

The New Teacher-Leaders

A Training Manual

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I Our Call

There are many hopeful and inspiring statements about our future in the Urantia Book, but few can match the promise and opportunity that is foretold in the following lines:

Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings.

(19:9.3/2082)

...the spiritual renaissance must await the coming of these new teachers of Jesus' religion who will be exclusively devoted to the spiritual regeneration of men. (19:9.3/2082)

Let us reflect upon the amazing implications of these statements. The revelators are telling us that our world is in need of new teachers of Jesus' religion. And they are prophesying the coming of these new teachers, predicting that these new religious leaders will help bring a spiritual renaissance to our "dark and confused world."

(See [Appendix 1.1](#) To Whom Is This Great Call Directed?)

In many places the revelators point out that today's world is beset by serious problems. The greatest of these are materialistic secularism, unceasing social transformation, and spiritual stagnation. New religious

leaders are desperately needed to answer these problems by turning our world back to the true religion of Jesus.

(See [Appendix 1.2](#) Our Present Situation: World Crisis and the Need for Spiritual Religion)

Yes, we do face serious problems, but great things lie ahead, and we are called to participate! We are called to join in a great adventure! Here is how the revelators describe what is to happen on our world and the thrilling possibilities that lie in our future:

*The **call** to the adventure of building a new and transformed human society by means of **the spiritual rebirth of Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom** should **thrill** all who believe in him as men have not been stirred since the days when they walked about on earth as his companions in the flesh. (195:10.6/2084; my bold)*

The time for a new revelation of Jesus has come! The leaders of this new revelation will bring about the spiritual rebirth of Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom. They will spark a great new spiritual renaissance. For those who feel inclined to help bring about this new revelation, three fundamental requirements are set forth.

The Three Fundamental Requirements

The new teacher-leaders must:

- (1) be “spiritual men and women”
- (2) “be exclusively devoted to the spiritual regeneration of men”
- (3) “dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings”

If we seek membership in this now forming corps of new teacher-leaders it is good to reflect upon each of these requirements. We will find that, just as the task is great, so also are the requirements. What follows may be thought of as a guide and basic training manual for those who aspire to become new teacher-leaders. As we ponder what role we might play in this great adventure let us be mindful what Jesus requires of his followers:

In accordance with the truth committed to your hands will the Master of truth demand a reckoning. (176:3.8/1918)

II The Spirituality Requirement

The first and most basic requirement for the new teacher-leaders is that they be “spiritual men and women.” What does it mean to be “spiritual”?

Spirituality is a reflection of our closeness to God; it is the measure of our attunement to his indwelling spirit. It is directly proportional to the elimination of the selfish qualities of love. And crucially, it is also a measure of the effectiveness of our spiritual ministry. Here is how the revelators put it:

*Spirituality becomes at once the indicator of one’s nearness to God and **the measure of one’s usefulness to fellow beings.** (100:2.4/1096; my bold)*

1 The Birth of the Spirit

The essential first step to becoming a spiritual person is to be “born of the spirit.” What is the “birth of the spirit”?

The “birth of the spirit” is the change of mind that occurs when we wholeheartedly choose to do the Father’s will. When we make this choice his indwelling spirit is born into the light of our faith. Jesus explained it to Nicodemus this way:

Already does this spirit of the Father in heaven indwell you. If you would be led by this spirit from above, very soon would you begin to see with the eyes of the spirit, and then by the wholehearted choice of spirit guidance would you be born of the spirit since your only purpose in living would be to do the will of your Father who is in heaven. (142:6.7/1602)

It is important to realize that the birth of the spirit is a gradual process and is mostly unconscious. When the process is complete it culminates in a “birthday.” Here is how the revelators describe it:

Religion is functional in the human mind and has been realized in experience prior to its appearance in human consciousness. A child has been in existence about nine months before it experiences birth. But the "birth" of religion is not sudden; it is rather a gradual emergence. Nevertheless, sooner or later there is a "birth day. (103:2.1/1130)

2 Showing Forth the Fruits of the Spirit

Since the birth of the spirit is a gradual process that is mostly unconscious, how may we know if we have been born of the spirit? Put simply, if we are born of the spirit we will begin to show forth the fruits of the spirit in our daily lives. Here is what Jesus said:

...those who are born of the spirit will immediately begin to show forth the fruits of the spirit in loving service to their fellow creatures. (193:2.2/2054)

But be not deceived; while salvation is the free gift of God and is bestowed upon all who accept it by faith, there follows the experience of bearing the fruits of this spirit life as it is lived in the flesh. (193:1.2/2053)

If professed believers bear not these fruits of the divine spirit in their lives, they are dead. (193:2.2/2054)

We must also realize that the Father requires of his faithful followers not only that they bear the fruits of the spirit, but that they *grow and progress* in spiritual fruit bearing. As we continue in the Father's will we must increasingly show forth spiritual fruit in our personal lives. Here is how Jesus put it:

Increasingly must you yield the fruit of the spirit as you progress heavenward in the kingdom of God. (193:2.2/2054)

My Father requires of the children of faith that they bear much spiritual fruit. (193:2.2/2054)

3 What Are the Fruit of the Spirit?

“What are the fruits of the spirit? Basically they are the character traits that result from our connection with God’s indwelling spirit. They are the characteristics of the Spirit that flow through us and we exhibit in our life reactions. The domination of a human life by the Father’s spirit is always accompanied by a growth in these perfections of character. Following is a listing of some of the fruits of the spirit. The first list we are familiar with from the Bible:

...the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. (34:6.13/381)

Jesus presented a second list at one of his last appearances:

And the fruits of the divine spirit which are yielded in the lives of spirit-born and God-knowing mortals are: loving service, unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, sincere fairness, enlightened honesty, undying hope, confiding trust, merciful ministry, unfailing goodness, forgiving tolerance, and enduring peace. (193:2.2/2054)

In fact, the fruit of the spirit are basically the character traits that Jesus demonstrated in his perfected life on earth.

