires segmentation prior to human attempts at comprehension. There is a unity in infinity which has been expressed in these papers as the I AM. [1261:5-7]

And our Adjusters are experiential fragments of that very I AM! Hence, to some extent, “Infinity” is experiential, even in its non-segmented unity. Spiritual progress, personality progress, can be conceived of as the progressive discovery of oneness with Reality.

It may be important to point out that “Infinity” is, perhaps, not what we might originally think it to be. It is not merely the endlessness of unbounded Reality. It is Unity and Diversity at the same time. Hence, the diversities of time-space and the unity of the absolute level are really one reality. That is why *Infinity, as it is observed by finite intelligences, is the maximum paradox of creature philosophy and finite metaphysics* [1262:1].

The I AM is “eternally” prior—maintains an eternal Source relationship—to the Deities of the Paradise Trinity and therefore to the Trinity itself, and the I AM is the Source of our Paradise Thought Adjusters. Hence, it appears to me that we might, in experiencing the Thought Adjuster in the superconsciousness, glimpse a bit of the I AM, the primordial Source of all Reality, and since we are destined to fusion therewith, we are destined to oneness with a qualified absolute fragment of infinity.

Now this Adjuster is, I believe, “the kingdom of heaven within you,” and, the midwayers say that this was one of the meanings Jesus had in mind when he used the term “the Kingdom of Heaven” (see Paper 170). Since the Reality of Infinity and the presence of

“This kingdom of which you preach is God within you.”
—Jesus [1569:2]

the Thought Adjuster are already *de facto* in existence, already the case, it is not necessary to “strive with men” in order to establish the Kingdom. Said Jesus, “Strive not with men” (1573:3; 1593:0; 1932:2; 1956:0). Live lives of nonviolence. Now to link these ideas: The I AM is. It IS NOW. And, in eternity, which IS NOW, we IS NOW TOO. (I know that is bad grammar in time, but conceivably correct in what I like to call “existential tense”—all our time-related verbiage being expressed in “experiential tenses” of past, present or future.) By somehow getting completely into the NOW, contact with the Adjuster becomes possible, which equals God-consciousness, and which verges on Infinity-experience. This experience must needs be limited if we are to remain in our time-space traveling suits of flesh and blood. But fusion IS possible to those with other qualifications and on light-and-life planets of the advanced order, most mortals fuse—there is nothing unusual about it—simply rare on Urantia.

Now let me make a jump in thought: Ignorance is not bliss—it is the opposite of bliss because it leads to prejudice (attitudes of non-recognition of oneness); and ignorance and prejudice are the chief inhibitors of spiritual growth—the pathway to Adjuster contact—actual bliss.

The progressive comprehension of reality is the equivalent of approaching God [2094:2]. And the study of *The Urantia Book* IS a means of achieving, gradually, the progressive comprehension of reality. Facts, meanings, and values indirectly make one “brave” because they make one “fear-less.” This works because the progressive comprehension of reality leads one to God, God is love, and love casts out fear. Adherence to the

program of “establishing” the kingdom—making real in the consciousness of others that which is already the case—(the infinity of reality and the reality of infinity) renders one fear-less when trouble overcomes one as it appears invariably to do in Urantian history.

Timelessly, there is really no difference between Havona and the grand universe, the evolutionary time universes. To God, all time is present at any given moment, and that consciousness of timeless perfection is available to human consciousness in the superconscious contact with the Adjuster. Now this should not be taken to be a devaluation of experience. Experience actually increases capacity for the apprehension of God-consciousness since it increases the comprehension of reality. The glimpse of the innocence of humanity in eternity and hence NOW coupled with the impregnability of the citadel of the spirit, makes it possible for us too to say, “Father, forgive the unenlightened for they know not what they do.” To experience God within is to experience God everywhere, including in others. This leads to the perception of the infinite value of other personalities—a cardinal value of the reality of the kingdom of heaven.

Fusion consists of oneness with a fragment of infinity—a particle of the absolute cause of the total cosmos leading to the limitless progressibility of life, of personality. Fusion is existential-experientiality and is of the final universe age even while participating in the growth, realization, and unification of Supremacy and Ultimacy.

Said Jesus, while it is not possible to prove to other men that you have found God:

“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.* [1733:2-4]

The Apostles were God-knowing men, of course. And some showed more courage “than all the armies of the world.”

Said Jesus:

“Shame on those false religious teachers who would drag hungry souls back into the dim and distant past and there leave them! And so are the unfortunate persons doomed to become frightened by every new discovery, while they are discomfited by every new revelation of truth. The prophet who said: ‘He will be kept in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on God,’ was not a mere intellectual believer in authoritative theology. This truth-knowing human had discovered God; he was not merely talking about God.” [1731:4]

Study Groups and the Indwelling Spirit.

GAÉTAN CHARLAND
Canada

THIS METHOD OF STUDYING *The Urantia Book* in groups, while being very effective in enhancing perceptions of the indwelling spirit in the realm of the superconsciousness, does not pretend to be better or replace any other methods that may be in use throughout the many study groups of *The Urantia Book* now in existence.

This method has evolved with the help of many, and through actual experiences during the long years of research to find ways to perceive the spiritual truth that can be found in the writings of *The Urantia Book*, in the understanding of others, and most importantly in the realm of the superconsciousness where the indwelling spirit manifests itself.

This way of conducting a study group, while it enhances spiritual perception, has the merit of improving teaching and leadership abilities. Those abilities can be improved by sharing the role of the facilitator with other participants when they are ready to accept such responsibilities and understand the underlying principles well enough to be experienced. One needs to know before one can teach; it takes many sessions before anyone can become comfortable with this method, so be patient.

This method also improves harmony and spiritual growth in the participants as long as they put into practice what they learn. Action is the necessary ingredient for growth and no amount of knowledge, even spiritual, can replace genuine experience. The outlook of each participant in using this method has to be focused on the practical side of life. Unending discussions on the sometimes hypothetical and unrealistic exploration of spiritual meanings detached from the reality of daily living can be detrimental to the spiritual experience of participants in study groups.

The leader of the study group needs to be focused on three very important aspects and goals:

1. The promotion of intellectual and spiritual understanding of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.
2. The spiritual growth of the participants
3. The training of teachers and leaders

The underlying principles of this method are very simple and easy to understand. They rely mainly on



The author (left) and readers from Bogota, Colombia

the spiritual truths and teachings contained in *The Urantia Book*. They make use of the higher aspects of the functioning of the human personality and have great respect for its potential. These principles also take into account the inner working of the indwelling spirit that inhabits our being and its relentless efforts to spiritualise our mind.

Underlying Principles:

- Participant's sincere willingness to know and experience spiritual truth.
- The recognition that the truth we perceive is relative to our own personality and life experience.
- The recognition that our spiritual brothers and sisters have different views and perspectives of the same truth which we perceive.
- The recognition that the Thought Adjuster needs our full cooperation to impress on our superconsciousness any truth we are trying to perceive.
- The recognition that in a group dedicated to spiritual understanding and perception of truths, the Adjusters can coordinate the efforts of each participant to enhance group harmony.

While big groups might be encouraging, they tend to be harder to coordinate. Look at the example of Jesus; he many times taught to small groups.

Certain papers in *The Urantia Book* are more suitable to such a technique. Papers concerned with the evolution of the planet and its life might be more suitable to a different approach. Any papers having to do with God, the indwelling spirit or spiritual growth might be more likely to benefit from this approach. The papers in themselves are important but become the pretext to accommodate spiritual and religious experiences.

