

Divine governance for our planet

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Presentation of a lecture during a meeting of the students of *Sagesse Divine Progressive* (Progressive Divine Wisdom) held on July 2013 in Montréal, Québec, Canada.

I wish to express warm thankfulness to M. Moussa Ndiaye for his powerful support implied in the elaboration of this presentation.

Man's tragic questioning

THIS STUDY ON DIVINE GOVERNANCE FOR our planet truly called upon me because it can answer man's tragic questioning on their living conditions.

For many authors, the reality of sufferance is incompatible with the existence of God. Could a loving and powerful God allow sufferance?

I use the word "tragic" because many among those who deny God and identify themselves as atheists do so in response to the human condition which engenders evil and suffering. Buddhism affirms: "Life is sufferance." I took note of certain assertions from philosophers who express the pain and revolt that assaults them when they ponder on the human condition:

It is not God that I reject; it is the world He created that I reject.

Even if God existed, man would be obliged to unbelief, because this God is intolerable.

With His infinite power, God could have done things otherwise.

Why do I suffer? Sufferance is the rock of atheism.

Many atheist philosophers displayed the existence of evil as a proof of the non-existence of God. For many authors, the reality of sufferance is incompatible with the existence of God. Could a loving and powerful God allow sufferance? Our feelings and our



System sovereign illustration

reasoning oppose when we must associate sufferance and God's goodness.

Thinkers who ponder on the question and who all the while do not reject God endorse the situation by affirming that since the world isn't God, it cannot ▶

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Greetings fellow *Journal* readers,

OUR SECOND EDITION OF the *Journal* for 2014 has three engaging essays concerned with mankind's interface with destiny and choice. In each one we will investigate our place in the universe and the association of good and evil through our innate Freewill in the search for the explanation of our being and association with the Divine.

The first essay "*Divine Governance for our Planet*" is a lecture given by Helene Boisvenue of Canada in Quebec in 2013. Helene skillfully examines mankind's questions on the Goodness of God vs. the existence of evil and enlightens us with her explanation ... "*It is the ignorance of divine wisdom that has man troubled by his earthly life while he despairs before God. My reflection here on divine governance for our planet is an effort to circumscribe Gods wisdom in regard to the human condition.*" Helene expands our understanding of this Divine governance in her deduction that "*All the moral qualities we praise and onto which divine qualities will be installed are developed in situations of contradiction where goodness sprouts forward because it is set side by side with evil. For imperfect beings, contrasts are mandatory: without them, values and moral qualities would escape us.*" Clearly she leads us to the understanding that without the opposite of the Goodness of God, we could not exercise our freewill choice of good over evil...

Our second contribution "*The Cultus and its Emotional Accompaniments,*" by Henry and Regina Wieman; is a research article and is a new format for the *Journal* as it was a subject reference on the UAI website internet forum at <http://urantia-uai.org/social/threads/87-7-the-nature-of-cultism.51338/> posted by Michael Melody. There are NO 'contributor comments' just a directive to read the

Journal team is currently seeking Assistant Editors, Proofers, and as always, Submissions!

Note: All submissions must follow quotation guidelines when using quotes from *The Urantia Book*; e.g. [Paper 141:4.2, page 1590:5]

paper associated with the research article so break out your book and as Michael said "*take note of the significant direct parallels to Paper 87:7 in The Urantia Book.*"

For my editorial input I will offer you this excerpt from Paper 87: "*But a cult—a symbolism of rituals, slogans, or goals—will not function if it is too complex. And there must be the demand for devotion, the response of loyalty. Every effective religion unerringly develops a worthy symbolism, and its devotees would do well to prevent the crystallization of such a ritual into cramping, deforming, and stifling stereotyped ceremonials which can only handicap and retard all social, moral, and spiritual progress. No cult can survive if it retards moral growth and fails to foster spiritual progress. The cult is the skeletal structure around which grows the living and dynamic body of personal spiritual experience—true religion.*" [Paper 87:7.10, page 966.5]

And I will offer you this excerpt from me...

For evolving man at one time or another has worshiped everything in existence And his inexplicable is still an "act of God" or the "dispensations of providence". But as intelligence grows, so will the inevitable. From man's mind and his actions, are wrought the spiritual. As the worship of nature was elucidated by science the experience of God acquiesces through personal compliance. For anything palpable that man held in reverence could not withstand curiosity's genius. As Divinity is progenitor of its physical substance its intimacy must inevitably redeem us. But long before actual worship began the fear of ghosts enslaved primitive man Stemming from dreams of their departed brethren the ghost cults advanced and death was their fulcrum. And the fear of the dead was quite impervious so to placate these ghosts, came the funeral service. Mourning was necessary to keep spirits away for if the dead saw happiness, they'd want to stay Though modern man mourns, losing someone dear the ancients did it out of abject fear. They'd offer them anything, from tools to bread including slaves or relatives, to please the dead. But as the cults advanced the many ghost classes were reduced to only two Good and Bad in association and religio-philosophy progressed to its modern day duo...

Smk Élan Vital = www.elan-vital.net

Our final essay "*The Significance of Freewill Choice*" is from Verner Verass, our most excellent Graphics Guru, *Journal* designer and Communications Chair. Vern crisply expands upon Freewill Choice in his elucidation;

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"Freewill choice must continuously adjust to situations involving decisions in response to experience of contrastive perfection and imperfection. The inevitable consequence of answering the Father's invitation call to be perfect."... In any conversation regarding predestination and the absence of choice, one must also remember that "*The door is open—to walk through it—is freewill choice, no coercion involved.*"

"For in mortal man, his mind is the key of freewill submission to a spiritual lead.

And spirit acquiesces to whence it came—in choice, personality ascends to its eternal name"...

Suzanne Kelly skelly@wtmi.net ■

Divine governance for our planet cont. from page 1

be perfect. Because if it were perfect, it would be God and nothing could exist outside of it. Thus, the world is subject to finiteness, imperfection: imperfection in regard to people and instability in nature, therefore the possibility of evil and sufferance.

It is the **ignorance of divine wisdom** that has man troubled by his earthly life while he despairs before God. My reflection here on divine governance for our planet is an effort to circumscribe God's wisdom in regard to the human condition.

Imperfection allows growth and partnership

We have obvious first-hand data: the human being, his life frame, the planet and the universe are imperfect and they fit into a reality in which time undoubtedly intervenes. Could we not present here the hypothesis that imperfection is an indication of a **mark of incompleteness in time**, a situation wished for by God? Imperfection allows progress, growth, perfection. A delay in time is inserted between imperfection and perfection or, put otherwise, between incompleteness and accomplishment. This time delay is very important: it makes it possible for creatures to participate in the divine creation by allowing created personalities in their achievement to become partners with Deity. [See Paper 105:6.5 page 1159.5] Progress is the watchword of the universe.

Can you not advance in your concept of God's dealing with man to that level where you recognize that the watchword of the universe is progress? [Paper 4:1.2, page 54.5]

The joy of fulfillment or the pleasure of emergence

When my daughter was quite young, she marvelled at the cakes I would make. She would sit on the counter near me and observe me with fascination, rejoiced of the result. Later on, when she was about five, she insisted on cooking the cakes herself. Of course, at that time, her method wasn't as fine tuned as mine and there were spills of pastry and icing but my daughter was very pleased of her undertaking. I kept a tender memory of the joy she so vividly manifested. Now, having gone through numerous experiences, she has become more skillful than I in that aspect of cooking.

For personalities, there is much satisfaction, fullness, joy in self attainment, elevation in the emergence of ideas and values. To the power of emergence that the gift of personality procures, add the pleasure of emergence.

God understands the urge of his creatures to accomplish and edify themselves. Is there not a more fascinating project than that of self attainment and the emergence of the spirit in man, the *finaliter*. God gives us the means.

The frame of life contributes to the perfection or deification of man

One of the outstanding elements for a human being's perfection is his frame of life. The earth is not mute and it supplies the numerous factors that guide men such as family, racial status, health, social integration, education, religion, economical development (science and industry), population, the national structure, leisure, the physical environment and others.

We must conceive that **there is a divine manner** in which beings and things of our world are governed so as to structure and promote their perfection. Man's perfection is his spiritualisation or his deification. Certain religious mystics of Christianity, Muslim, Jewish and certainly others from Asia have seized this truth in the centuries past. For example, Master Eckart, Dominican of the Middle Ages (1260-1328) already affirmed at that time: 'It is mandatory that I become He, and that He becomes me.' Master Eckart's spirituality was largely criticized by the church and a trial was laid upon this audacious preacher. In the tenth century, a mystic Muslim, Al-Halladj, was crucified for having dared to affirm: 'I am the truth', which equaled to identifying himself with God.

God seeks to penetrate material life and He will do so in partnership with man.