When man yields the "fruits of the spirit" in his life, he is simply showing forth the traits which the Master manifested in his own earthly life. (194:3.1/2062)

So our first job is to be born of the spirit, but this spirit birth must be immediately followed by spiritual fruit bearing. We must increasingly and spontaneously bear this spiritual fruit throughout our lives. This is our ever-present goal and the measure of our spiritual progress. As we go through life we may inquire of ourselves, "Am I increasingly showing forth the fruits of the spirit in my daily life?" If we are, we may be confident that we are advancing in the required spiritual training to become an effective teacher-leader. And in this long spiritual journey it is good to remind ourselves that:

The quickest way for a tadpole to become a frog is to live loyally each day a tadpole. (100:1.4/1094)

4 Growing Up to Spiritual Adulthood

We cannot stand still in the kingdom. We must go forward, and the culminating result of such growth and advancement is spiritual adulthood and maturity. As new teacher-leaders we must understand that to effectively reveal Jesus we will have to reach spiritual adulthood. We are called to be living examples of the mature spirituality that may be attained by a true follower of Jesus. Here is what he taught about growing up to spiritual adulthood and maturity:

*You may enter the kingdom as a child, but **the Father requires that you grow up, by grace, to the full stature of spiritual adulthood.***

(193:2.2/2054; my bold)

*Childlike trust secures man's entrance into the kingdom of heavenly ascent, but progress is wholly dependent on the vigorous exercise of **the robust and confident faith of the full-grown man.*** (102:1.1/1118; my bold)

*Though Jesus taught that faith, simple childlike belief, is the key to the door of the kingdom, he also taught that, having entered the door, there are progressive steps of righteousness which every believing child must ascend in order to **grow up to the full stature of the robust sons of God.***

(170:3.2/1861; my bold)

(See [Appendix 1.3](#) Four Step Progression to Spiritual Adulthood)

5 Jesus Lives Again in Us

Spiritual adulthood and maturity qualifies us to progress to an even higher state of spirituality. This is the level wherein Jesus, through his indwelling spirit of Truth, is enabled to live again in us. The most successful teacher-leaders will reach this exalted state. This will make them truly effective representatives and ministers of Jesus. It is this level of spirituality that the revelators call for:

The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit-born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men.

(195:10.1/2084; my bold)

The new teacher-leaders are called to attain that level of spirituality such that their lives naturally reflect Jesus and his inner spirit. Just as Jesus provided a living demonstration of his religion to his day and age, so are we called to be the living demonstrations of Jesus and his teachings to our modern world. We must be spirit-filled such that when others see us they may see Jesus!

(See [Appendix 1.4](#) Jesus Lives Again in Us)

(See [Appendix 1.5](#) Summary of the Spirituality Requirement)

For further study and contemplation to guide us in attaining the requisite spirituality the following are highly recommended:

(See [Appendix 2](#) “Meditation in *The Urantia Book*” by Peter Holly)

Paper 100 Religion in Human Experience. *The Urantia Book*

Sample Prayers:

“May I increasingly show forth the fruit of the spirit in my daily life.”

“Jesus, live again in me.”

“Jesus, fill me with your spirit.”

“Jesus, shine through me.”

III The Spiritual Regeneration Requirement

The second major requirement we will consider is the directive that we be “exclusively devoted to the spiritual regeneration of men.” Notice that this directive gives us a clear and well-defined goal, the “spiritual regeneration” of others. This is the specific and exclusive work we are called to, and it gives focus and power to our efforts.

1 First, Be Spiritually Regenerated Ourselves

If we truly seek to be a force for spiritual regeneration in others we should recognize that to be most effective we must be spiritually regenerated ourselves. Only after having been born of the spirit and having achieved a sufficient measure of spiritual advancement, are we are rightly prepared to effect spiritual regeneration in others.

2 Spiritual Regeneration of Others through Personal Contact

We must realize that our greatest power to spark spiritual regeneration will come not through our teachings, but rather through the contact of others with our spirit-filled presence. It is the example of our spirit-dominated life, especially in the midst of our secular and materialistic world, that will be most effective in inspiring spiritual regeneration in others.

3 Why *Exclusively* devoted to Spiritual Regeneration?

We should also note that we are called to be *exclusively* devoted to spiritual regeneration. Why exclusively? Here is the context in which we find the exclusivity requirement:

If Christianity persists in neglecting its spiritual mission while it continues to busy itself with social and material problems, the spiritual renaissance must await the coming of these new teachers of Jesus' religion who will be exclusively devoted to the spiritual regeneration of men.
(195:9.4/2082)

Thus we see that the reason for *exclusively* devoting ourselves to spiritual regeneration derives from the fact that Christianity has increasingly *neglected its spiritual mission* and substituted a focus on social and material problems. Professed followers of Jesus have become diverted from his commission to “effect the spiritual transformation of successive generations of mankind.” (195:9.10/2083)

We are to avoid the mistake of Christianity. We must not be distracted and diverted from our work; we are called to an *exclusively spiritual mission*. As new teacher-leaders we must focus our efforts on this one clear goal—the *spiritual regeneration* of our fellow man.