The leaders of study groups interested in this method should be careful when new readers are present. It is more beneficial and proper if each participant has previously read *The Urantia Book* entirely and has arrived at a

desire for deeper comprehension. This method does not rely only on intelligence or intellectual acuity. Other methods might be more suitable for new readers where the leader is capable and knowledgeable in different ways of animating study groups.

Leaders in study groups need to understand group dynamics. While big groups might be encouraging, they tend to be harder to coordinate. Look at the example of Jesus; he many times taught to small groups. A group of seven is very good and we should always limit the number to twelve. If your group exceeds that number, then you should make a second group.

The Dynamics and Working

When a study group adopts this method of functioning, every participant should be aware of its rules. The method is dedicated to spiritual understanding and growth so it would be quite natural to start a session by a short silent prayer to the indwelling spirit.

Guidelines

- The leader chooses a paper that is consistent with the group spiritual maturity. Remember that papers are used as a pretext for the spiritual experience.

- The leader determines who will start reading; he will decide how many paragraphs should be read by each participant based on the complexity of the subject (usually two or three at the most).

- After a participant has read his part, he is welcome to share with the group his own understanding of the text. He should strive to understand the spiritual as much as the intellectual meanings.

Nothing is better than actual experience, so be joyful in exploring and adapting this method to your study groups. Be patient...

- The participants can use real life experiences as a way of sharing their understanding of what they have perceived.

- Discussion should always stay factual and focus on real life applications.

- While a participant is sharing his own understanding, other participants are encouraged to listen attentively to what is being shared so as not to disturb the flow of reflections. Praying for the one who shares is also encouraged.

- After the reader has shared his view, other participants are welcomed to share their own understanding of the same paragraphs. No one is allowed to criticise, only to augment what others have shared.

- Only one person at a time is allowed to speak. Others must respectfully listen and wait their turn.

- No arguments are allowed to take place. This is not a debate. Debates or arguments are the realm of the intellectual mind; they are not favourable to spiritual insight and the Adjuster's influence.

- After every participant has shared his perception, the leader can augment or summarize the ideas that

were expressed. Usually if ample opportunities were given to everyone to share his/her view, the leader will have the final word and then ask another participant to continue the reading.

- No one should be forced to share his understanding. Some people at the beginning are very timid and lack confidence, but with time and respect they will grow and share.

- The leader is responsible for the harmony and discipline of the group and should, when necessary, restrain some participants in their desire to expand into other areas of interest.

- Distractions should be kept to the strict minimum; even the pouring of water can stop the flow of perception in one's mind. The Adjuster needs the mind to be in a receptive state to impress meanings on the superconscious level.

If some participants have questions concerning certain passages or meanings, the leader can ask if any would be willing to answer the questions; or he could, if he judges otherwise, answer them at the end of the round.

It is a good practice for the leaders of such group to prepare themselves in prayer before the meeting. Members could be requested to do the same thing.

If every participant is in the right attitude with his mind fully focused on the spiritual goal of the group, then everyone can have a very profound experience of spiritual perception of truth. This applies also to the leader of such groups.

This method of conducting a study group can be greatly enhanced by choosing specific subjects with specific goals in mind. It can also be used as a medium to organize workshop conferences by having every participant prepare short speeches on a predefined subject that would be explored in such a group. The speakers at such workshop would then be invited to facilitate a workshop based on their speeches. Such workshop conferences could accommodate as many as five to six speakers with similar workshops. This is a complement to the training of leaders and teachers. >>

Another way to further explore this kind of method is, once in a while, to have the participants summarize a whole chapter within a predefined paper that was read previously in the group, and present this summary as a short speech to the others within the group. This will help in focusing the mind and improving the work of the Adjuster. Remember, the Adjuster always needs an action on our part to actualise the growth potential of our soul.

Nothing is better than actual experience, so be joyful in exploring and adapting this method to your study groups. Be patient; it took more than a few sessions before I could witness any significant results. □

*In Spirit,
Gaétan Charland*

Global Seeding

Dissemination: A Brief Overview and Strategy

GLOBAL SEEDING WILL culminate when the inviolate revelation is available to all in a form comprehensible to all. Seeding began inauspiciously in 1955 as library placement. Through this low profile method much of the English and Spanish population now has access to the revelation. And lately has the Internet accelerated awareness and use of the word “Urantia” in several languages.

Depending on how one defines completely “seeded,” some tiny fraction of this work is done. If you imagine a globe that shows densities of *The Urantia Book*, it would show far more color in the English, Spanish, French and Finnish domains. All the other language areas would depict but sparse seeding.

Because of steady seeding of the North American continent since 1955, the Book is now available to most library systems therein. And the Book is on the shelf or can be ordered at most Canadian and American bookstores. It is universally available on the Internet (China may be an exception, now or soon). All Australia has been seeded at least once by ANZURA. The rest of the UK has access to the revelation in some form, but requires more attention.

The science fiction writings of J. J. Benitez, along with a 2000 Book seeding of Latin America, sparked a significant surge in El Libro’s spread, even in a slumping book market, even in poverty stricken areas. Seeding and reseeded libraries, colleges and prisons in money-poor areas is important because it may be the only avenue to convey the revelation to locals.

Seeding is far from complete in the Spanish realm, from Mexico to Cape Horn, and many nations will require additional dissemination work. Spain is being seeded by UAI members, but most of the rest of Europe is unseeded. The Italian, German and Romanian will all need this preliminary work so demand will build and the translation will begin to circulate in retail book venues of each language group.

Several translations are hardly begun as regards seeding, except the French, Spanish and Finnish. The Finns are busying themselves creating translations for their neighbors, seeding adjacent nations. The Lithuanian and the Russian translations are published and need much preparatory attention. By decade’s end the Japanese and Chinese will be ready to disseminate.

Some of Asia and South America have had preliminary seeding through the efforts of Mark Bloomfield



“Sower with Setting Sun” Vincent Van Gogh, 1888

and others. Mark has scheduled another tour to cover Africa beginning in early 2007. Next he plans to seed the Portuguese in Brazil. Both of these tours will require about 3000 Books.

As part of UAI Dissemination Committee’s long term strategy, a “Global Seeding Project” has been introduced to the younger readers. They are encouraged to place Urantia Foundation brochures in appropriate venues, especially universities and colleges. Free brochures are available to download and print from the Foundation’s website. The DC will keep a supply of seedbooks on hand should young reader/seed-planters need them. But this project is intended to enlist the help of all readers and age groups interested in disseminating the text.

The Dissemination Committee works on a small budget, but if it had access to dedicated seeding funds, it would request \$50,000 to start.

- These funds would be used to purchase 3000 Books for Mark’s planned tours, and perhaps to defray some of the expenses of field workers like Mark.
- And it would buy reserve Books intended for the youth group members who are seeding the revelation on campuses via Foundation brochures.

The Dissemination Committee is often asked to assist with worthy projects, but cannot always comply due to short funds. If a wealthy contributor is found who wishes to fund such dissemination projects, they are waiting. Perfect dissemination of the text may require another 900 years; it all depends on how carefully we plant and germinate the seeds, and then nurture the roots of revelation.