Today we are ready to seize such truths. The mystics of ancient times are rediscovered and, it's a blessing from God, their writings could engender with fertility a new spirituality. 'Nothing is more powerful than an idea for which the time has come.' (Victor Hugo)

God seeks to penetrate material life and He will do so in partnership with man. From the savage man, He wishes to emerge the divine one. The elements of our frame of life which I have previously identified engender conditions which enroll men into progress, growth and perfection which draws them into the process of deification.

Examples taken from *Dieu*, by Frédéric Lenoir, Robert Laffont 2011, p. 253 and *Maître Eckhart* by Jean-François Malherbe, Fides 1999, p. 7

Forced to think by hunger

Let's take the primitive man as an example. This man was fixed within his animalistic impulses; he was pretty much indolent and only pondered, as we say, when he was hungry. So, **he had to be hungry...** to think and conceive means of survival. In doing so **he developed his intelligence**. And modern man also develops his intelligence and explores the material facts of his planet when confronted with problematic situations. Many scientific discoveries were achieved to solve specific problems. As an example, let's think of the works of Louis Pasteur on his prevention of disease which led to the utilisation of vaccination for the better healthcare of

humanity. Man must be postured in favorable conditions *to think, to plan, to imagine new and better ways of doing things*. [Paper 81:2.14, page 904.4]

Morality must emerge

In a similar way, at the dawn of humanity, **morality emerged from situations of necessity or contradiction**. Woman's strong attachment for her children and man's compassion, mobilized to protect this woman and her offspring from the dangers of a hostile environment, have developed in these people the sense of duty along with the responsibilities and qualities pertinent to their survival. For the human being, God has privileged family life and integration into society. These frames allow humans to extract themselves from their egotistic tendencies and take command of their altruistic devoirs. No feelings are tenderer than those of parents in regard to their children. [See paper 84:7.30, page 942.1]

For imperfect beings, contrasts are mandatory: without them, values and moral qualities would escape us.

Man's frame of life (family, society, the state of things etc.) is essential to his wellbeing. The management of his self in such a frame reposes on obvious constraints. Man experiences this and feels the resultant through his body, his mind and his personality. Man and his frame of life take origin in God. God's goal is the integration of the human nature, the frame of life and the divine will demanding perfection. There is a divine govern in the realisation of this goal.

Contrasting situations

Moral qualities develop in situations of contradiction, without which such qualities would be unseizable.

Contrasts are stimulations, indications of a growth effort.

As a young mother, responsible for the wellbeing and education of my children, I discussed with friends about the pertinence of fairy tales. Should we, through these stories, confront our young ones to the violence of certain characters? Evil in fairy tales is just as present as goodness. A book from an American teacher and psychologist, Bruno Bettelheim, entitled *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* helped us in our questioning. In reading through this, I particularly retained the importance of offering contrasting figures to children, deprived of ambivalence, to allow them to easily understand the difference between good and evil. And like so, the figures in fairy tales are all good or all bad. One is brilliant, the other stupid. One is bad-tempered and jealous, the other generous, etc. Possessed of so little development, young children need a marked contrast to seize the moral sense of a situation.

All the moral qualities we praise and onto which divine qualities will be installed are developed in situations of contradiction where goodness sprouts

forward because it is set side by side with evil. For imperfect beings, contrasts are mandatory: without them, values and moral qualities would escape us. Contrasts stimulate and orient us in our effort toward spiritual growth. Inasmuch as men are imperfect they need *...relative value levels as a choice stimulus*. They cannot *identify and choose the good in the absence of all contrastive and thought-compelling moral situations. Everything divine which the human mind grasps and the human soul acquires is an experiential attainment... a reality of personal experience and is therefore a unique possession...* [Paper 3:5.16, page 52:2]

I extracted from page 51§5–13 of *The Urantia Book* some moral qualities essential to our growth and which are developed in situations of contrast.

1. **Courage**, strength of character.

Letter from a soldier

A few months ago, I watched a special report on television which informed us about the participation of Canadian soldiers in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. During this program, the daughter of a deceased soldier in this war read a letter her father had written to his wife who was then pregnant: he was asking her to raise their child in a manner that would allow this child to face the difficulties of life with courage.

Let us position ourselves in the person of an educator. For example, how do we help a child cope with the difficulties of life? In the educational process, how do we go about forming children to have courage, strength of character? They must be put in situations which will oblige them to **react to disappointment** and tackle difficulties. We all deplore the lacking education of over spoiled children, less hardened as such to cope with the difficulties of life.

Parents sometimes have unwise filial tenderness when they shamefully dismiss their children from the consequences of inappropriate acts. I admired the thoughtful attitude of my daughter's husband when he offered his twelve year old son a pair of tickets for a hockey match at the Montreal forum. The conceited child then told his father that the chosen seats weren't best suited and that in such conditions he might not go to this match (in the hope of getting better tickets). In spite of the boy's plea, my son-in-law gave the tickets to a friend and his son had to live with the sad consequences of his act and go through a vivid disappointment.

2. **Altruism**, service of one's fellows, provide for **encountering situations of social inequality**.

How is altruism developed in a child? I asked this question to a social worker friend, specialised in ethics. Here is what she answered: *All children sooner or later experience situations of lack. In this way, the child will afterwards identify the lacks and needs in the people of his entourage and understand them*. The

experience of such a situation allows the development of empathy and kindness. The social services set forth by society, social organizations, have been created to help people in need. These community projects have favored mutual sensibility among those implied.

3. **Hope**, the grandeur of trust, requires a situation in which we are **confronted with insecurities and recurrent uncertainties**.

Without uncertainties, confidence would not partake in the reality of values. Let us examine the behavior of someone who must be interviewed for a job posting he dearly wants. The hope of being accepted will mobilise considerable resources from his personality and concealed capabilities will actualise that otherwise would have stayed dormant.

4. **Faith**, the supreme assertion of human thought, requires this situation where we always know less than we can believe. It develops faith built on confidence and submission to the divine will.

Here, I will share with you the attitude of a person very dear to me. This person is very uncertain about the reality of God and she self-proclaims to be agnostic. As we were discussing on spirituality, she confided to me that, life long, she had been seeking to know the truth about God but now, tired of searching and upon leaning on Jesus' words which said: *Seek and you shall find*, she had decided to surrender to the goodness of God: *If He exists, God is undoubtedly good, He will knowingly take care of me*. This person who affirmed to be without faith offered one of the loveliest expressions of faith I can think of.

5. **The love of truth**, and the willingness to go wherever it leads, requires a **world where error is present and falsehood always possible**.

Experiencing error with the pain and deceptions which ensue makes truth desirable and it stimulates the search for it. A sincere questioning will lead to a powerful development of numerous wishful qualities such as enthusiasm, dynamism, courage, consistency, hope, dedication and many other personality expressions where heart and reason will solidly unify.

6. **Idealism**, the approaching concept of the divine, **requires an environment of relative goodness and beauty**, surroundings stimulative of the irrepressible reach for better things.

Let's use this example of a situation in which the citizens of a country realize that collusion and corruption tarnish the ongoing public matters. If people are scandalized by such frauds it is because they are driven by ideals of honesty and sane management of the public treasury. Who doesn't wish for more justice, goodness, more beauty when the defaults of a system dawn upon us. This situation contributes to

stimulate research and expression of ideals and thus participates in the emergence of the divine concept. How should we interpret this? The concepts of God elaborated by man always include their highest ideals. Thus, we can say that as ideals are developed they enhance the relative representation that man has about God.

7. **Loyalty**, devotion to highest duty imposes this situation where **the possibilities of betrayal and desertion are possible**. Devotion to duty consists in the implied danger of default.

A close couple of Serbian source, now Canadians, was living in Sarajevo when war took place in Yougoslavia in 1992. In this city where co-mingled Serbians, Muslims and Croatians, these people lived altogether well before the war. The man in this couple even had a very close friend of different ethnicity. His attachment for him was so tangible he had chosen him as a witness to his wedding. When the city was put into fire and blood, this friend betrayed him saying: *We will kill you Serbians!* The pain of the treachery is still intense within my friend but in him I do feel a sense of flawless loyalty in regard to our friendship. Having being exposed to the fouls of treachery, never would he allow himself to practice such infamy. This experience favored in him the development of a sharp sense of loyalty.

...as ideals are developed they enhance the relative representation that man has about God.

8. **Unselfishness**, the spirit of self-forgetfulness, requires that we **live with the incessant clamoring of an inescapable self for recognition and honor**.

We are told in *The Urantia Book* that the child has already developed a strong and unified egotistic nature much prior to his moral capability, prior to his capacity of choosing altruistic service. (See page 1131§8) This situation is necessary because the process of dynamic choosing requires that two possibilities or more are unified in power.

9. **The experience of pleasure**, the satisfaction of happiness implies this situation where **the possibility of suffering is always present**.