4 Working for Spiritual Regeneration

So how do we go about working for spiritual regeneration?

We may take our first step by simply choosing to work for this goal. We can make it a conscious practice in our everyday life. It involves a new way of looking at others and a new way of interacting with them. It is to see them, not through the lens of our differences, but rather as fellow children of God whom we seek to advance spiritually.

We add power to our efforts by praying that we may be a force for spiritual regeneration in others. We may pray that Jesus live again in us and that he work through us to spiritually inspire and uplift those we contact. Here is the ideal the revelators call us to live up to:

Jesus' disciples should be more than conquerors, even overflowing sources of inspiration and enhanced living to all men. (195:10.1/2084)

IV The Requirement to Depend *Solely* on Jesus

The last major requirement we will consider is the directive that we “dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings.”

(See [Appendix 1.6](#) The Need for Courage)

1 Why the Exclusivity Requirement?

Let us consider the exclusivity requirement. Why are we called to depend *solely* on Jesus and his teachings? Why not, for example, depend on the best of Christianity, which the Urantia Book calls “the best of the religions of the twentieth century?” Or why not depend on a synthesis of the greatest teachings of all the world’s religions?

2 Distinguish the Religion *of* Jesus from the Religion *about* Jesus

There are three especially important reasons for this directive.

The first reason derives from the fact that the world knows Jesus only through the lens of Christianity. Most people do not have any idea that there is a religion *of* Jesus that is separate and apart from Christianity, which has evolved as a religion *about* Jesus. His original gospel has been submerged within the overall Christian message. And the true teachings of Jesus are identified with many non-Jessonian teachings.

Further, Christianity early on began the process of applying all of Jesus' teachings regarding his spiritual kingdom to the temporal Christian church. To enter the kingdom, to be born of the spirit and dedicate oneself to doing the Father's will, was equated to being baptized into the church. Thus an outward social organization was substituted for Jesus' concept of an inner spiritual kingdom. For these and other reasons Jesus' teachings must be clearly distinguished from the Christian message. Our work is to focus on and exalt the teachings *of* Jesus.

(See [Appendix 1.7](#) The Substitution Error)

3 Jesus' *Incomparable* Teachings

A clue to the second reason for depending solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings is contained within the directive itself. His teachings are indeed *incomparable*. They are the highest and greatest and most truly valuable teachings ever to appear on planet earth. They are divine and perfect. All other teachings may be judged by their compatibility with the teachings of Jesus. *He is our touchstone to truth.*

4 The Value of Jesus' Life Demonstrating His Teachings

His teachings are best understood by observing the perfected life he lived on earth. The perfection of personality and character he developed in living a trying and testing earth life provides an ideal example for us to emulate in our own lives. Jesus life is so valuable because it is not just a theoretical construct of an ideal moral philosophy, but rather a living demonstration of the spiritual character he taught. This combination of teaching the ideal character and then providing a real life example of that character is our most valuable knowledge.

Of all human knowledge that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. (196:1.3/2090)

(See [Appendix 1.8](#) The Living Jesus)

5 Only Jesus and his Teachings Possess the Power to Triumph over the Modern Threats to Civilization and Bring the Spiritual Renaissance

The third reason for the exclusivity requirement is the fact that *only* Jesus and his incomparable teachings possess the *power* to bring about the spiritual renaissance. The Urantia Book tells us that Christianity “has truly been one of the greatest powers for good on the earth” (195:10.12/2085). It has done its job carrying the kingdom of Jesus’ concept forward for 2000 years, up to and through our present material and secular age. But now more is needed. Only Jesus and his personal religion possess the power to see us through the three great problems that our world now faces: spiritual non-progression, materialistic secularism, and unceasing social change. Only Jesus and his teachings possess the power to stabilize us in this time of crisis

and triumph over these modern threats to civilization. Only through Jesus and his teachings will we attain the new spiritual renaissance. Here is how the revelators put it:

*Christianity has indeed done a great service to this world but **what is now most needed is Jesus.** (195:10.1/2084; my bold)*

(See [Appendix 1.9](#) Summary of Reasons for the Exclusivity Requirement)

V How Do We Work for the Spiritual Renaissance while Depending Solely on Jesus?

We have discussed several reasons for depending *solely* on Jesus. Now let us turn to another related question. *How?* How do we go about the prosecution of our task to bring about a spiritual renaissance, all the while depending *solely* on Jesus and his teachings?

(See [Appendix 1.10](#) Learn, Live, and Teach the Way of Jesus)

1 Pray and Commune

Depending on Jesus begins with our inner life. We must consistently look to Jesus within for help and guidance both in our personal lives and in our ministry.

Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches.” This is a wonderful idea to meditate on. Remember also his teaching to “abide in me” and “live in my love.” He urges us to “commune freely with me” and to “maintain this

living spiritual connection with me.” (180:2.1/1945) These teachings, when followed, strengthen our inner life and our ministry. In my experience the idea that we can maintain a spiritual connection with Jesus is quite powerful.