Each generation has the privilege and responsibility to carry the inviolate text forward; to ensure new translations are created and seeded. If this work appeals to your sense of service, contact the DC. Help is needed with funding and in the fields. It takes many readers working in harmony and dedication to do this seed work, but all help will serve a great end.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please forward any comments or suggestions that will help bring global seeding another step closer to fruition. □

Fraternal regards,
 Rick Warren
 Chair, UAI Dissemination Committee
rewar@swbell.net

Embarking on the Journey: Awkward Practice

CAROLYN PRENTICE
United States

Each of the apostolic teachers taught his own view of the gospel of the kingdom. They made no effort to teach just alike; there was no standardized or dogmatic formulation of theologic doctrines. Though they all taught the same truth, each apostle presented his own personal interpretation of the Master's teaching. And Jesus upheld this presentation of the diversity of personal experience in the things of the kingdom. [1658:1]

HOPE THAT YOU have worked through the six periods of Beginning Awareness. The purpose of that leg of the journey was to build awareness that you are called to teach, you are given opportunities to teach, and that you can learn to teach by approaching it with guidance and reflection. I hope also that by reflecting on the different teachers you have experienced, you have realized that teaching comes in many forms, and that there is no absolutely foolproof technique for teaching. But you may have noticed that the good teachers in your experience have had a few things in common:

Jesus is famous for using this technique. The concept is simple: People can learn something only when it relates to what they already know.

passion for the material and a way of presenting or allowing you to discover it—that made sense to you as an individual. So I assume that embarking on this journey indicates that you have a passion for *The Urantia Book* and other topics that you might teach. From this article, you will learn three basic techniques that teachers use to make material appealing and useful to the student. In addition, you will learn why the stage is called Awkward Skill, and then you will begin the next leg of your teaching journey.

Basic Techniques

1. Listen.

The true teacher maintains his intellectual integrity by ever remaining a learner. [1433:2]



"Jesus Washing the Feet of the Apostles" Giotto, 1303-1305

If you have read Papers 123-134 as assigned, you probably noticed that Jesus spent a lot of time in observing, listening to, and getting to know people. Thus the first advice to you here is that in order to be an effective teacher, you must know your students; you must be ever willing to learn more about human beings. This is the foundation of teaching. As you read those papers, perhaps you thought that all the time that Jesus spent learning how men lived had something to do with his bestowal experience. And that is true. But this deep and intimate understanding also helped Jesus become the master teacher. You cannot teach someone if you do not see the problem or the material from his or her perspective. That's the key here. It's one thing to have some sort of intellectual understanding of other people, for example, to know that this particular person before you is male, white, 27 years old, works in a factory, has a two-year college degree. But to understand what his life is like, what his view of reality might be, is a very different kind of knowledge. You cannot learn about people's perceptions from a book. You have to learn about them from the people themselves. The principal channel for this understanding is listening to them, hearing them.

Many of us have had this frustrating experience: We have some difficulty with our computer, so we call the technician, the so-called "help desk." The person who answers the phone doesn't really listen to us. He just starts spouting advice: do this or that. And we know that he hasn't really heard us, he hasn't really listened to what our problem is. To him, we are just one more call. So he keeps suggesting solutions for a problem we don't

have, and we keep telling him that his solution doesn't fix our problem. We go back and forth several times, and finally he transfers our call to another technician. After our request has gone through four different people, we talk to someone who actually listens to us attentively. Maybe this person even asks us a few questions before giving us any advice, perhaps paraphrasing what we have said—and then asking us if that is what we meant. And then, because this person actually understands the problem from our perspective, we arrive at a solution that works.

Remember how you feel when this happens to you—bewildered, confused, even resentful. You were made to feel stupid by someone trying to teach something you already knew—instead of what you were really asking about. This is a critical lesson to learn, and it is important to learn it early in your teaching career—and continue to learn it every day.

I've experienced this problem in teaching from both sides—as teacher and as student—in mundane teaching, academic teaching, and spiritual teaching. Be sure you understand what the student is asking. Take time to listen, to ask questions, and to paraphrase before you dump your answer on the student. In many of the events of Jesus' life, we don't get a play-by-play account of what Jesus said and asked. But we see that he engaged people in conversation, asked them questions, and found out about them before he gave them any advice. And sometimes he knew that they didn't want any advice.

So really this teaching technique has three parts to it: Listen, ask questions, and paraphrase before you try to answer any question or impart any teachings. You should practice this habit in all your everyday interactions with people, before you even consider teaching them anything. People really appreciate being listened to, and if they think that you have truly understood them, they are more likely to value your insights and be more receptive to your teaching.

2. Use Teaching Tales.

Perhaps to the dismay of other educators and scholars, I apply this one term, *Teaching Tales*, to a variety of techniques, such as models, flow charts, parables, anecdotes, metaphors, and analogies. What the term means is that you put the lesson in a form of something familiar to the student. Educational researchers have documented the importance of this technique—and master teachers have been using this technique for millennia. Jesus is famous for using this technique. The concept is simple: People can learn something only when it relates to what they already know.

Thus, you should use some kind of teaching tale to make the lesson understandable to the student. The kind of teaching tale you use depends on you and your student—and this is why the first technique—listening—is so critical. You have to understand how your

student sees the world and perhaps know something of his/her background before you can frame a lesson in terms that make sense to that person.

We see these teaching tales in use with children. For example, you can teach a child to tie his shoes by means of a little story or a rhyme. Several of these exist; one is about a rabbit with long ears, another about building a teepee with a friend. Perhaps you know a different one. The idea is that the story makes the process easy for the child to understand and to remember.

As we get more scholarly, we don't leave behind our need for teaching tales. Scientists use teaching tales to share knowledge about the universe—they call them models or theories. Perhaps these sophisticated teaching tales do not have the same literary impact as shoe lace tying story, but the same technique is at work: putting new knowledge in terms of something already known or easily envisioned. Scholars come up with a model of atoms that looks like the solar system. They design machines that look curiously like parts of the body with limbs and tendons. They design organizations that can be mapped like the branches of a tree or a river flowing. And we understand them because we are familiar with the basic concept that they are modeled on.

But you can use a teaching tale effectively only if you have really listened to the student, if you have tried to understand the student, and you have tried to expand your knowledge of how people live and think. I have experienced terrible teachers who had perfectly wonderful explanations of complex concepts. Their problem was that their students could not understand the explanation because it was based on a teaching tale that was beyond their student experience.

So to use this technique, first you must listen to the students and understand what their experience has taught them. Sometimes, if they are attempting to solve a physical problem, like remove a paper jam from the copy machine, they will frame their problem using a teaching tale [that is, model, analogy, metaphor, anecdote, etc.]. Listen carefully for this because you can use their model to teach them something, or embellish their model to help them find the answer to their question.

3. Focus on the Positive.

And this was his method of instruction: Never once did he attack their errors or even mention the flaws in their teachings. In each case he would select the truth in what they taught and then proceed so to embellish and illuminate this truth in their minds that in a very short time this enhancement of the truth effectively crowded out the associated error. [1456:0]

Notice that Jesus never corrected them, saying that they were wrong in their outlook. He listened to them, understood their perspective, and then, whatever he could find in their ideas that reflected his greater truth, he expanded upon.

Jesus met many learned people, revered teachers in Rome and other places. Notice that Jesus never corrected them, saying that they were wrong in their outlook. He listened to them, understood their perspective, and then, whatever he could find in their ideas that reflected his greater truth, he expanded upon.

The Urantia Book reminds us to keep it simple: The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man (2086:7) and friendship with God (1534:1; 1535:5). These concepts are not foreign but rather are harmonious with many religious traditions. Therefore, we can find these simple but profound concepts as a place to agree and expound on. Many of us might be tempted to go beyond that, but we will find that mentioning concepts like morontia worlds, midwayers, or life on a neighboring planet will probably only dismay our listeners.