I have the pleasure of being close to my grandchildren, a young girl of four and a little boy of two. A profound attachment binds me with them and this solid tenderness nourishes my *joie de vivre*, especially when my grand-daughter seriously says to me: *Grand-ma, you are dear to me*. The thought that unwished for circumstances would deprive me of their affection intensifies the gentleness and joy I have in being able to love them now.

All the preceeding enumerated qualities which develop in contrasting situations are necessary and inevitable for whosoever wishes to ascend in his

quest for God, for he who wishes to spiritualize, or put otherwise, he who wishes to deify. They are also qualities akin to love and service to mankind.

A divine governance without friction

A few months ago I told my daughter that she was doing divine works in supporting her two children in their growth. She reacted promptly, affirming that growth was a natural process. This reaction is not astonishing because divine govern in human life integrates without friction or brutality, without visibility while being efficient.

God is not complicated

He works with gentleness within our frame of life

God, in contrast with a widespread opinion, is not complicated; He works with gentleness within man's frame of life to spiritually elevate him. It is man who complicates his relationship with God by opposing his human life with his divine one. There is no contradiction between the human guided by wisdom and the divine life which immanences to man. What a mistake it is to think that to be close to God we must dissociate from our normal frame of life and isolate ourselves from family life and social responsibilities. I am referring here to the observed tendency within many religions which incite to ascetic living calling upon mortifications and penance, cut off from everyone.

What counts is not renunciation but rather the self mastery which favors the development of moral qualities.

Being part of the scene, loving it, building on it

As we have seen previously, spiritualization is structured and realized within man's normal frame of life. What counts is not renunciation but rather the self-mastery which favors the development of moral qualities. We must be an active part of this frame of life, love it and build upon it through its material, intellectual and spiritual aspects. Progress and growth lean on the realities of **energy, thought and mind**. Progress must be balanced by harmonizing these three aspects.

In the 18th century, when modern science began to be made known, the peoples involved greatly counted on this new knowledge while convincing themselves that science would solve all problems, even social or moral. Since then there has been disenchantment...many people don't believe in progress anymore. The situation arises from the fact that progress evolved in a maladjusted manner without harmony in regard to the three aspects of growth.

The privilege of education

A situation of growth requires education

Since our planet is in growth and that the spiritualization of human beings is progressive, an education is required in which one who has more gives and one

who has less receives, humans who have achieved success in relation to humans climbing the scale. This is apparent in the family when parents educate their children so to promote intellectual, moral, ethical and spiritual development. This is also largely visible in the organization of society. Let's consider all the mobilized resources for the scholarship of children and their professional and ethical training. On Earth, the need we have in fostering our children in their education is quite special. Scarce are the beings of this universe that have the privilege to work in partnership with God in the creation of new sons and daughters of God. We find this statement in the teachings of Jesus:

Do you not know that men and women are partners with God in that they co-operate to create beings who grow up to possess themselves of the potential of immortal souls? [Paper 133:2.2, page1471:1]

A common nature

Education demands a common nature between the pupil and the educator because the experience of love is the necessary frame to obtain the wished for result. For example, it would not be wise that angels educate human beings. Furthermore, the phenomenon of progressive spiritualization requires that the great educators must adjust to a growing scale on behalf of the social evolution of the planet.

As an illustration, if the teachings of the prophets of the Old Testament well responded to the spiritual needs of their time, it is necessary for the 21th century man to have suitable teachings adapted to his intellectual, moral and spiritual evolution. If we utilize the wisdom of the ancients, we must position this knowledge in its historical and cultural context for an appropriate interpretation. But, truth being alive, the power of the spirit will always enable the emergence of the highest meanings and values to be carried by the educators, men and women of successive generations.

The internal process of unification

The frame of life is meaningful to man's spiritualization, but to solely restrain spiritual growth in this field of influence appends us to the arguments of the naturalistic atheists who affirm that moral values are evolutionary adaptations to the conditions of life. We must understand that, in this program of improvement in which the frame of life is largely important, an **internal process** allows for its realization.

We remember that, in our universe anchored in time and space, the emergence of any reality responds to **a rule of unity and to a purposeful unification or interpenetration of ancestral causes**. Everything comes from God; everything must penetrate man

and propel him toward distant Godlike spheres of knowledge. Mans spiritualization is accomplished because he (the part) unifies with the whole (God). In this process, man becomes a **partner of God** merging with the human soul, which becomes a hitherto unseen expression of divine nature and splendid beauty.

Man's growth is also reliant on the more unnoticeable powers of the Supreme Being which impel on the actualisation of potentials. Supremacy is an irreversible power of growth which mightily draws us to our finality.

Conclusion

Be perfect

We all remember Jesus' summon which tells us: *Be you perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect.* Many generations of believers stumbled on these words of Jesus by interpreting this divine application as a requirement of immediate perfection. If we situate Jesus' demand in the context of a temporal universe where time lags are inevitable, we understand that, in his request, Jesus calls upon us to fasten ourselves to an ascending curve of perfection. In this context, it is not so much our level of progress that matters but the direction we have chosen. I noted a quotation from the teachings of Jesus on this matter:

'My children, if there exists a true and living connection between the child and the Father, the child is certain to progress continuously toward the Father's ideals. True, the child may at first make slow progress, but the progress is none the less sure. The important thing is not the rapidity of your progress but rather its certainty. Your actual achievement is not so important as the fact that the direction of your progress is Godward. What you are becoming day by day is of infinitely more importance than what you are today.' [Paper 147:5.7, page 1653:1]

Men have questioned a lot about the will of God. We have an answer in this teaching of Jesus. Man being naturally imperfect, will be subject to the law of progress and growth to attain perfection. Perfection is the divine will. The frame of life, the human condition wisely contributes to this perfection. Through this presentation, I aimed at **celebrating the beauty and effectiveness of the frame of life for this divine project of deifying man.**

We must love our people, our frame of life, and accept to live in our material world. The frame of life takes origin in God; it is by fully accepting the human condition, by perfecting himself (mind and heart) and his environment through the outpouring of his



The believer sees God revealed in beauty of nature

progressively acquired skills that man spiritualizes in partnership with God who resides in him.

Raymond Lévesque, a singer and songwriter from Québec, wrote a wonderful song called *Quand les hommes vivront d'amour* (title may be translated to "When men will live on love," with lyrics as follows)

*When men will live on love
All misery shall cease to be
And will begin the lovely days
But we, my brother, shall have ceased to be*

*In the great string of life
Upon which we had to roam
Upon where we had to stand
We will have had the poorest part*

*But when men will live on love
And that misery will cease to be
Maybe will they someday think
Of us, my brother, who will have ceased to be*

*We who will have in the poorest days
Into hatred and into war
Sought for peace and sought for love
That they, my brother, they will then see*

...Jesus calls upon us to fasten ourselves to an ascending curve of perfection.

I might not totally agree with the author when he says: *...we will have had the poorest part.* In spite of opposite appearances, the part which is ours now is a grand epic; it inserts in the divine plan to make of us divine beings. **In his love, God has chosen us as partners** to achieve the fullness of our being and make us irreplaceable in the universe. In the comprehension of divine wisdom, it is now possible for us to reject the opinion of one of the philosophers I introduced at the opening of my lecture and to affirm: ***An infinitely good and mighty, God could not have done it otherwise.*** ■

The Cultus and its emotional accompaniments

HENRY AND REGINA WIEMAN
USA

Chapter V from *"Normative Psychology of Religion"* by Henry and Regina Wieman, published by, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1935

It was included on the Urantia Association forum by Michael B. Melody, a regular poster, in a thread on the "Nature of Cultism." He wrote of its significance as a human source with regard to Paper 87 The Ghost Cults:

"Years ago I became aware of the author's (Bright Evening Star) use of some concepts which were held in the mind of one of the most respected theologians of the 20th century, Henry Nelson Wieman. It happens that Wieman was teaching in Divinity School at the University of Chicago in the late 1920s and early '30s. As you read this well known chapter from *The Normative Psychology of Religion*, take note of the significant direct parallels to Paper 87:7 in *The Urantia Book*."

The significance of the Cultus

THE CULTUS IS THE SYMBOLISM BY WHICH loyalties and sentiments are stimulated, fostered and sustained. Every long-continuing social group develops a cultus. It is sensed strongly in "old families," long-established universities and churches, and in racial groups that have remained in one territory. Grandmother's house where there are a myriad of things —each with some particular significance or office, Oxford University, Notre Dame in Paris and Oberammergau are places where the impact of a particular cultus affects him who approaches in sincerity. **But even new groups soon feel the need of a cultus. They begin, blindly or deliberately, to grope their way toward those silent powerful symbols which establish bonds to the end of supporting ideals and sentiments.** The

...new groups soon feel the need of a cultus. They begin, blindly or deliberately, to grope their way toward those silent powerful symbols which establish bonds to the end of supporting ideals and sentiments.

gang of boys who set up the ceremony of a blood brotherhood and have their pass-words, initiation tests, and, above all, their pledge, be it barbaric or noble, are establishing their cultus. And unless their cultus is sufficiently true to the nature and needs of the members to exert power over them, the gang will dwindle into nothingness. The Soviets have sanctified the tomb of Lenin, couched their goals into slogans for flaming banners, and glorified the ordeals of struggle toward victory as altar service for the cause. How else could they have made misery and deprivation acceptable?