2 The Spirit of Truth Is Our Partner and Guide

It should be clear that a revival of the actual teachings of Jesus that displaces the Christian teachings about Jesus is a gigantic task, and will not be easy. However, we may take solace and encouragement from the fact that our efforts to reveal Jesus will not be solitary. We are not undertaking this great work alone. The Spirit of Truth will be our full partner, in fact our guiding partner, in this great enterprise. The fact that Jesus’ Spirit of Truth was poured out upon us at Pentecost means that we are specially equipped to achieve our mission. In fact, our new revelation of Jesus’ life and teachings is really a part of the on going mission of the Spirit of Truth to reveal Jesus to each new generation of mortals on earth. Here is what the revelators tell us:

...the Spirit of Truth came to help the believer to witness to the realities of Jesus’ teachings and his life as he lived it in the flesh....
(194:2.6/2061; my bold)

This spirit was bestowed for the purpose of qualifying believers more effectively to preach the gospel of the kingdom... (194:3.5/2063; my bold)

We should always remember and be strengthened by the fact that our revelation of Jesus will be accomplished in partnership with his Spirit of

Truth working in and through us. We are not fighting alone, but rather in partnership with the God of the universe. Jesus' spirit will help and guide us. Our part is to maintain our spiritual connection with him and grow ever more receptive to his spiritual guidance.

(See [Appendix 1.11](#) Spiritual Weapons)

3 Focus on the Best of the Bible, Jesus Actual Life and Teachings

In seeking a revival of the actual teachings of Jesus we must keep in mind that the world knows Jesus only through the Bible and Christianity. As much as we might wish otherwise, the spiritual revival of Jesus and his actual teachings is not going to happen through a widespread acknowledgement of the truth of the Urantia Book. The worldwide acceptance of a 2000 page book that presents itself as a new revelation of truth will take time, and will really come to pass only after the present world crisis is behind us and we have entered the new spiritual renaissance. I believe that The Urantia Book will be the Bible of this oncoming new age; it will be like a third testament that will guide us in the more spiritual age that is to follow our present material age.

This means that we cannot justify our teaching of Jesus by reference to the Urantia Book. We must use the resources that are at hand, and our first and most basic resource is the record of the life and teachings of Jesus as found in the New Testament gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These records, sparse as they are in comparison to the Urantia Papers, are our most basic resource. Besides the New Testament gospels we have two other very important resources that will compliment our usage of the Biblical record. First, we have the Urantia Book to deepen and broaden our

understanding of Scripture, correct errors, and clear up misinterpretations. Second, we have Jesus' indwelling spirit to both guide us and aid our ministry, and to work in others, to aid their understanding and acceptance of our teaching.

4 A New Resource: *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*

Today I am happy to announce that there is another significant resource available to us. I am referring to this book, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, which I first published in 1991. It was created as a resource for those who seek to teach Jesus in the exclusive manner mandated by the revelators. I began work on this book in the early 80's. My goal was to produce an acceptable and trustworthy source of truth that I could give to others for guidance, comfort, and inspiration.

The basic idea for the book was to take all the true verses regarding Jesus from the Bible and put them together in their proper sequence based on the chronology of *The Urantia Book*. Erroneous passages, such as the virgin birth or walking on water, were simply left out. The goal was to produce a book of Jesus' life and teachings that would be fully acceptable to most Christians and at the same time be fully harmonious with the teachings of the *Urantia Book*.

My first use of the book was at graduation ceremonies at a small school I founded many years ago. At these ceremonies I presented each departing student with a copy of the book, and I am happy to report that it was always well received. More recently the book has been given at graduation ceremonies at a small seminary in Texas. Also a number of readers have reported that they have successfully used the book to teach

Sunday school. In India a group of some 30 pastors has used it for years to guide their ministry. It has even been translated into Telegu, their native language, for wider distribution. This group of Christian pastors uses both the *Bible* and *The Life and Teachings* in their services.

I do believe this book can be a valuable tool in our efforts to expand the revelation of Jesus. It provides us with a restatement of Jesus' life and teachings that is wholly constructed from Biblical passages, while at the same time it is free from the misinterpretations, errors, and false doctrines, generally associated with the Bible and Christianity. These words from the gospels are recognized and honored by Christians all over the world and by many others as well. In fact, the pure life and teachings of Jesus, freed from the surrounding Christian teachings and dogma, should also prove acceptable both to non-believers and to those of other faiths. The book itself is always well received as a gift, thereby providing an acceptable and trustworthy revelation of Jesus that we can leave with others for guidance, comfort, and inspiration. It is an easy way to transmit the true teachings of Jesus, *here and now*.

VI The Future

What does our future hold? What will be the results of our efforts? Following is an outline of how I believe our mission will unfold.

1 Our Target Audience is the Christian World

As we dedicate ourselves to this undertaking it is instructive to first consider our target audience, those who will be most receptive to our new

message of Jesus. Here we should clearly realize that our work must be directed primarily to the Christian world. After all it is with Christians that we have the greatest affinity and shared beliefs, both moral and spiritual. It is Christianity that recognizes and teaches Jesus as both the Son of God and the Son of man. It is also Christianity that stands in desperate need of new contact with Jesus and of deliverance from its error of emphasizing teachings *about* Jesus to the detriment of the actual teachings *of* Jesus. And crucially, it is the Christian church that contains within itself the actual kingdom of Jesus' teaching—the divine brotherhood of believers who have chosen to do the Father's will. Here is how the revelators describe the situation:

2 Jesus' Kingdom Presently Exists within the Christian Church

*Thus does the so-called **Christian church** become **the cocoon in which the kingdom of Jesus' concept now slumbers. The kingdom of the divine brotherhood is still alive and will eventually and certainly come forth** from this long submergence, just as surely as the butterfly eventually emerges as the beautiful unfolding of its less attractive creature of metamorphic development. (170:5.21/1866; my bold)*

We may learn much from these words; they contain three important insights: First, the revelators make clear that Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom *presently exists within the Christian church*. Second, they reveal that this divine brotherhood is in a passive state, slumbering and submerged within Christianity. And third, they prophesy that this brotherhood will eventually awaken and come forth in a higher and more advanced form.