So to follow Jesus' teaching, we should not try to correct the person's viewpoint; instead we should take whatever we can find that is good in it and expand it a

He was refusing to learn something new because it made him feel uncomfortable. He was refusing to grow.

little. We must realize that most people are not ready for big mind-blowing revelations that threaten their understanding. So think little and think positive.

This technique also works hand in hand with the previous two. By understanding the other person's viewpoint, and by building on a model they are already familiar with, we can point them to something new.

Putting the Techniques Together: Be of Service

Religious experience is the realization of the consciousness of having found God. And when a human being does find God, there is experienced within the soul of that being such an indescribable restlessness of triumph in discovery that he is impelled to seek loving service-contact with his less illuminated fellows, not to disclose that he has found God, but rather to allow the overflow of the welling-up of eternal goodness within his own soul to refresh and ennoble his fellows. Real religion leads to increased social service. [1121:6]

Perhaps you noticed in Jesus' life that he took every opportunity that came his way to be of service to people. For example, on the way to Rome with Ganid and Gonod, the ship's steering paddle broke and Jesus volunteered to help work on it. This gave him the opportunity to talk with more people and also to be seen as a good person, a useful and knowledgeable person. This service positioned him to teach people.

Many of us think that teaching is only about spiritual service, but in reality, the opportunities for that kind of teaching often appear in very mundane circumstances. What convinces other people that we might be reliable witnesses is that we know something about the world and we're not afraid to get our hands dirty. We're willing to help out, to work side by side with them; we're not just

sitting on the sidelines waiting for something spiritual to come up. When we undertake service to others and we work together, people open up, share their insights and philosophies. These are the priceless, unlooked-for opportunities for teaching. If you hold yourself apart, if you always say, "I'm too busy," or "I don't want to do that kind of work," then you are missing many of your chances to help and to teach. Using Jesus' life as a model, we too should seek out more contact with people, to be of service to them in a variety of ways because through this service, we learn more about people and are blessed with opportunities to teach and to learn. Notice too that these are opportunities to teach mundane things

Thus, I asked you in the previous article to think about some service project you could undertake. You will find your opportunities to learn to teach by committing yourself to some kind of service. We'll talk about this more later in the article.

Why "Awkward Skill"?

I remember my son at ten years of age was invited to a skating party. Although he really wanted to go to the party with the other kids, he refused to go. He told me he did not know how to skate and everyone would laugh at him. It made me sad because I thought that at such a young age he was already exhibiting some negative adult behavior. He was refusing to learn something new because it made him feel uncomfortable. He was refusing to grow.

Don't let this happen to you in this stage of Awkward Practice. You are learning a new skill, and you will feel awkward and uncomfortable at times, maybe most of the time. But persevere because that is the only way you will learn and grow.

We come to this calling to be teachers as we are, with the talents we have and the faults that we have. Some of us may already be talented at listening to people. Perhaps we already think in Teaching Tales or have already learned to look for the positive in other people. Some of us are more outgoing or adventurous than others and may feel excited about undertaking a service project that gets us out of our routine. So a few of us may already be good at these skills and be ready to soar. If you are one of those people, good for you! Get started and do what you are good at. But watch out: You will eventually come up against a brick wall, something that does not go as easily as you expect. If you are a person blessed with natural teaching or listening talent, when you finally feel challenged or awkward, it might be more difficult for you to continue than those who are less accustomed to easy success. After showing such promise early, you may find that you are not always successful and that is hard to begin to progress again. Nevertheless, take heart. This is the stage of Awkward Practice. It is the stage where we have to think about the skill and consciously apply it, and feel awkward at it. Through this we improve; we grow.

The rest of us perhaps do not feel so comfortable and so talented right at the start. These are new skills to learn. We are not accustomed to really listening to people, and so it will take a conscious effort, and we will feel awkward at it. We may not understand the concept of teaching tales at first and have difficulty recognizing them. So we may feel awkward or even ridiculous as if we simply are not called to do this. We may have difficulty finding anything to be positive about in another person's perspective. And thus we may become demoralized.

You too take heart. These are normal emotions. Do not doubt that you are called to be a teacher. The universe is waiting for you to embark on your celestial career. You have something to contribute to the education of people around you. Like Jesus, you can help people as you pass by. Jesus perfected his technique by practicing throughout his childhood and early adulthood—some 30 years. You will not develop your technique in a few days. You will sometimes not be as successful as you would like, but you will continue to make progress as you learn from your mistakes.

Effort does not always produce joy, but there is no happiness without intelligent effort. [556:10]

The greatest affliction of the cosmos is never to have been afflicted. Mortals only learn wisdom by experiencing tribulation. [556:14]

Assignments:

Remember that this is the stage of Awkward Practice. It is foundational. Be patient. Although writing in your journal may seem like a chore, it is one sure way for you to reflect on your experiences. At the beginning set aside 15 minutes at least three times a week to reflect on your experiences and progress in this teaching program. Each week, add another 15 minutes, either on different days or on the same days, so that by the end of the next three months you have developed a daily habit of reflecting for about a half hour a day.

No one else will read your journal, so do not be concerned about spelling or punctuation. The idea is to think on paper because this is the way that you formalize your thoughts and create a record. Once you develop this habit, you will come to value this time to yourself, this way of making your thoughts clearer. Be patient with yourself. Expect to grow and change. You will not change and grow if you just continue on as you have always done. Growth and learning require that you change something in your life.

Continue reading in *The Urantia Book*, Part IV, Papers 137-150. Watch for the teaching tales that Jesus uses. Pay attention to the ways in which the apostles were trained to teach and how they responded to the training. Also consider how different they all were, and yet they all provided some service and teaching, appealing to different kinds of people in different circumstances. Jesus chose them because they were not all the same, and he

did not expect them to all teach and serve in the same way—but they all did serve and did teach.

Here are the activities for the next 12 weeks. I haven't divided them up into periods this time because they represent a circular process rather than a linear process. Spend as much time in each one as you need to and then return to it, perhaps several times over the next few months.

1. Commit to a service project: The purpose of this stage is to get you out of your ordinary everyday experience, give you contact with different people in different ways. Be creative in finding a service project. You could work with an already established group, such as volunteer at a soup kitchen or a Boy Scout troop. You could commit yourself to visiting someone on a regular basis, someone who would welcome your visits. Your service project might be joining a community theatre group to help build sets or sell tickets. You could agree to meet once a week with an international student who wants to practice conversational English. Your service could even be to your own family, setting aside one hour a week to really talk and listen to them. The point is to find something to do that actually helps other people and is welcomed by them, and **puts you in new circumstances**. It doesn't matter so much what you do, but that you undertake something in a new spirit of service, in the spirit of commitment to see where the spirit leads you.

Approach this service through prayer and reflection. Don't make a hasty decision. First, in your journal list the possibilities. Think and pray on each one. It is important that you commit, meaning that you decide to pursue this project for the next six months to a year. Again, remember that you must be patient. You must show up loyally, do your work and watch and listen and learn. Ask for the guidance of your Thought Adjuster, and follow where it leads. **[If you are reluctant to undertake a service project, please re-read Phil Taylor's article in this issue of the Journal!]**

2. Reflect on the meaning of Awkward Practice. Seriously consider the times you too might have refused to learn something because you didn't want to look ridiculous. Look for examples of these feelings in people mentioned in the readings. Write about it in your journal. Do you remember feeling awkward when you tried to learn something? Is the fear of looking ridiculous keeping you from learning something? This reflection will help you in this stage in two ways: First, it will encourage you that you can learn new things and that you don't have to be afraid. Second, it will help you understand other people who seem reluctant to learn a new skill.