Each family has its cultus. Everyone experiences this. Our first act as guests in a home, if we would be



Ancient symbols carved in stone photograph

gracious, is to try to sense the nuclei of the emotional drives of the particular family as they may be discerned through various family symbols. Heirlooms and mementoes; the celebration of birthdays; arrangements made for particular activities such as the telling of stories, neighborhood camaraderie, family worship, or the coming of a baby; the policies of family education—all these and much more are outward evidences of that deep, compelling force, family cultus. There are families where the cultus is so slight as to be difficult to discern, others where it is rich and complex through rootage in days beyond dim memory. In some families the cultus is reinforcing, glorifying, challenging, sustaining. In others it clutches, molds, retards, denatures. In subtle ways the sentiments, beliefs, policies and loyalties of the family become symbolized so as to bring them to the consciousness and keep them in the consciousness of each individual member. He feels the impulsion to organize himself and his life in respect to these and to interact with the forces implicit in them as one who belongs.

The chief function of a cultus is to foster the emotions with which the beliefs and ideals are charged. It is a carrier of sentiments, beliefs, ideals, loyalties. All these must be nourished and nurtured else they become meager, vapid; else they fade and fail. Even political parties sense this. Think of the vivid, vital symbolism of the Progressive party under Theodore Roosevelt—Teddy's smile, the slogan, "I'm delighted," even the Teddy Bears! Or review in your memory that dramatized travesty of sentimental patriotism, "Of Thee I Sing." The alumni organizations of colleges purpose this nurturing of loyalties, however defeating their methods or ulterior their ends.

One of the chief attractions of the cultus is that it belongs to the group, and often to the ages that have gone before. It gives the members a sense of belonging,

of shared affections, loyalties and sentiments. **Each individual is significant, not just in himself, but in and through all the group—the living, the dead and the yet to be born—who belong in the cultus.** That this sense of belonging to the group of a certain cultus is held a very precious value in human living is markedly evident. On the one hand, there is felt some degree of reverent glory or of pride in the symbols of the cultus among the members. On the other hand, there is a striving on the part of those who feel outside of a particular cultus to imitate it. This striving is a subject for public ridicule of the resultant material forms—the commercially antiqued houses of the *nouveau riche*, the elaborate and artificial rituals of some large city churches, and the cheap bohemianism of certain “colonies.” Clever leaders of a group spare no pains to elaborate a cultus and superimpose it upon their constituency. Aimee Semple McPherson through wide use of symbolism has built a powerfully bonded group around her enterprise. Visitors have commented on how skillfully they are encouraged to feel panicky over their being “outside the fold.”

Where the cultus is a pseudo-cultus, that is, artificially evidenced or deliberately built, its power depends upon its artificer and his constant promotion. Where it is genuine, that is, grown through human experiences, it has tremendous power within itself over the participants in the experiences.

Cultus has the greatest hold upon human beings where they are not conscious of it. It is as much an uncriticised and essential part of living for them as is the very air they breathe. The patterning of their living takes form through it. It develops, and **constantly fosters and sustains those urges and sentiments which they believe their ideal situation in life requires.** It establishes bonds sometimes which are stronger even than personal affection. The rarity of the love of Ruth for Naomi was measured largely through the fact that she would leave her own cultus, as symbolized in many things and relationships, to go with Naomi into what would be for her a meaningless life situation.

The hold of an unconscious cultus may be so great that the participants cannot conceive of any other possible situation which would meet the requirements of what they have come to feel is their ideal situation for living. They may vaguely sense that there are those of mankind who live otherwise, and feel that these wandering or lost souls must be strange, indeed. We could all experience the status of “heathen” or “foreigner” or “bounder,” if we chose certain social locations for residence. And it should be remarked that there is apt to be beauty and goodness of some sort or degree where the group lives within a **genuine cultus** of which it is unconscious. A harmony of sentiments and loyalties works into a harmony of standards and beliefs. The bonds grow deep, grow powerful, and grow warm.

When this happens, there develops one of the greatest obstacles for social reconstruction. **The cultus so completely nurtures and preserves the established loyalties, sentiments and beliefs as to resist change. To the participants in the cultus, change would seem synonymous to the tragic loss of meaning in living.** The instigators of social reconstruction may look upon these participants within the impending cultus as selfish, provincial, narrow-minded, ignorant, superstitious, ignoble human beings. They may fail to realize that the participants are resisting what they believe are evil forces to which the same list of adjectives are meritoriously applicable. Each feels that this way lies salvation. The continuing impasse between capital and labor illustrates the condition. So also does the persistence of certain tribes of American Indians in holding to the ways of their fathers in the face of the educative efforts of missionaries and government agents. The martyrs of the Christian church gave up life rather than break the bonds of their religious loyalty.

Only when the growth of the cultus is periodically examined in the light of the highest realities and possibilities accessible to the group, can it be kept in its place as a means of promotion.

Cultus, then, can pass beyond the promotive function and become conformative, even to the point of physical, intellectual, social or spiritual martyrdom. It tends so to do where its growth continues undisturbed by serious challenge in the form of maladjustments of its participants within, or disruptive intrusions from without. Only when the growth of the cultus is periodically examined in the light of the highest realities and possibilities accessible to the group, can it be kept in its place as a means of promotion. It is not a self-critical or self-corrective force. Nor does it stimulate criticism—quite the opposite. Yet, withal, it is a forceful educative influence.

The failure of the religious cultus of today

The cultus of religion today is not fulfilling its function. Because of this, communicants cannot get an adequate symbol of the “Cause” they serve. **There are many stranded individuals who no longer feel that they do belong, or can belong. For them, there is no adequate living symbolism which lights the way toward the highest accessible Cause and which develops sentiments of sufficient emotional power to lead to devoted action.** Indeed, the development of an effective cultus in any religion today is a very serious problem. Our society is swiftly moving, swiftly changing. This is true not only in the larger aspects that have to do with national enterprises and international relationships, but also in the individual aspects that have to do with types of jobs open, population shift, cosmopolitan contacts and many other matters. Rootage takes time and a furtherance of the conditions for its growth. **A religious cultus must grow.** And there must be constant renewings in the light of the nature and needs of the situations in the lives of

the participants. **Modern living has been too speedy, shifting and preoccupied to give consideration to the culture of effective symbols.**

We have the remnants of the older religious cultus with us. It was built upon the nature and needs of the life of another era. The security of the individual, "his salvation," was the central issue in the cultus of the Christian religion. This religion will be used here to exemplify the modern breaking down of religious cultus. Since

...suffused with the illumination of the treasured words of Jesus, their Central Symbol. All this community in the area of the deepest issues of life as then conceived, gave direction and values to living, brought light and color and warmth.

individual salvation was the great issue, fear was, for many, the major emotional drive. And this fear was specific. It was the fear of eternal damnation or of the loss of heaven. Graphic portrayals of the devil, of hell, of angels, of heaven, even of God were frequent stimuli. The old beliefs about the improvement of persons were based upon a faculty psychology or else upon inferences from certain theological concepts. Original sin must be washed in the "blood of the Lamb." There must be some breaking in from the outside of something supernatural to redeem the individual. Waiting for this impression, and celebration of the fact of its coming, were great emotional periods. These religious events became ritualized in a "coming to the altar," baptism and other ceremonies. "The Lord's Supper" is a symbolic partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ which has its deeper rootage in this belief in ingression.

All these and more made up the very rich and powerful Christian cultus. Those of us who were nurtured in it can testify as to its significance and potency in the individual life. To this day there stands in my memory, as clear as reality, the cross which loving hands had interwoven from branches and hung high above the altar of the simple, dignified church where my family worshipped. Under it, fashioned in the same way, were letters that spelled the words, "Jesus only." The cross and the words were interwoven, also, with quite definite ideals and standards for religious living through being kept a vital part of certain church ceremonies. I can recall, as no doubt can many others of that group of worshippers, certain vital experiences into which these symbols entered. The symbols and ceremonies of that little, New England type church were very precious and deeply potent.