3 Focus on Awakening Slumbering Christian Believers

This prophecy points to a special focus for our efforts. This slumbering brotherhood presently stands in need of awakening and *spiritual rebirth*. It is we who are called to provide a new revelation of Jesus that will awaken these sleeping Christians to higher levels of spiritual living. Bringing about the spiritual rebirth of Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom will be our first major step in the initiation of the spiritual renaissance. Here again is the revelators' call:

*The **call** to the adventure of building a new and transformed human society by means of **the spiritual rebirth of Jesus' brotherhood of the kingdom** should thrill all who believe in him.... (195:10.6/2084; my bold)*

4 Unified Christians Will Help Bring the New Revelation to the World

The Christian world is presently divided into many denominations, sects, and cults. The only hope of a unification of Christianity lies in a return to Jesus' original gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. This is also part of our work. By our exclusive focus on Jesus' actual teachings we will supply the foundation for the unification of the various Christian churches. And as this revival of Jesus and his original gospel comes to Christianity, many believers will then join our efforts to bring this gospel to the world at large. According to the Urantia Book this is the great hope of our world:

The great hope of Urantia lies in the possibility of a new revelation of Jesus with a new and enlarged presentation of his saving message which would spiritually unite in loving service the numerous families of his present day professed followers. (195:10.15/2086; my bold)

5 The Gospel of the Kingdom

What is this “saving message” that would spiritually unite the various Christian cults? It is Jesus’ original gospel of the kingdom, the good news that we are all sons and daughters of God, our loving heavenly Father, and brothers and sisters to one another. It is this simple gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man that has the power to unite Christianity.

The kingdom Jesus taught is the Father’s will dominant and transcendent in the heart of the believer. We enter the kingdom by faith in Jesus’ teaching that God is our Father, and then by choosing to do our Father’s will. Jesus showed us the way to life in the kingdom with his two great prayers, “your will be done,” and “Not my will but yours be done.”

In his first appearance after the crucifixion Jesus made clear to his assembled followers that, “*Sonship with God by faith* is still the saving truth of the gospel of the kingdom.” (193:0.4/2052; my italics) He emphasized that what the world needs most to know is that we are all sons and daughters of God and through faith we may actually realize and daily experience this great truth. In our work we must always teach others to see themselves as sons and daughters of God, our loving heavenly Father.

6 The Success of Our Mission

Will our efforts succeed? Consider these prophetic statements from the revelators that outline both the history and future evolution of the religion of Jesus on our planet:

*The teachings of Jesus, even though greatly modified, survived the mystery cults of their birthtime, the ignorance and superstition of the dark ages, and **are even now slowly triumphing over the materialism, mechanism, and secularism of the twentieth century.** (195:9.3/2082; my bold)*

*[The Christian] church is only the larval stage of the thwarted spiritual kingdom, which will carry it through this material age and over into a more spiritual dispensation where **the Master's teachings may enjoy a fuller opportunity for development.** (170:5.21/1866; my bold)*

The following quotes are two of my favorites. They foretell victory over the powerful forces of materialism and secularism, and a wonderful new spiritual age to follow:

*A new and fuller revelation of the religion of Jesus is **destined to conquer an empire of materialistic secularism** and to overthrow a world sway of mechanistic naturalism. (195:9.2/2082; my bold)*

*Urantia is now **quivering on the very brink** of one of its **most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment.** (195:9.2/2082; my bold)*

7 Let Us Go Forward

So, let us go forward! We have our marching orders and the encouraging vision of our final triumph. We are to bring a new revelation of Jesus to our world, one that will undo the teachings *about* Jesus and replace them with the actual teachings *of* Jesus. Our work will spark a glorious new spiritual renaissance. We will awaken slumbering Christian believers to a more inspiring vision of Jesus and a deeper, clearer understanding of his original gospel. These newly awakened Christians will join our efforts to expand the true religion of Jesus to both the Christian and the non-Christian worlds.

This revival of Jesus' original gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man will also help to unite the various Christian churches. And a more unified Christianity will contribute to the worldwide acceptance of Jesus and his actual teachings. The religion of Jesus will eventually triumph and become the dominant world religion in the new and more spiritual age we are now approaching.

The requirements to be an effective teacher-leader are great and not all will attain the high level of spirituality required. However each person may participate in their own way up to the level they choose. Just as there were various levels of devotion in Jesus' followers, so there will be various levels of participation by those who work for the new revelation. In large or small ways all may contribute to the coming triumph of the true religion of Jesus. For example, one easy and effective way to advance Jesus and his original teachings is to present *The Life and Teachings of Jesus* as a gift to family, friends, and to those in distress. I have done this for years with great success and genuine appreciation from those who received the book.

For those of you who truly feel this call to become a new teacher-leader, the first step is simple. You may enlist now by whole-heartedly affirming this choice to your Father within. Choose it, affirm it to God, and pray for his guidance and blessing.

Your initial training will focus on the first great requirement of becoming “spiritual men and women.” You must be born of the spirit and undergo the long spiritual ascent through childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and maturity, to that high estate wherein Jesus, through his spirit of truth, is enabled to live again in you. Essentially, this means you must consistently choose to do the Father’s will and increasingly show forth the fruits of his spirit in your daily life.

Remember, as new teacher-leaders we are called to both *teach* and *lead*. We teach by restating Jesus’ actual teachings and we lead by living those teachings. Just as “a picture is worth a thousand words,” it is our spirit-filled presence and our life example that will make our ministry truly effective.