The purpose of this stage is to sensitize you to the people God sends into your lives. You can't teach people "as you pass by" if you don't even notice them or if you overlook them because you're expecting a specific situation.

You will become more empathetic towards their fears and insecurities as they struggle with learning.

Return to this reflection several times during the next three months. Reflect on times when you feel awkward doing the other exercises in this stage. Explore why you feel awkward and the negative voices you hear when you feel that way. Remind yourself that you are a student, that you are learning, and that you must be patient. Celebrate the successes you experience, the times when you really do listen to people or can recognize a teaching tale. Focus on the progress you are making. The purpose of writing this in your journal is so that later you can see that you have made progress.

3. Listen to other people and reflect on what you learn from them. Make this a daily habit before you sleep at night or perhaps when you get up in the morning. Who did you come in contact with today, what did you

As you interact with people, try to view the world through their eyes.

learn from them, what did they take from their interaction with you? The purpose of this stage is to sensitize you to the people God sends into your lives. You can't teach people "as you pass by" if you don't even notice them or if you overlook them because you're expecting a specific situation. Every day, set aside 15 minutes or so to write in your journal about and reflect on the people you met that day or the day before.

During this time refrain from trying to teach anything. There is a purpose in this. The idea is to focus on listening first instead of thinking about your response. Try to listen and ask questions that clarify your understanding. Be careful: Often our questions are veiled criticisms or attempts to get others to look at something our way. Avoid questions that start out: "Did you consider this?" "Are you familiar with this?" These questions usually lead away from the topic and focus the attention on you, the questioner. Make sure your questions truly lead back to their perspective.

4. Be positive: As you reflect about your interactions with people, ask yourself what was positive or good about their outlook? What could you expand on? During this stage, go one step further. As you listen, refrain from making a quick reply. Instead, listen for one thing that you agree with, one thing that you can say, "I understand why you think this way." Or "It's true that . . ." Or "Good for you for noticing that . . ." Again, refrain from offering advice or teaching right away. I realize that some circumstances will demand that you teach something. For example, if your co-worker is trying to figure out how to use the new copier, you'd better give him some advice. But do so **ONLY AFTER** you have first listened, tried to clarify what he understood, and have pointed out something positive or correct about his thinking.

Again, this is something you should reflect on in your journal. Celebrate your successes.

5. Notice teaching tales. As you interact with people, try to view the world through their eyes. Listen for the models, analogies, teaching tales that they use. This takes practice, and you might not notice the teaching tales others use until you reflect on them later. Again, this is why reflection is so important.

You can take this reflection one step further. As you come to see the teaching tales that others use, their models, try to see your own truths, how what you know or want to teach would look from their perspective. Try to shape a model or teaching tale that illustrates this view, that can harmonize with their experience. This also takes practice. You will come back to the skill again and again, so be patient. Recognize that the teaching tale used most in *The Urantia Book* is the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

6. Consider what you have in common with the apostles. Particularly as you read Paper 139, compare and contrast yourself with the apostles, what you admire about them, what their individual weaknesses were. Choose one that you think you might be like and watch how he acts throughout the papers. Write about this in your journal. The purpose of this exercise is to help you to recognize your own human frailty and that you must persevere nevertheless. *Life is but a day's work—do it well. The act is ours; the consequences God's.* [556:13]

Contact me: Again, if you have any questions or you want to share your experiences with me as you work through this project, please email me at carolyn.prentice@gmail.com.

If a number of people contact me, we could possibly start a discussion list and share our experiences and reflections. I'd be happy to hear from you! ☐

This is the second article in a series that was introduced in the May 2006 Journal. The purpose of this series is to outline a plan for personal development of the skill of teaching. The four articles in this series will take you through the four stages of learning a skill: beginning awareness, awkward practice, conscious skill, and integrated skill. If you missed the previous articles, read them at:

<http://www.urantia-iaa.org/Journal/index.html>

(Choose May or August 2006 and your preferred language).

What is the Master's Program?

PHILIP TAYLOR
United States

The following is an attempt to begin to define the Master's program based on my own personal experiences. It is not a final definition of what this program is. Ultimately this program must be defined by the collective experiences of the men and women who dare to embark on such a course of training. This is only my understanding of the Master's Program.

If the Christian church would only dare to espouse the Master's program, thousands of apparently indifferent youths would rush forward to enlist in such a spiritual undertaking, and they would not hesitate to go all the way through with this great adventure. [2085:2]

BEAR IN MIND when you read this quote that it was taken from the papers in *The Urantia Book* that discuss the future of Christianity and the present need for the return of Jesus in the lives of men and women daring to live a spirit-led life. The paper states: *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 [2084:1].*

The failure of the Christian church was that it blinded men and women to a real relationship with Michael. Such churches recognized that Jesus founded their institutions, but more often than not, these churches supplanted the personal relationship with our creator with a personal relationship with a church that bears his name. Even so, this personal relationship has always been available to man. God is approachable and the relationship with our Creator Son bears witness to that fact. Many know of this personal relationship, but have they pursued it to its fullness?

The Master's Program is a real program, led and coordinated by Michael of Nebadon. Much as Jesus trained his apostles for greater service in the Kingdom of Heaven, so too does he train all his willing servants

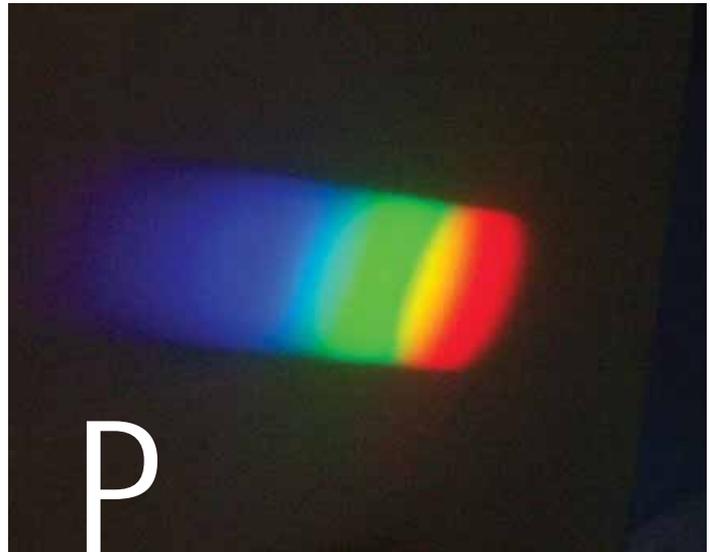


Photo: Alain Cyr

who desire to become teachers and leaders for that same Kingdom.

Can we see any reason why the Master would not train us through his spirit exactly as he trained his apostles 2000 years ago? In fact, would not such a personal training with Michael and through the Spirit of Truth be even more effective than was the training with Jesus when he trained the twelve? Remember *The Urantia Book* tells us that the apostles made more individual spiritual progress in less than a month after the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth...*than in their almost four years of personal and loving association with the Master [2061:7].*

The failure of the Christian church was that it was unable to present a clear and vivid understanding that Jesus is present and available to each and every one of his followers. This active, personal, and continuous friendship is the source of great companionship and is the basis for continued discipleship in the Kingdom of Heaven, and all who embark on this path of training and development are truly his disciples.

The Christian church failed because they could not reveal that Jesus is our personal guide and teacher and in him is that source for unbounded enthusiasm with whom we can enlist in this great spiritual undertaking. The Christian church failed because, instead of leading men and women to their true teacher (a master), they instead attempted to teach and become the master for themselves under Jesus' name.