The Christian cultus had already, in that day, reached the conformative stage where the behavior of the individual was a responding to the cultus primarily. At the opening of the present century the average community lived in this cultus. The devotees shared much of their living under the potency of a common symbolism. There was the Central Symbol, Jesus, around which their idealistic concepts and purposes were gathered. Then, those that follow were also potent—the symbolic myth concerning the order of the universe; the holy authority

of their priests or officers of religion; their ceremonies and rituals of worship and service; their sense of fellowship in the security of salvation; their outreach toward supplementary, supernatural power; their fears and hopes as symbolically objectified; their compensations and sublimations as ritualized; and their harmonious, or at least related, interpretations of life, with its good and evil, joy and sorrow, deprivation and glory, suffused with the illumination of the treasured words of Jesus, their Central Symbol. All this community in the area of the deepest issues of life as then conceived gave direction and values to living, brought light and color and warmth.

Why cannot such a cultus remain? Because certain events have disturbed the bases upon which much of its symbolism was developed, and hence have de-vitalized and de-powered it. A deeper and truer understanding of the processes through which persons are improved, a socialization of outlook which interprets individual salvation through considerations of social interdependence and constructiveness, critical examination of the tenets of the Christian religion and its sources through the instrumentality of modern scientific methods, the revelations of modern science concerning the universe, the breakdown of the old religious sanctions dependent upon specific fears, the cosmopolitan contacts between those of the Christian cultus and those of other cults, the increase in the number and variety of population shifts which repeatedly break into the growth of communities—these and other forces have come as disruptive intrusions from without to disturb and devitalize the passing Christian cultus.

The maladjustments of the devotees have brought disruptions from within, also. There is much open discussion today as to whether the Christian religion, as presented through the Bible and creeds, provides the ideals and standards necessary, pertinent and constructive in a modern society quite different from the simple, pastoral one of the time of the Christian leader. These great doubts have come to light through the problems of living encountered by Christian persons. So long as there are these grave doubts as to the ideals and standards themselves, the cultus which was developed to charge these with emotional dynamic cannot function adequately.

Current use of this largely devitalized symbolism weakens religion. The very deliberateness with which many groups are setting about building forms of worship through ritual and ceremony is a telling symptom of the low vitality of the cultus. It is being artificially nourished and nurtured. **In many religious groups today symbolism is introduced primarily to give a pleasing emotional glow or stir.** Some of it subtly serves to sustain the easy security of those either who are prosperous or who feel their salvation is sure. Part of it reverberates with reminiscent emotions of ancient childhood experiences. Again, its appeal is an aesthetic one and the resultant subjective warmth is vaguely interpreted

as religious. Or it moves through giving a sense that this, however different in semblance, is the true way our fathers trod. Occasionally, it descends to being merely sugary attractiveness, designed to be delectable to the communicants. At times the effort is made to augment its weakness by combining its symbolism with that of other causes which are commanding the interest of the people. Alarm over this state of the Christian cultus has been strong enough to become vocal. This is shown by the great emphasis worship has been given in the formulated programs of various religious bodies.

Many individuals who feel that religion is a truly vital process are at a loss today because the old cultus does not function effectively. They are bewildered in regard to the adequate bases for religious living. In a society largely trained in conformative response to a cultus, they are not prepared for more constructive responding. It is a deeply creative undertaking for devotees in a transition period to give expression to their own vital religion. It is difficult for them to discover, each for themselves, what their own essential and actual religion is. There is a question, oftentimes, of allegiance in turning from the religion of the cultus to the religion of intelligent, genuine loyalty. **Some few can meet and surmount these difficulties.** Among them are those who can express their emergent concepts and loyalties in a philosophy of religion or in a program for religious guidance and education. **But always for the great mass of persons, religion becomes vital, potent, significant only through a cultus in and through which they can live out their lives day by day.** Through the cultus the loyalties and ideals, standards and beliefs, are made available to them. Through it they gain access to what they hold as supremely worthwhile.

Whence comes an adequate religious cultus?

It grows up through the devotional experience of the devotees, through their adoration and service. It must be true to the nature and needs of the situations of life of these devotees. It must be a living and growing symbolism through which they sense The Highest, and through which they dedicate their living to The Highest. **This means that no two groups will develop an identical symbolism, though there will be some basic similarities among groups who serve the same dominant loyalty. The religious cultus evolves.**

What must be the function of a new religious cultus?

It stimulates, fosters and sustains the sentiments and loyalties with which the religious beliefs and ideals must be charged if religion is to function vitally and effectively. It must make available the highest realities and possibilities accessible to the particular group, in such a way that the members are stirred to adoration and service. It thus reveals a patterning for living, and develops and constantly fosters and sustains those urges

and sentiments which they believe their ideal situation in life under their dominant loyalty requires. It builds bonds that gradually grow stronger and more deeply rooted. It is the chief means of religious education, the means through which the immature or the novitiate are inducted into the distinctively religious way of life. The particular system of religious education, with its curricula and methods, is an outgrowth of the cultus. The religious cultus is the symbolism which is the carrier of religious beliefs.

What are the essential elements in an effective cultus?

First there will be presented some of the more significant elements which have characterized an effective cultus through much of the past. Then, a factor new in a cultus but essential in this day will be given consideration.

1. The cultus must symbolize that which is **permanent in the midst of change.** It must point ever to that which is held to be Supremely Worthful, so that this will be the great central ideal through all the changes which may take place in the immediate and concrete situations of living. It must facilitate the illumination of all routine and constructive activities by the splendor of The Highest.
2. There must be continuity in the material cultus, a strong warp running through to give a **sense of unity to the woof of variety.** This is achieved partly through the first element given. It is furthered, also, by allowing the symbols to remain the same, or, if changed, reconstructed by a slow modifying. In such a way, the new becomes thoroughly conditioned by what has already been established and so is able to carry this heritage in addition to whatever new functions may be added. The potency of a symbol depends upon the amount and significance of the experience which has been incorporated into it. Continuity gives stability to the cultus.
3. **Beauty must be there,** but cannot be introduced deliberately if it is to be of greatest effectiveness. Everywhere about us, in this mechanical age, we see beauty being overworked as applied decoration or exploiting lure. Synthetic beauty is only a sort of prettiness of surface. Deep, genuine beauty develops through sincerity and harmony in functioning. It is spontaneous in this sense. The symbolism of the cultus automatically incorporates beauty whenever the devotees, with all their hearts, adore and serve. It is cumulative. Once beauty is there, more beauty comes.
4. Another element in the effective cultus is **interpretation of the glory of the mystery.** Beyond the Most Worthful, as men can at any one time apprehend it, there lie possibilities, vast, magnificent, and

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sublime. The apprehension of these emerges gradually through consecrated religious living, but always there are further unexplored, and at present uncomprehended, worths. The sense of this existent and potential “on beyond” is a vital and powerful lure in the adventure of high living. The mysterious Higher is a reality: it is always there, though the conceptions of it change. The cultus must bring to the devotees a vivid sense of this precious reality “on beyond.”

5. The symbolism must consist of factors, elements, signs, which have psychological association with great experiences. Some of these experiences may be significant to the individual, some to the group. Those which have deep meaning for the group will be the more powerful. To be most powerful of all, these great experiences must be concerned with a timeless entity.

6. The cultus must include forms which the individual can carry out significantly on his own initiative. The

Until this century, social change has come so slowly or in such a scattered way, as a rule, that mankind has not felt his whole world changing at once.

Roman Catholic Church has provided generously for this element of the cultus, with such ceremonies as are associated with the rosary of beads, votive candles and the twelve Stations of the Cross. Each individual must have, in some sense and form, his own altar. When two children participate in the lighting of the first fire on the hearth of the new family house, that hearth forevermore carries

significance for them, even though the specific event be forgotten. The individual must be stimulated and sustained through rituals of self dedication.

Now, all these six elements in an effective and mature religious cultus can be studied in religious living of the past. They are ancient and potent. They still stand as essential elements. But we have said that a new element has come into religious living. Therefore, a new element must come into the religious cultus. A more worthwhile loyalty has emerged and is being apprehended—the salvation of all mankind through intelligent and noble social reconstruction. The cultus must stimulate, foster and sustain the sentiments and loyalties which the promoting of this Highest Value requires. So we add one new element to the list, not only to care for this new type of objective, but also for the emergence of other and greater objectives as they are apprehended. This new element must function effectively in those areas of religious living which promote growth in keeping with the emergence of higher objectives.

7. The cultus must symbolize dynamically the increase of value. It must keep in the consciousness of the devotees a moving sense of that which functions in our midst for the reconstruction of society for the good. A religion with an outworn theology

cannot do this. There is an actually operative, creative growth of value. It takes strong loyalty to discover the conditions for this growth of good, and to set up those required conditions. The theory of religion must illuminate this growth, so that loyalties will be adequately stirred to serve it. A religion which effectively incorporates into its symbolism such clarified theory and potent cultus would insure its own perpetual renewal. Out of the consequent progression of loyalties would come the incorporation of new significance into the established symbols, and of new experiential elements into the total cultus. This would give a new quality to the cultus, qualify it for today and the new days to come.

These seven are significant elements to be incorporated in a modern religious cultus.