So let *us* be the ones who fulfill the Urantia Book’s prophecy of the coming of new teacher-leaders. Let *us* be the ones who answer the call to bring to our “dark and confused world” a new revelation of Jesus and a bright new spiritual renaissance.

Preston Thomas

2017 Fellowship International conference

University of Denver

July 21, 2017

The New Teacher-Leaders

A Training Manual

Appendix 1

1.1 To Whom Is This Great Call Directed?

Let us consider this important and basic question: To whom is this great call directed? And what part should we, the reader-believers in the Urantia revelation, play in this great new revelation of Jesus?

In answering this question we must take into account the inescapable fact that this call appears *in the Urantia Book*. Does it not mean that this call is directed to us, the believers in the Urantia Revelation? After all, we are the ones who have been blessed to receive the new and greater revelation of Jesus' life and teachings. Are we meant to keep this new revelation of Jesus to ourselves or share it with the world?

As the new revelation of Jesus expands and transforms our world many others will join in this great effort, but *it will begin with us*. We must embrace the fact that we are the select few who have received the Fifth Epochal Revelation of Truth and we are called to bring this new revelation of Jesus to our world.

1.2 Our Present Situation: World Crisis and the Need for Spiritual Religion

This call for a new revelation of Jesus comes some 2000 years after the Master's bestowal on earth. It is instructive to ask, "Why now?" Why is this call directed to us now at this particular point in world history?

The short answer to this question is that our world is in crisis and the only effective answer to this crisis is a revival of Jesus' religion of personal spiritual experience. Spiritual progress, which will come through the world's more general acceptance the real religion of Jesus, is desperately needed to stabilize and guide us through the existential challenges we now face.

*Only the real religion of personal spiritual experience can function helpfully and creatively in **the present crisis of civilization**. (99:2.1/1087; my bold)*

This characterization of our world in crisis was originally written in the 1930's; the difficulties they describe have been verified by history and have only grown in magnitude since that time. Our modern world faces ever more serious problems with each passing year; they loom over us like the sword of Damocles, and threaten our very existence. And they require true spiritual religion for their solution.

The revelators identify many serious problems that modern man must address, but three stand out as the source of our greatest threats. Each of these challenges is fraught with danger and each reinforces the others, thus

adding to the severity of all. The first step in effectively combating these problems is to clearly identify them and their consequences.

Problem # 1 Lack of Spiritual Progress

The *greatest problem* our modern world faces is our lack of spiritual progress. We live in a time that demands personal spiritual religion and trustworthy moral guidance, but spiritual living is not progressing well on Urantia; in fact, it is not progressing at all. Genuine spiritual religion, the answer to our modern problems, has not only ceased to progress--it has become stagnate.

*In the face of unprecedented scientific achievement and mechanical development there is **spiritual stagnation** and philosophic chaos.*

(99:4.6/1090; my bold)

*...modern civilization is at a **standstill** in spiritual development.*

(81:6.25/909; my bold)

The Problems of Modern Christianity

Modern civilization is in crisis and desperately needs the genuine religion of personal spiritual experience. But Christianity, our best hope among the modern religions, is only a religion about Jesus; and in losing

sight of his original teachings it also lost the awesome potential and spiritual power of Jesus' actual religion. Moreover, Christianity itself has become secularized and lost much of its spiritual focus; it has been diverted from its purely spiritual mission into secular and social work. It suffers from many non-spiritual trends and is identified with the deficient moral standards of the social systems and industrial policies of Western civilization.

The majority of professed Christians of Western civilization are unwittingly actual secularists. (195:8.1/2081)

Paganized and socialized Christianity stands in need of new contact with the uncompromised teachings of Jesus; it languishes for lack of a new vision of the master's life on earth. (195:9.2/2082)

In the end Christianity has failed to bring forth an acceptable level of spiritual progress; it lacks the power to reverse the spiritual stagnation that besets our world.

Problem #2 Social Transition to a New Age

Unfortunately, our lack of spiritual progress is not the only serious problem we face. The advances brought about by the inventions of the Industrial Age and the spread of knowledge that characterizes our present Information Age have transformed civilization. We are in the midst of a historic *transition* from the old and passing order of society to a new social order. We face *a millennium of unceasing social change*. This unending

change in the social, economic, and political arenas brings with it significant challenges and dangers.

Here is how a Melchizedek describes our situation:

Mechanical inventions and the dissemination of knowledge are modifying civilization...(99:1.1/1086)

Urantia society can never hope to settle down as in past ages. The social ship has steamed out of the sheltered bays of established tradition and has begun its cruise upon the high seas of evolutionary destiny. (99:1.3/1086)

This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium. The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustments. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny. (99:1.1/1086)

Such times of significant social change as we are now experiencing are times of great uncertainty and unsettledness. Constant change in the social, economic, and political orders brings with it great potential for danger and disaster.

these dangerous times of transition from one phase of civilization to another, from one level of culture to another. (99:1.3/1086)

During the psychologically unsettled times of the twentieth century, amid the economic upheavals, the moral crosscurrents, and the sociologic

rip tides of the cyclonic transitions of a scientific era, thousands upon thousands of men and women have become humanly dislocated; they are anxious, restless, fearful, uncertain, and unsettled... (99:4.6/1090)

certain economic adjustments and social changes are imperative if cultural disaster is to be avoided (99:1.1/1086)