The definitions of *master* as found in the *Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary*, published in 1938 reveal more of this personal relationship with Michael. Of the definitions available to us that define *master* we find that there are several that most appropriately define

If we look to all that Jesus taught and to the guiding principle that governed his life, we can see that there is but one goal which the Master is teaching us; that is, how to seek, know and do the will of the Paradise Father in Heaven.

our relationship with Michael. They are: “A man who controls or has authority over others; a ruler; a governor; one who receives an apprentice; a tutor; one who has disciples or followers; a religious leader.”

A master is more than a lord and a leader. In the true meaning of the word, and from the original translation from *rabbi*, a master is a teacher, and this is just the relationship that the Christian church and many organizations fail to realize; it is the master who teaches and trains us.

The definition of a disciple further reveals this relationship. A *disciple* is “one who receives instruction, a pupil or learner.” If we are disciples, then we are willing learners and we recognize that Master as our teacher.

There are several definitions of *program*. They are: “a plan or system under which action may be taken toward a goal; a series of steps to be carried out or goals to be accomplished; a training program; or a system of services, opportunities, or projects, usually designed to meet a social [or spiritual] need.”

The Master’s Program is a plan or a system of steps toward a goal. If we look to all that Jesus taught and to the guiding principle that governed his life, we can see that there is but one goal which the Master is teaching

Inherent in this program is the fact that this is an individual program. It is not the program of an institution or an organization.

us; that is, how to seek, know and do the will of the Paradise Father in Heaven. Through his training and guidance spirit led men and women can realize this goal and represent the rule of the will of God on earth as it is in heaven.

The definition of “a system of services, opportunities, or projects to meet a social [or spiritual] need” is probably the most appropriate definition of a program headed by the Master. And this seems to be most appropriately what the Master’s Program is: Men and women, in partnership with Michael, serving spiritually through service opportunities and projects to learn more effectively how to know and live the Father’s will.

Most importantly, however, in this definition of *program* is the recognition that there are steps to be carried out and training to be conducted to achieve this goal and prepare ourselves to become more effective servants in the Kingdom of Heaven—true teachers and leaders in this next era—Apostles. One of our failures as an organization is that we recognize the need for teachers and leaders but we have not yet recognized the need to be trained nor the source of that training.

The key element of the Master’s program is the establishment of a personal relationship with Michael where he trains us step by step to achieve the final goal of individual spirit dominance and the rule of God in the hearts of men. We can achieve this training through progressive service experiences where by we are spirit led and spirit trained to grow, learn, discover and make real higher spiritual realities and gain greater spiritual experiences.

Service-experience is the second key aspect of this program. The Master’s program is dependent on the classroom of service. Service is the medium through which the student is challenged, stimulated, and learns to make real, the ideals and desires of a spirit-led son. Service is the finding of greater spiritual experiences, and true service leads to a fuller understanding of how to know and do the Father’s will—the realization of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The teaching of the Gospel cannot only be in word but also in deed—loving service to our fellows. It is the very medium of service that provides for the dynamic life situations by which we can learn and teach through loving interaction and a stimulating (thinking) environment. It is in the active service of man that we fully learn to become dependent on God and positively pressured to become spirit led in the face of increasing challenges and difficulties.

The path of service is the path of the second milers. It is to those followers *who really live and love as he taught his disciples to live and love and serve* [2084:5] that man can realize the course of training that the Master’s Program has offered his disciples. Jesus taught his apostles as they served, and so too must we find our paths to service in order that we may embark on this second mile of training and preparation for greater service.

Perhaps the reason why the Christian church has fostered so many *apparently indifferent youth* is because such younger people fail to see true leadership in these social/spiritual organizations. But the fact remains that there are many spirit-led men and women, young and old, who desire true leadership, but they do not yet see leaders in society and religious institutions that are worthy of their loyalties. But do they see Michael as the leader of their organization?

The Master’s Program establishes Michael as the leader of our organizations, and he is responsible for the training and preparation of his followers for greater service within our organizations and within society as a whole. The youth may not be willing to give their loyalties to the present leadership, but they are more than willing to give their loyalty and hearts to the leadership and training of the Master. It is by such training that Michael can begin to prepare more dynamic and appealing leaders to serve and represent him in his Father’s Kingdom.

Of course Michael has been training us all along; his Spirit of Truth works regardless of receptivity, but it is designed to bring man into a greater consciousness of Michael’s presence. It is designed to bring us to a personal relationship with him and perhaps this advanced relationship with our Creator Son is characterized by the “Master’s Program.”

Do not make the mistake of expecting to become strongly intellectually conscious of the outpoured Spirit of Truth. The spirit never creates a consciousness of himself.

only a consciousness of Michael, the Son. From the beginning Jesus taught that the spirit would not speak of himself. The proof, therefore, of your fellowship with the Spirit of Truth is not to be found in your consciousness of this spirit but rather in your experience of enhanced fellowship with Michael. [2061:2]

Inherent in this program is the fact that this is an *individual* program. It is not the program of an institution or an organization. It is a program that can only be facilitated by a personal relationship with our Creator Son. Men and women cannot take it upon themselves to train others; it is dependent on each individual to allow him/herself to be trained through progressive spiritual experiences as they take place in our social and spiritual environment.

Because such a program is personal, each individual will find a course of training and experience that is right and unique to them. Michael will lead us all to the individual paths of service that is right for each one of us, and in such a program we will discover our strengths and weaknesses, and we will begin to be prepared for greater service.

The Master's Program is not the responsibility of an organization or an institution. We cannot conduct such a program on Michael's behalf. But what we can do is to begin to share our experiences with others that this program is a real experience in our own lives and encourage them to experience these things for themselves. We are not here to say "Follow us" but rather "Come with us." We can share what he has taught us individually, not to establish a program for others but to help those who are seeking to realize that a fuller, more replete experience of training and leadership is available to those who desire to become apostles in fullness.

But it is dependent on the individual to establish this personal program with Michael, and it appears that it begins with such an individual requesting of Michael to be prepared and trained for greater service.

Michael desires to rule in the hearts of men and women who serve in his Father's Kingdom, and it is through these God-knowing men and women that he can rule in the spiritual affairs of the planet. But these men and women must be duly trained for the roles of greater service.

Truly, the Master's program is a great adventure—it is the thrill of loving service to God and man, under the guidance and direction of a loving, masterful teacher.

□

A Glimpse of God

Continued from page 4



Hasn't intellectual authoritative theology left us back in Jesus' day? I submit that it has. There is more potential for spirituality on a broader scale now than then, beginning now, or NOW, because the theological stasis of atonement and salvation "happened" in the past. But God IS, NOW, and is experiential both now and NOW, experientially and existentially, because, to be circular (eternity IS circular) God is existentially infinite NOW and he is in us NOW and is experiential NOW. Sure it's a "qualified experience now," but it's also an "Unqualified" experience. In eternity, there is one Absolute, God, the I AM, the Adjuster, which is NOW. I've made my non-argumentative argument circular, but it is different from a circular argument, which would be a logical fallacy. The experience of God actually goes beyond logic "May God bless us, every one." May God bless us, Ever ONE."