The difficulties in the way of a new religious cultus

It becomes clear that a new religious cultus cannot be developed as the passing cultus was, through decades and centuries of accumulation of symbolism undisturbed by radically crucial disruptions from within the culture or from without. We have cited some of the conditions of modern living which interfere with the development of a religious cultus in the old sense. The old cultus in tempo and type was an outgrowth of the old life. All the old symbolism was designed to celebrate established law and order. It has been used in the past for social conservation of the established social status. **The new cultus must be an integral part of life and growth today. It must be of a new tempo and type consonant with the requirements of the realities and possibilities of human living in this present.**

An enormous difficulty at once presents itself. Until this century, social change has come so slowly or in such a scattered way, as a rule, that mankind has not felt his whole world changing at once. There has been time for accommodation to change through a process of almost imperceptible modification of what-has-been into what-is-becoming. Even when the changes in the past have been more catastrophic, the situation was neither so complex nor so essentially interdependent as now. Also, there was, for most persons, room and right to seek new situations for living. There was not, as today, a closing in of the world of things and of thinking upon the individuals. When this closing in occurs, it tends to force a solution of the problems of change within the situations where the change is taking place.

This present condition of things makes the whole process of adjustment to swift change a more conscious one. There is more realization that something must be done about it all. The timid and dependent grow panicky. They clutch back at old securities in ancient or modernized forms. Those whose age or, geographical location or intellectual habits protect them from forceful facing of the impact of change tighten their hold of the

old cultus. Many flounder, and for their sakes or for the advantage of opportunistic founders a myriad of new cults spring up, each seeking sincerely or profitably to furnish soil for the uprooted. All such as these are hindering factors in the growing of a new cultus in so far as their action is individually motivated. There can be no marked movement in any one direction when many parts are pulling in numerous and varying directions. The old concept of individual salvation is still the motivation. That lesson of seeking one's own salvation was all too thoroughly learned.

Another difficulty is that **no central ideal or dominant loyalty as symbolic of what is supremely worthwhile for all human living will be accepted widely today unless it can withstand the scrutiny of thorough examination and the testing of critical experience.** We have come to the place where no new Messiah with a new Revelation, nor no new reformer with a new interpretation of the old word, can precipitate all the floating elements into the compound of a new religious doctrine around which will grow a new cultus. **Modern methods of investigation and evaluation will examine whatever is set forth in the name of religion. This difficulty is at the same time a great good, for, while it slows the process of religious discovery and organization, it tends to insure it against perversion and error, at least in terms of the highest culture of the period. Nevertheless, this is a suddenly new basis for religion.**

For these reasons there can be no formulation or even fairly formed projection as to what this new cultus will be. It must grow out of religious living. There is one avenue that does not seem wholly closed to thought and imagination in regard to it, however, and it may be profitable to explore somewhat in that direction.

As has been said, the great issue underlying and pervading the old Christian cultus was the salvation of the devotee as an individual. Indeed, for some time, there has been a glorification of individualism in religion. Now, forces beyond the direction and control of men have developed conditions of group living which throw new light upon the matter of individual salvation. It is no wonder that Christians have begun to inquire if their particularized ideals and principles could be promoted and lived in this civilization. It has come about that no man can live unto himself, even in trying to live "the good life." His behavior is an integral part of the social situation in which he is a participant. Conversely, the total of his social situation is an integral part of his behavior. They are truly two aspects of the same process. Modern man can find his salvation only in and through the social situation in which he is a participant. His high purposes and noble intentions will often miscarry or fail in a situation which is not organized to foster the best that man can know. He will suffer pain and loss through the actions of others whom he may never have seen. The thrusts of injustice, malice, cruelty, intolerance, avarice, and all the evil from

a society which is organized in the exploitive interests of certain powerful persons, reach him through a succession of intermediary blows and thrusts leveled at his fellow men. He may find himself faced even with the choice of criminal behavior or forceful deprivation of means of livelihood. In other words, social conditions have become such that man must seek his salvation through continuing social reconstruction.

In such a situation the essence of religion is no longer to be looked for in the subjective states of devotees, but in the direction and character of their loyalty to that objective which best represents the supremely worthwhile for human living. Now for the great majority of persons, the directions of loyalty are not yet clearly and convincingly discerned. They cannot start with a central symbolic ideal and build their cultus around it. They are not ready.

If, then, there is now no central, widely recognized, symbolic ideal around which a new cultus can grow, how is it to come about?

The fostering of a new type of cultus

The urgent question at the heart of the problem centers in the social procedure which will be efficacious in developing new and potent symbols, and in fostering emotional response to all symbols carrying new meanings. Practically speaking, the question stands: what may be done to promote the growth of a new type of cultus which will stimulate and develop sentiments and loyalties, which in turn will give direction to social reconstruction as a religious function within the social process? How can a growing religious cultus be used to give direction and power to the human effort of serving the highest cause of which modern man in the modern world can be conscious today? How can the fostering and sustaining of the emotions be so carried on that the Supremely Worthful, in terms of a present dominant objective, will claim their dynamic devotion?

In setting the religious cultus into effective functioning in connection with present day living, we have said that we cannot begin with any widely shared idea of what is Supremely Worthful. There is none. We can begin only with what we have. We must search appreciatively and critically for suitable nuclei. Since these cannot be found in the matured forms of fully and richly developed loyalties, we must turn back to search for possible generative sources.

There are already certain sentiments which have received sufficient validation to warrant their being stimulated, fostered and maintained. Some of these are strongly manifested in current life, such as;

1. A rising sense of the need of reconstruction in the economic order.
2. Demand for the abolition of war.

Modern methods of investigation and evaluation will examine whatever is set forth in the name of religion.

3. A drive toward peaceful means of international adjustment.
4. A reaching out for some reasonable basis for a planetary community.
5. A strong sense of the need of adequate education for all children.
6. Concern to establish family life upon a more stable and effective basis which will foster genuine fellowship and a spiritual community within it.
7. A demand for universal conditions of physical and mental health.
8. A growing need to discover something dependable about which to organize one's living.

There are several values or objectives in this growth of the love life of the family that need the support of a beautiful and potent religious symbolism. The intermediary success of parenthood is one of these.

It is with such as these that we can begin. Clearly, they are not those traditional religious, emotional complexes which have been treasured as sacred and holy sentiments. Rather, they are new ideas emotionally charged with clustering feelings which are being engendered by those processes of living which seem to carry, and to lead on to, higher possibilities of value.

We have as nuclei, then, those sentiments and loyalties, already functioning in some degree, which seem to point on to richer fulfillment of life and to the emergence of meanings not now fully discernible. Certain ideals have forced the attention of mankind in no doubtful fashion. Certain loyalties are emerging which command our devotion. Certain social objectives give promise in the light of those principles of evaluation which are in slow process of being clarified.

We can start here with these drives. We will test them by these emerging principles of evaluation to ascertain if they point toward the increasingly worthwhile. To those which pass the test we can devote ourselves and serve their growth. Gradually there will emerge larger objectives. And, in turn, through these, a socially functioning idea of the Supremely Worthful will steadily become clearer to perception. This will become the central symbol of our devotion until, through that devotion, in turn, we perceive emerging an ever more comprehensive objective. Thus, there will be a progression of objectives which claim our highest loyalty. By this stairway of objectives, man ascends towards The Highest.

Some possible starting points

A new and effective cultus can grow through stimulating, fostering and sustaining of these sentiments, loyalties and objectives. Since the church is the community institution which is in the most strategic place for nurturing this cultus, the illustrative suggestions will involve the church as the initiating agency. Other groups outside the church are building up a new cultus. The church is chosen for discussion, however, because of its position of advantage in the matter. Ideally the membership of the church includes the whole family, and this ideal is somewhat approximated. This adds potency to whatever the church can achieve in this direction.

One area of human living where already there are likely to be strong sentiments and loyalties which need sustaining and directing, is in the love life of the family. Organized religion has usually shown a marked interest in this area, and certain ceremonies have grown up in the church which symbolize some of its values—the wedding ceremony, christening of infants, and the burial of the dead among these. Many of these ceremonies, though, have lost their former depth of significance. Further, some of the most important values have never been potently symbolized. The chief reason this is so, we venture, is that the emphasis has come to be placed upon events rather than upon growth. If the cultus had fostered the *growth* of this love life, there would be much more vigor in it. Our present practice emphasizes culminating events and products. It is the *increase of value* which needs promoting and celebrating.