The Need for the Stability of Religion in Times of Change

What is most needed in times of great change and upheaval is the stability provided by sound morality and genuine spiritual religion. Our present transition problems are made far more dangerous by the fact that traditional morality and religion have been weakened by the advances of a scientific and materialistic age. Our lack of spiritual progress has left our world *without moral and spiritual anchorage* in a time of constant and accelerating change. This is a very dangerous situation. The revelators put great emphasis on this need for true religion and moral guidance to see us through these uncertain times of transition and unending change:

...as never before in the world's history [men and women] need the consolation and stabilization of sound religion. (99:4.6/1090; my bold)

Religion must function to prevent these new and intimate interassociations from becoming mutually retrogressive or even destructive. Religion must act as the cosmic salt which prevents the ferments of progression from destroying the cultural savor of civilization. (99:1.4/1087)

Personal Spiritual Religion as the Answer to the Crisis of Civilization

The modern problems resulting from spiritual stagnation combined with unending social transformation are more dangerous and complex than anything we have faced in the past. And the revelators make clear that nothing less than genuine spiritual religion and true morality will suffice for their final solution.

Only the real religion of personal spiritual experience can function helpfully and creatively in the present crisis of civilization. (99:2/1087)

Problem #3 Modern Secularism

The problems of spiritual non-progression and the dangers of unending social change are made more acute by our third great problem—the devastating effects of modern secularism. Since the Middle Ages society has become progressively secularized. This growing power of secularism was effective in overcoming the totalitarian control of life by the Catholic Church. It has also promoted material progress, American industry, tolerance, civil rights, and democratic ideals. However, as the revelators point out, the secular revolt against the totalitarian medieval church went too far, and led to a revolt against God himself. Below is a sampling of the revelators' depiction of the social and political problems we face as a result of modern secularism and its disregard for, or denial of, God. With the benefit of some 80 years of history we may clearly witness the truth of the

revelators 1930's characterization of our world as well as their astoundingly accurate prophetic insight into our future.

*But even after materialism and mechanism have been more or less vanquished, the devastating influence of twentieth-century **secularism will still blight the spiritual experience of millions of unsuspecting souls.*** (195:8.1/2081; my bold)

*For three hundred years Western thinking has been progressively secularized. **Religion has become more and more a nominal influence, largely a ritualistic exercise. The majority of professed Christians of Western civilization are unwittingly actual secularists.*** (195:8.3/2081; my bold)

*Twentieth-century secularism tends to affirm that man does not need God. But beware! this godless philosophy of human society **will lead only to unrest, animosity, unhappiness, war, and world-wide disaster.*** (195:8.5/2081; my bold)

*This secularistic human society, notwithstanding its unparalleled materialistic achievement, is **slowly disintegrating.*** (195:8.10/2082; my bold)

Thus, the revelators warn us that modern secularism is a powerful force for evil in our world. It blights the spiritual experience of millions and leaves the majority of professed Christian believers without a genuine spiritual religion. In its rejection of the totalitarian medieval church Western

society went too far and this has *brought about the rise of the totalitarian political state*. Denying God, replacing him with secular beliefs, has fostered the slow *disintegration of society*; in losing belief in God we also lose the glue holding us together. The revelators clearly warn us that turning away from God will result in distress, unhappiness, animosity, destruction, and war on a world-wide scale.

Summary of World Problems

In summary, the question has been posed, “Why is the call for new teachers of Jesus’ religion addressed to us now?” The answer to this question lies in present world conditions. The revelators make clear that the world is now in crisis and the religion of Jesus is needed to see us through. Three major elements of this crisis may be clearly identified: lack of spiritual progress, the dangers inherent in the unending social transformation, and the dire consequences of modern secularism. These elements mutually reinforce each other and add to the severity of the challenges we must overcome.

The religion of Jesus is required to combat and triumph over these modern threats to our civilization. And this is why the Urantia revelation is calling for new teachers of Jesus’ religion; they are needed now and in the coming years to secure the final victory over secularism, to stabilize and guide us through 1000 years of social transformation, and to set the world back on the path of genuine spiritual progress.

1.3 Four Step Progression to Spiritual Adulthood

The Urantia Book reveals a clear path to spiritual progression in Paper 170, Section 3:

Though Jesus taught that faith, simple childlike belief, is the key to the door of the kingdom, he also taught that, having entered the door, there are progressive steps of righteousness which every believing child must ascend in order to grow up to the full stature of the robust sons of God.
(170:3.2/1861)

Faith is the price you pay for entrance into the family of God; but forgiveness is the act of God which accepts your faith as the price of admission. And the reception of the forgiveness of God by a kingdom believer involves a definite and actual experience and consists in the following four steps, the kingdom steps of inner righteousness:

- 1. God's forgiveness is made actually available and is personally experienced by man just in so far as he forgives his fellows.*
- 2. Man will not truly forgive his fellows unless he loves them as himself.*
- 3. To thus love your neighbor as yourself is the highest ethics.*
- 4. Moral conduct, true righteousness, becomes, then, the natural result of such love. (170:3.3-4/1861-62)*

1.4 Jesus Lives Again in Us

This concept of Jesus living again in us is revealed in several places in the Urantia Book:

*As the indwelling spirit of the "new teacher," the Master has, since Pentecost, been able to **live his life anew in the experience of every truth-taught believer**. (194:3.1/2062; my bold)*

*...the Spirit of Truth came to help the believer to witness to the realities of Jesus' teachings and his life as he lived it in the flesh and as he now again **lives it anew and afresh in the individual believer** of each passing generation of the spirit-filled sons of God. (194:2.6/2061; my bold)*