"This kingdom of which you preach is God within you."
 –Jesus [1569:2] □

Thank you ONE and all.
 Respectfully submitted,
 David E Glass

UAI Conference 2006

– Sydney, Australia

Rewards of Isolation – Small Teams in Deep Waters

Highlights of the Conference – Personal Impressions

KATHLEEN SWADLING
Sydney, Australia

THE REWARDS OF ISOLATION certainly paid off for readers “down under” who had the pleasure of hosting the recent UAI Conference in Sydney. Readers in Australia rarely get the opportunity to fraternise with the international reader community because of our geographic isolation; we are far away from everywhere. The expense of travel is more often than not the sole inhibiting factor. What a treat it was to have so many readers visit our shores and to form enduring friendships with readers from around the world. There really is no substitute for person-to-person

interaction; great things can and do happen when personalities come together.

A written account such as this on the conference can barely scratch the surface of conveying the actual experience. You really had to be there to understand the breadth and depth of such an

event. Subsequent issues of the *UAI Journal* will publish the plenary speeches that were given at the conference, so I will simply share some of my personal impressions with you here.

Before I launch into the conference itself I'd like to acknowledge my fellow team members on the ANZURA Conference Committee who so valiantly rose to the occasion and ably worked together to bring about this event. Second generation reader Merindi Swadling stepped up to be the Chair of the Conference Committee and effectively led the team along the two-year journey toward our goal. She was an effective leader and made sure no stone was left unturned. It was refreshing to

Putting on a conference is a wonderful experience – I thoroughly recommend it to reader groups even if it's only for a regional gathering.



The author in the middle with family and friends.

More photos of the conference at

<http://www.urantia-uai.org/photos/australia2006/index.html>

have one so young and efficient whip the “oldies” into line and keep us on track. Nigel Nunn and William Wentworth were the master minds behind the content of the program and took care of most of the in-depth scholarly components. It was great to have such capable fellows in our midst who could take care of all that kind of brain work so that the rest of us could concentrate on other logistical matters. Vern Verass, our President who is also a professional graphic designer, produced the high quality brochures, booklets, program packs, banners and signs and contributed mightily to all other aspects of the planning process. Rita Schaad, our arts and crafts guru, provided the decorative trimmings and paid attention to many of the practical details that contributed to the smooth running of things throughout the conference. Marion Steward, our Kiwi member who flew across the Tasman Sea twice to meet with the team, was full of bright ideas and introduced the concept of a welcoming ceremony and supervised the registration process on site.

In addition my husband Trevor and I took care of registration and venue liaison. All together this group constituted the core planning group who met face-to-face on a quarterly basis for two years and exchanged untold emails. But as the time drew nearer many others volunteered to help with the actual work during the conference. I'd like to acknowledge and thank them all. Sophie Verass, our beautiful solo singer who sang the opening song at the welcoming ceremony; Delphine Swadling and Robyn Hromek, who assisted Marion at registration and with the drink, meal and harbour cruise ticket sales; Val Billington, who assisted with the decorations and trimmings; Andrew Swadling and Rex Merrett, who were our main photographers and operated video cameras; Daniel Swadling, who took charge of the “dogs body” team who helped with luggage and rearranging chairs, etc.; Paul de la Croix who was a faithful volunteer for anything that was required; and of

course, the Melbourne study group team: Bob Reynolds, Regina Williamson, Ben Bowler, Bevan-Rhys James and Gerhard Neuwiller, who organised the Urantia pub quiz and performed the “Wedding at Cana.” It really was a pleasure to work with all these wonderful people.

Putting on a conference is a wonderful experience – I thoroughly recommend it to reader groups even if it’s only for a regional gathering. It really helps to bring people together and to develop a valuable working relationship when you set to work on common goals. I know we are all stronger for the experience, and we have vowed to keep up the momentum by continuing to work together on projects for the furtherance of the revelation.

Knowing that people were going to great expense, and subjecting their physical bodies to gruelling long flights just to get to Australia, the planning committee wanted to make sure our guests found the conference well worth the effort and expense. Therefore, we took extra special care to attempt to make the program educational, captivating, and rewarding. The plenary presentations were of a high calibre and covered a wide range of topics in ways that were enthralling and easy to understand. Our intention as we chose the plenary speakers was to target individuals who we felt not only had an in-depth grasp of *The Urantia Book* teachings, but who were also particularly good at imparting their presentations. This is a gift that not everyone has, and we felt that in fairness to the conference participants, it was our responsibility to provide speakers who were skilled enough to hold the audience’s attention and succeed in teaching the teachings.

We opened the conference on Friday evening with a little opening ceremony followed by an evening of socialising. The youngest of our readers delivered the conference banner into the room and rolled it out onto the floor; then 18-year-old Sophie Verass stepped onto it and took our breath away with her solo performance of a song that is known by most Australians but that had the lyrics adapted for a Urantian occasion. (See words to the song at the end of this article). The two Presidents, Gaétan Charland (UAI) and Vern Verass (ANZURA) then said a prayer and gave short welcoming speeches. The conference committee volunteers served the first round of drinks as a welcoming gesture and mingled with the guests. The conference was officially underway.

Nigel Nunn agreed to be the emcee for the conference and kicked things off on day one with his outstanding plenary speech on *Personality in Transition – the Individual Blossoms*. In my view Nigel has a unique talent of being able to impart the big picture concepts of *The Urantia Book* in layman’s terms and in a jovial, eloquent and brilliant way. He is also a computer wiz so is able to provide wonderful graphics and working models of the universe as he breezes through his presentations. I’d venture to say that Nigel’s grasp and ability to impart knowledge and understanding on *The Urantia Book*’s teachings is at least equal to, if not exceeding the skills of

William Sadler, Jr., whose taped lectures and books have assisted many a reader over the decades to understand the more difficult topics in the book.

Will Sherwood was the second plenary speaker in the afternoon of day one and gave a polished and well prepared presentation on the *Agondonta Story*. Will has a wonderful ability to weave the philosophy and values of the teachings of the book with his knowledge on the power of positive thinking. Will deals with these concepts every day in his personal and professional life and has an obvious passion for them. He truly speaks from the heart and was able to highlight the incredible power of our individual attitudes and choices, which brought new insights into the meaning of the Agondonta status as described in *The Urantia Book*.

William Wentworth set the mood on day two with his stunning presentation on *Isolation as an Evolutionary Technique*. Here we have another brilliant mind and able presenter who has been hiding all these years “down under.” Like Nigel, William has a special gift in being able to impart the teachings on the big picture subjects and brings it all home to the individual’s place in the wider scheme of things. I felt like I was taken on an incredible journey as he talked about the concepts of divergence and convergence as an evolutionary technique, and then managed to bring the personal reality of the Universal Father right into our hearts and minds. I was honestly left stunned and flabbergasted.

Tamara Wood, one of our younger generation readers and the faithful Office Manager at the Foundation’s headquarters in Chicago, glowed throughout her riveting presentation on *Heroes of the Revelation* in the afternoon of day two. Tamara is a natural born speaker and communicator – she is graceful and confident and speaks straight from the heart; she obviously knew her topic inside out and was passionate about it. She brought the characters – those heroes of the revelation – alive for us and spoke of them as if she knew them intimately. I find Tamara an inspiring individual – her sincerity and living faith pours out of her soul so that the fruits of the spirit are plain to see.

Michael Hania, our brilliant Russian translator, spoke in the morning of day three on *Worship in Isolation – Touching the Source*. They say that still waters run deep. Michael is one of those quiet artistic souls who speak straight from their own genuine personal experience. He is gifted with an intelligent and beautiful mind and his exotic accent adds a melodic quality to his voice that left us with the feeling that we had truly “touched the source.”