There are several values or objectives in this growth of the love life of the family that need the support of a beautiful and potent religious symbolism. The intermediary success of parenthood is one of these. Most other professions experience rather concrete and fairly immediate social returns and recognition for achievement. The nature of the vocation of parenthood is such, however, that it is difficult for parents to know whether their devotion to the growth of the love life is succeeding or not. Indeed the mother who makes her first business that of parenthood is apt to suffer a degree of social neglect, however fine a person she may be. The sentiments and loyalties entering into the promotion of the growth of the love life of the home are certainly in line with the larger objectives concerned with noble social reconstruction. **A rich and potent symbolism for the nourishing and nurturing of these sentiments, ideals and loyalties would be a truly great contribution to the worth of human living.**

The functioning of such a symbolism may make use of many avenues and means. There is drama which may celebrate glowingly what has been done to promote this growth of the love life. Perhaps a periodic production worked out by parents themselves as an avenue of expression of their discoveries, problems and victories might be one specific element. There are the preparatory rites, definitely educative, by which the young may be made ready for new experiences of social affiliation: starting to school; club membership; community participation at a definite level, such as citizenship. The total sacrament of betrothing, which should cover weeks certainly, perhaps months, is a crucial experience which needs a powerful and moving symbolism.

Families need leadership in developing the religious symbolism of those intimate and precious family experiences which make living significant. The seeds of the symbolism are there in plenty. Ignorance, or competitive interests, or non-sensitivity, often interfere. Group pressure as expressed in an effective religious cultus would be a tremendous force in vitalizing the loyalties involved in promoting the growth of the love life of the home. It could develop in people an appreciation of, and a cooperative participation in, this area of growing good.

In the larger community of which the home is a part there are also nuclei of sentiments which need fostering. There may be evidences of the dawning of a larger group consciousness in community attitudes on inter-racial or economic issues. Again, it may be that there is a growing anxiety toward one focal point where the widening community threatens to break down. However and wherever sentiments and loyalties are functioning, there needs to be a symbolism to catch these up and build them through enduring bonds into the total growing good. To illustrate more concretely; pageantry may interpret the moving community sentiments in regard to some one crucial focal point, such as getting a school established or a needed law passed. There may be an annual ceremony of appraisal of community social progress for the year, with meaningful processional songs and presentations of progress. There are already hymns that symbolize the movements of community life. Or again, there may be an annual ritual of working out the group's manifesto for the new year in which hopes and purposes evolve into defined expression, and loyalties are pledged.

The still larger communities of the nation and the world need consideration, too. Perhaps at first this will be most difficult, for it is hard to feel their nearness and hence the urgency of their call upon the loyalties of those who would adore and serve the growing good. The beginning may have to be made by some simple service of directed meditation each Sunday morning when specific symbols of the experiences of others of mankind who are far away bring to the devotees vividly the living issues of their situations.

To make this more specific, a possible symbol for such a service is here suggested. **Symbols, as have been said, cannot be merely designed and superimposed; they must grow out of the devotional activities.** This example, then, is an illustration of a possibility. The simple service of meditation may be opened by a reverent presentation of the symbol of a circle of clasped hands, hands of quite different skin tones and indications of use in work. This may be shown on some beautifully wrought banner or other insignia which is hung during the service. Or it may be worked into a ritual of clasping of hands in which persons take part, either a few or the larger group, while speaking some dedicatory meditation. Songs and guided meditation may accompany the presentation of the symbol. And then the new and immediately present issue of far away men, women and children, can be introduced in vivid and stirring ways so that the devotees can vicariously appreciate their needs and aspirations. The same symbol and ritual, used in connection with successively new but related issues will tend to foster more meaningful sentiments and purposes for action. These symbols may be presented in many, many ways—will have to be, for different persons are stirred by quite different elements.

Russia furnishes a vivid example of the manner in which a vast human enterprise can be symbolized. The emotional life of a nation was transformed in a relatively short time. The five year plan was presented in such a way as to inspire sacrifice and devotion among great masses

of people. Nazi Germany, for less worthy purposes, has inspired the German people to ardent loyalty by means of slogans, ceremonies, analogy and metaphor. No mass movement is possible until some great project can be so presented as to fire the imagination of the people. If the New Deal had been able to clarify important objectives this might have happened in the United States. Then we could have clothed this project with potent symbolism.

These are times in which, at almost any moment, an objective with a program of endeavor may capture the hearts and minds of the people. The manner of its presentation will be a source of its potency, but the main factor will be the promise it seems to carry of actualizing the possibilities of value which all feel are imminent. The religious institutions must be equipped and ready to adjudicate this objective and its program in respect to its validity as a representative of the values for which religion stands. In so far as it proves valid, a rich and effective cultus can be developed around it. In fact, the church should thus adjudicate all living issues and foster those which carry religious values. In this way, the beginnings of an effective cultus can grow and will be powerful in shaping the nation and the world.

We might go on, but these will be sufficiently illustrative.

Out of these occasions and beginnings there will develop the rudiments of a permanent cultus as fine for the day at hand as any which has gone before was effective in its day. The cultus will grow to the extent that those sentiments and loyalties which do or can sustain worthy causes are fostered.

The cultus is the very heart of religion. It is what fosters religion more than anything else. **If religion is to function effectively it must develop a symbolism which will keep its devotees alert and cognizant of the fact that the established system of law and order must be continuously reconstructed, at times perhaps even catastrophically. Progressive reconstruction is necessary in order to release the widening and integrating community of life. The cultus must foster the emotions which charge men's ideals with the power necessary to growth.**

Two things are permanent today—change and growth. These we shall have with us always. The Christian leader, Jesus Christ, stated this graphically when He symbolized the widening community by means of a mustard seed. The enlarging life that acts under loyalty to the supremely worthwhile must be promoted and celebrated. **The cultus must foster, whether through evolution or revolution, that growth which is essential in a progression of objectives toward the Supremely Worthful. This includes a basic truth which must be applied to any religious cultus which would be effective, precious and potent. The cultus must provide for the change, be it evolution or revolution, in its own religion. ■**

These are times in which, at almost any moment, an objective with a program of endeavor may capture the hearts and minds of the people.

The significance of freewill choice

VERNER VERASS
Australia

FREEWILL CHOICE IS A DIVINE endowment of personality by which we determine our individual destiny.

The bestowal of personality is the exclusive function of the Universal Father, the personalization of the living energy systems which he endows with the attributes of relative creative consciousness and the freewill control thereof. There is no personality apart from God the Father, and no personality exists except for God the Father. The fundamental attributes of human selfhood, as well as the absolute Adjuster nucleus of the human personality, are the bestowals of the Universal Father, acting in his exclusively personal domain of cosmic ministry. [Paper 5:6.4, page 70:5] emphasis added

Mortals are classified freewill sons of the God of free will.

The words “freewill control” appear in the single instance of the quote above—AND—the words “freewill choice” appear in the following 10 paragraphs in *The Urantia Book*:

1. Freewill choice is bestowed by the Universal Father

Concerning those personalities who are not Adjuster indwelt: The attribute of choice-liberty is also bestowed by the Universal Father, and such persons are likewise embraced in the great circuit of divine love, the personality circuit of the Universal Father. God provides for the sovereign choice of all true personalities. No personal creature can be coerced into the eternal adventure; the portal of eternity opens only in response to the freewill choice of the freewill sons of the God of free will [Paper 5:6.12, page 71.7] emphasis added

Mortals are classified freewill sons of the God of free will. God provides for the sovereign choice of all true personalities.

2. Freewill choice eventuates in the divergent realms of sin and righteousness

Evolutionary man finds it difficult fully to comprehend the significance and to grasp the meanings of evil, error, sin, and iniquity. Man is slow to perceive that

FREEWILL CHOICE

IS BESTOWED
BY THE
UNIVERSAL FATHER



FREEWILL CHOICE

EVENTUATES IN THE
DIVERGENT REALMS OF
SIN AND RIGHTEOUSNESS



contrastive perfection and imperfection produce potential evil; that conflicting truth and falsehood create confusing error; that the divine endowment of freewill choice eventuates in the divergent realms of sin and righteousness; that the persistent pursuit of divinity leads to the kingdom of God as contrasted with its continuous rejection, which leads to the domains of iniquity. [Paper 54:0.2, page 613:1] emphasis added

The door is open—to walk through it—is freewill choice, no coercion involved.

Freewill choice must continuously adjust to situations involving decisions in response to experience of contrastive perfection and imperfection. The inevitable consequence of answering the Father’s invitation call to be perfect.

3. Freewill choice includes the ability to decline survival

One error of human thinking respecting these problems consists in the idea that all evolutionary mortals on an evolving planet would choose to enter upon the Paradise career if sin had not cursed their world. The ability to decline survival does not date from the times of the Lucifer rebellion. Mortal man has always possessed the endowment of freewill choice regarding the Paradise career. [Paper 54:6.9, page 620:1] emphasis added

FREEWILL CHOICE

THE ABILITY TO
ACCEPT OR DECLINE
THE PARADISE CAREER



We've always had freewill choice on the question of eternal survival. Sin cannot be inherited, it's always a matter of freewill choice.

4. Freewill choice confirms that man's ability to choose good or evil is a universe reality

The moral will creatures of the evolutionary worlds are always bothered with the unthinking question as to why the all-wise Creators permit evil and sin. They fail to comprehend that both are inevitable if the creature is to be truly free. The free will of evolving man or exquisite angel is not a mere philosophic concept, a symbolic ideal. Man's ability to choose good or evil is a universe reality. This liberty to choose for oneself is an endowment of the Supreme Rulers, and they will not permit any being or group of beings to deprive a single personality in the wide universe of this divinely bestowed liberty — not even to satisfy such misguided and ignorant beings in the enjoyment of this misnamed personal liberty. [Paper 54:3.1, page 615:3] emphasis added

The statement above is one more eloquent confirmation that freewill choice is an inviolable prerogative of the Father which he has chosen to pass on to his children.

That which comes from the Father is like the Father eternal, and this is just as true of personality, which God gives by his own freewill choice, as it is of the divine Thought Adjuster, an actual fragment of God. Man's personality is eternal but with regard to identity a conditioned eternal reality. Having appeared in response to the Father's will, personality will attain Deity destiny, but man must choose whether or not he will be present at the attainment of such destiny. In default of such choice, personality attains experiential Deity directly, becoming a part of the Supreme Being. The cycle is foreordained, but man's participation therein is optional, personal, and experiential. [Paper 112:5.2, page 1232:3] emphasis added

We've always had freewill choice on the question of eternal survival. Sin cannot be inherited, it's always a matter of freewill choice.

What the Father wills, is. Having passed the priceless power of freewill choice to his imperfect children of time and space, their participation, while most desirable, is optional.

5. Freewill choice, the thrilling experience of contributing something personal and unique to God

Note: In this quote "freewill choice is designated "freewill participation" as the most appropriate term to communicate the unassailable sanctity of this choice to personally participate in the eternal adventure, when contrasted with Lucifer's folly—crime—attempt to revoke this very creature "freewill choice" to do the Father's will.

Lucifer's folly was the attempt to do the nondoable, to short-circuit time in an experiential universe. Lucifer's crime was the attempted creative disenfranchisement of every personality in Satania, the unrecognized abridgment of the creature's personal participation — freewill participation — in the long evolutionary struggle to attain the status of light and life both individually and collectively. In so doing this onetime Sovereign of your system set the temporal purpose of his own will directly athwart the eternal purpose of God's will as it is revealed in the bestowal of free will

FREEWILL CHOICE

THE ABILITY TO
CHOOSE GOOD OR EVIL
IS A UNIVERSE REALITY



FREEWILL CHOICE

THE THRILLING EXPERIENCE OF
CONTRIBUTING SOMETHING
PERSONAL AND UNIQUE TO GOD



upon all personal creatures. The Lucifer rebellion thus threatened the maximum possible infringement of the freewill choice of the ascenders and servers of the system of Satania — a threat forevermore to deprive every one of these beings of the thrilling experience of contributing something personal and unique to the slowly erecting monument to experiential wisdom which will sometime exist as the perfected system of Satania. Thus does the Lucifer manifesto, masquerading in the habiliments of liberty, stand forth in the clear light of reason as a monumental threat to consummate the theft of personal liberty and to do it on a scale that has been approached only twice in all the history of Nebadon. [Paper 54:2.3, page 614:8] emphasis added

No being can deprive another of the thrilling experience of contributing something personal and unique and original to God.

6. Freewill choice wisely made is not detrimental to you or injurious to your fellows

You are not given unrestricted choice as to your future course; but you may choose within the limits of that which the transition ministers and their superiors wisely determine to be most suitable for your future spirit attainment. The spirit world is governed on the principle of respecting your freewill choice provided the course you may choose is not detrimental to you or injurious to your fellows. [Paper 48:6.6, page 552:4] emphasis added

On the mansion worlds, we are free to choose our individually matched Paradise career path.

FREEWILL CHOICE

**WISELY MADE IS NOT
DETRIMENTAL TO YOU OR
INJURIOUS TO YOUR FELLOWS**



7. Freewill choice is made by perished children of surviving mortals whether or not to follow the parental path of mortal ascension

Freewill choice capability extended to children who have perished before they've had opportunity to acquire spiritual status as individuals shows how justice prevails. This ongoing life experience, opportunity to choose to follow the path of their parent/s in mortal ascension.

FREEWILL CHOICE

**MADE BY CHILDREN OF
SURVIVING MORTALS**



This probation nursery of Satania is maintained by certain morontia personalities on the finaliter's world, one half of the planet being devoted to this work of child rearing. Here are received and reassembled certain children of surviving mortals, such as those offspring who perished on the evolutionary worlds before acquiring spiritual status as individuals. The ascension of either of its natural parents insures that such a mortal child of the realms will be accorded repersonalization on the system finaliter planet and there be permitted to demonstrate by subsequent freewill choice whether or not it elects to follow the parental path of mortal ascension. Children here appear as on the nativity world except for the absence of sex differentiation. There is no reproduction of mortal kind after the life experience on the inhabited worlds. [Paper 45:6.7, page 516:5] emphasis added

8. Freewill choice is how the universe Creators evolve from the nature of existential Paradise divinity to the experiential nature of supreme sovereignty

In the local universes even the Creators evolve: The presence of the Conjoint Actor evolves from a living power focus to the status of the divine personality of a Universe Mother Spirit; the Creator Son evolves from the nature of existential Paradise divinity to the experiential nature of supreme sovereignty. The local universes are the starting points of true evolution, the spawning grounds of bona fide imperfect personalities endowed with the freewill choice of becoming cocreators of themselves as they are to be [Paper 116:4.8, page 1272:7] emphasis added

It's refreshing to know in a local universe such as we inhabit, even the creators are required to evolve through exercise of "freewill choice" as part of the creature bestowal experience to achieve the perfection of supremacy in the case of Michael. And with his consort, the transformation from living power focus to personification as the Divine Minister, her freewill choice of loving partnership and power synthesis.

FREEWILL CHOICE

IS HOW THE
UNIVERSE CREATORS
EVOLVE



9. Freewill choice is how the Deity Absolute was segregated from total, infinite reality

Deity Absolute is that potential which was segregated from total, infinite reality by the “freewill choice” of the Universal Father. Introducing experiential augmentation within the realm of existential, eternal perfection. Therefore, our own freewill choice has its ancestry and present potential of eternal actualization.

The Deity Absolute seems to be the all-powerful activator, while the Unqualified Absolute appears to be the all-efficient mechanizer of the supremely unified and ultimately co-ordinated universe of universes, even universes upon universes, made, making, and yet to be made.

The Deity Absolute cannot, or at least does not, react to any universe situation in a subabsolute manner. Every response of this Absolute to any given situation appears to be made in terms of the welfare of the whole creation of things and beings, not only in its present state of existence, but also in view of the infinite possibilities of all future eternity.

The Deity Absolute is that potential which was segregated from total, infinite reality by the freewill choice of the Universal Father, and within which all divinity activities — existential and experiential — take place. This is the Qualified Absolute in contradistinction to the Unqualified Absolute; but the Universal Absolute is superadditive to both in the encompassment of all absolute potential. [Paper 0:11.4, page 14:2] emphasis added

10. Adjusters are absolute foundations of freewill choice

God the Almighty is present as the Thought Adjuster which indwells the minds of men and women—is an absolute foundation of “freewill choice.”

We can only love because our Father has already made a “freewill choice” to live inside us.

The indwelling presences of the First Source and Center. Mind unifies spirit causations with energy reactions;

FREEWILL CHOICE

HOW THE DEITY ABSOLUTE
WAS SEGREGATED FROM
TOTAL, INFINITE REALITY



bestowal ministry unifies divinity descensions with creature ascensions; and the indwelling fragments of the Universal Father actually unify the evolving creatures with God on Paradise. There are many such presences of the Father which indwell numerous orders of personalities, and in mortal man these divine fragments of God are the Thought Adjusters. The Mystery Monitors are to human beings what the Paradise Trinity is to the Supreme Being. The Adjusters are absolute foundations, and upon absolute foundations freewill choice can cause to be evolved the divine reality of an eternaliter nature, finaliter nature in the case of man, Deity nature in God the Supreme [Paper 116:3.4, page 1271:2] emphasis added

Identity is only real if the “choosing bit” decides to continue as an individuated universe phenomenon.

Mortal identity is a transient time-life condition in the universe; it is real only in so far as the personality elects to become a continuing universe phenomenon. This is the essential difference between man and an energy system: The energy system must continue, it has no choice; but man has everything to do with determining his own destiny. The Adjuster is truly the path to Paradise, but man himself must pursue that path by his own deciding, his freewill choosing. [Paper 112:5.3, page 1232:4] emphasis added ■

FREEWILL CHOICE

MYSTERY MONITORS ARE
ABSOLUTE FOUNDATIONS
OF FREEWILL CHOICE





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