An interesting thing happened on the morning of day three after Michael’s talk. We had forgotten to tell Michael how long we expected him to speak. We had allowed one to one-and-a-half hours in the program for each plenary talk and Michael prepared only half an hour. He told us beforehand and we were

...“in order for a tadpole to become a frog he must live loyally as a tadpole – so let’s go out there and work our tails off.”

wondering what to do with the extra time. Meanwhile there was a bit of a dilemma happening with scheduling a room for one of the informal workshops that was to happen later on that day. Sue and Derek Tennant were to give a presentation on the FreeSchools charity project that they have established with Mark Bloomfield in Thailand and India. They needed to use the main plenary room as they were to show a video and needed the projector and screen. However, we had already allocated that space for one of the other informal presentations that also needed to show a video. The conference program committee held an impromptu meeting and decided we would allow the Tennants to make their presentation to the whole group in the space after Michael's talk. Some may call it serendipity; this presentation was one of the highlights of the conference. I'm sure there was not one person in the room who was not mightily moved by the video on FreeSchools that showed the plight of young children in deprived countries and how a handful of devoted Urantia Book readers (initiated by the work of Mark Bloomfield in India) are attempting

Our collective efforts are being woven together to create a beautiful tapestry that is contributing to the evolution of the Supreme Being.

to do something about providing young girls a basic education that will give them a better chance in life. This project is a whole story in itself which I can't go into here, but it is well worth checking out and supporting. For more information on it you can go to the website at www.Freeschoolsworld.com

Many readers heard the call at the conference and have jumped into action to assist with this project.

Mark Bloomfield's explosive presentation on the *Mother of All Missions* on the morning of day four – our last day, couldn't help but leave us reflecting on the nature of what we had been given; what we hold in our hands, in relation to the untold horrors of this world. It was a confronting wake-up call to we who profess to believe in the power of revelatory truth. Mark has placed literally thousands of copies of *The Urantia Book* in libraries and learning centres in both the developed and developing worlds and has initiated numerous humanitarian projects. He's been on the front line of human suffering; he's seen it all close up, first hand; he knows whereof he speaks. Through all of his experience, Mark holds an unshakable conviction that the teachings of the Urantia revelation are the only real cure for the

We Are Urantians

We came up from the ooze and slime from the warm inland seas
The Life Carriers they nurtured us as we climbed down from the trees
We stood upon our own two feet and finally free will came
Our names are Andon and Fonta, the first Urantians

Our ancestors were Andonites who survived the ice and snow
We have a touch of blue man, red, yellow and indigo
We survived the Prince's downfall then the Gates of Eden came
Though they fell within a hundred years their story still remains

Chorus:

*We are one, but we are many
And from all the lands on earth we come
We share a dream and sing with one voice
I am, you are, we are Urantian*

Then the teachings on faith of Salem began to spread across the land
To prepare us for Christ Michael with his outreached saving hand
To bring mankind together for His eternal plan
Now a gift of revelation, a guide book in our hands

Chorus

sickness and disease of this troubled world. He has, therefore, devoted his life to doing something about it. Mark's courage and steadfastness was an inspiration as he successfully illustrated the powerful force of faith in selfless action.

UAI's President Gaétan Charland gave the closing plenary speech, *Small Teams in the Deep Waters of Today* where he gave us a world roundup of reader and organisational activities around the globe. He called upon various individuals to speak briefly on their service projects and regional activities. We heard from Byung Seo, who spoke about the readership in South Korea; from Share and Bill Beasley who spoke about service outreach projects and their work with the Matthew Project in raising funds for Urantia Foundation; and from Seppo Kanerva, who is President of Urantia Foundation. Gaétan was obviously deeply moved by the conference experience and admitted that his prepared speech was no longer what he wished to say – instead he ad-libbed and obviously expressed himself straight from the heart.

Following Gaétan was ANZURA's President Vern Verass who gave the final words of thanks in closing. Vern's heartfelt comments moved many of us to tears. I know the conference had a profound effect on Vern as it did on many others present. I particularly remember his closing words: "in order for a tadpole to become a frog he must live loyally as a tadpole – so let's go out there and work our tails off."

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Celestial opportunity

ALAIN CYR
Canada

ON SUNDAY October 22, 2006, I was present in a funeral home where my beloved uncle Thomas was presented in a coffin after living what I think is a very good and complete life on a planet. He died of natural causes at the age of 97½ with the conviction that the Lord is present to receive him. Thomas was an elder brother of my father who passed away in 1989. Of course, Thomas' soul free body did look much different from what all his kindred and friends were accustomed to see. So as it goes with emotion and how these occasions remind everyone that this life is a short-term mandate, I had this opportunity to indeed share some insight with my family.

While discussing Thomas' nature with my cousin Bernard, his son Joey and Bernard's mother (my aunt Rollande), Joey suddenly bursted into tears. I put my arm around his shoulder and asked him why he was so suddenly entangled. He said that he was sad because he had never actually had any occasion to know Thomas. I mentioned that this was truly a good occasion to be reminded that we should never lose any time and that we should fraternise with whomever we know now and with those we will eventually encounter. Everyone we meet and shall know has a message for us; and we have a message for them.

So upon discussing these matters, cousin Bernard questioned the injustice of life when babies of two years of age die before even knowing what life is all about. Reflecting on that, we realized that considering the aver-



"Ascension" detail, Giotto, 1304-06

age lifespan being 76 years for men in North America, it would then be almost appropriate to think that another injustice was happening now because of Thomas' elderly departure. So we understood that as we are creature born, there is necessarily a Creator and that only He can know the full meaning of His creatures' existence. Our only satisfying argument thus resides in our faith, this natural faculty imparted in us which allows us to believe without knowing. Moreover, when we consider how man was created, we can notice how every living organ in him is organized in a functional manner. Are the eyes in the right place? Should our mouth have been put elsewhere? Are we not born with specific organs and faculties which allow us to be as we are, thinking personalities with the power of choice?

So we concluded with the fact that every personality is unique, our existence cannot be the fruit of hazard and only a loving Creator could bestow such an endowment. Love cannot be quantified; it is love. So if we integrate our human needs of subsistence with the urge to better know the Father of all personalities, we are sure to encounter many fruitful answers. Loving is a way of living and it leads us to understand, cooperate and participate in social development. It is a gift to understand that we receive as we give and that this is the measure of our growth.

I left the funeral home with an uplifted heart after a warm hug with aunts and cousins... we all somewhat felt that this was only the beginning. □

UAI Conference

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I could go on and on about the other aspects of the conference; about the many wonderful workshops and study groups; about the fun and entertainment; about the amazing conversations over cups of tea, meal times and in the hallways and dormitory corridors; about the fraternisation as we sailed around Sydney Harbour; about the wonderful feelings of "mateship" and brotherhood – but I won't... there's not enough space in this journal.

My friends, we have heroes of today's revelation in our midst – those faithful servants who go the second and third mile, those teachers who help us in our in-depth study of the Urantia teachings, those quiet achievers who labour faithfully in ways we may never

know or hear about, those leaders who provide the organisational framework to make events such as this conference happen. Our collective efforts are being woven together to create a beautiful tapestry that is contributing to the evolution of the Supreme Being. The UAI is truly an educational organisation that fosters the in-depth study of *The Urantia Book* and the dissemination of its teachings – that's the part it has to play and it's a two-pronged approach. I urge each and every conference organiser to tap into the vast resource of the readership's talents and provide stimulating educational forums for the enhancement of our understanding of the Urantia teachings in ways that will help readers not only understand the teachings but also foster spiritual development that will assist us in the everyday application of the teachings in our lives. □



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