1.5 Summary of the Spirituality Requirement

In summary the successful achievement of the spirituality requirement will involve our traversal of the following levels of spiritual progression:

- (1) First, we must choose to do the Father's will and thus be born of the spirit.
- (2) We must go forward throughout our lives increasingly giving forth the fruit of the spirit.
- (3) The fruit of the spirit include: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, temperance, meekness, patience, self-control, and self-mastery.
- (4) If we observe in our daily lives that we are increasingly showing forth the fruit of the spirit we may know that we are advancing spiritually.
- (5) Having been born of the spirit we must advance through infancy, childhood, teen years, to spiritual adulthood and maturity. This will take time.
- (6) Advancing to spiritual adulthood and maturity qualifies us to reach that exalted stage where Jesus is enabled to live again in us.
- (7) The most effective teacher-leaders will reach this stage and become living demonstrations of Jesus and his teachings to our world. They will be spirit-filled examples of Jesus' religion such that when others see them they can see Jesus.

1.6 The Need for Courage

The first thing we may note here is that we will be called upon to manifest courage. We are to “*dare* to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings.” This differs from the norm; most depend upon established religion for their religious teachings. We need courage because we are teaching a new religion, the personal religion of Jesus, in place of Christianity, the established religion about Jesus. In this sense we are going against the grain of history and tradition. This will require great courage as well as discretion and wisdom. Also, we live in a secular and materialistic age that tends to deny true religion, and courage is required to espouse a religious point of view in the face of widespread disbelief. So, as we go about our work bringing the world to a new understanding of Jesus, let us remember the Master’s exhortation to:

“Be of good courage.” (176:2.3/1914)

1.7 The Substitution Error

This undertaking is complicated by the fact that the actual religion of Jesus and his inspiring life example have become submerged and distorted within Christianity. The teachings of Jesus have been effectively displaced by Christian teachings about Jesus; and the social brotherhood of the Christian church has been substituted for Jesus' spiritual brotherhood of the kingdom. Thus the teachings of Jesus are now combined and confused in the minds both Christians and non-Christians with many other teachings, such as those of Paul and the apostles, as well as traditions, dogmas, and creeds of the early church leaders.

The following quotes from the Urantia Book help make clear the substitution error and the problems it causes for understanding and realizing Jesus actual kingdom teachings:

*... his early followers who went about to create a sociophilosophical system of belief regarding the fact of Michael's sojourn on earth. In a short time the teaching of this story about Jesus nearly **supplanted** the preaching of Jesus' gospel of the kingdom. In this way a historical religion **displaced** that teaching in which Jesus had blended man's highest moral ideas and spiritual ideals with man's most sublime hope for the future—eternal life. And that was the gospel of the kingdom. (170:5.19/1866; my bold)*

*The church, as a social outgrowth of the kingdom, would have been wholly natural and even desirable. The evil of the church was not its existence, but rather that it almost completely **supplanted** the Jesus concept of the kingdom. Paul's institutionalized church became a virtual **substitute***

for the kingdom of heaven which Jesus had proclaimed. (170:5.7/1864; my bold)

*The kingdom of Jesus' teaching, the spiritual ideal of individual righteousness and the concept of man's divine fellowship with God, became gradually **submerged** into the mystic conception of the person of Jesus as the Redeemer-Creator and spiritual head of a socialized religious community. In this way a formal and institutional church became the **substitute** for the individually spirit-led brotherhood of the kingdom. (170:5.9/1864; my bold)*

*The church was an inevitable and useful social result of Jesus' life and teachings; the tragedy consisted in the fact that this social reaction to the teachings of the kingdom so fully **displaced** the spiritual concept of the real kingdom as Jesus taught and lived it. (170:5.10/1864; my bold)*

*In this manner the kingdom became the concept of an age, the idea of a future visitation, and the ideal of the final redemption of the saints of the Most High. The early Christians (and all too many of the later ones) generally **lost sight of the Father-and-son idea** embodied in Jesus' teaching of the kingdom, while they **substituted** therefor the well-organized **social fellowship of the church**. The church thus became in the main a **social brotherhood** which effectively **displaced** Jesus' concept and ideal of a **spiritual brotherhood**. (170:5.15/1865; my bold)*

Paul and his contemporaries applied all of Jesus' spiritual implications regarding himself and the individual believer to the church as a

group of believers; and in doing this, they struck a deathblow to Jesus' concept of the divine kingdom in the heart of the individual believer.
(170:5.17/1865)

Thus it is clear that the historical Jesus of Galilee and his basic religious teaching, the gospel of the kingdom, has become submerged within Christianity. His kingdom teaching, that we are all children of the loving heavenly Father, is often neglected in favor of teachings of Paul and other Christian leaders.

In modern times there is great confusion because of the association of the teachings of Jesus with other Christian writers. Instead of clearly exalting Jesus' actual teachings above all others, New Testament and even Old Testament teachings tend to be treated with *equal validity*; thus the *incomparable teachings* of Jesus suffer from dilution with other teachings of lesser value. Christianity, through the substitution of its own teachings for those of Jesus, has become only a religion about Jesus, not the actual religion of Jesus. And in so doing it has lost much of its power for spiritual progress and moral guidance in a world of growing moral confusion and spiritual stagnation.

1.8 The Living Jesus

It is important for our understanding that we clearly recognize the *two distinct concepts* of “the living Jesus” presented by the revelators. Both are central to our new revelation of Jesus. We have already discussed one meaning, *Jesus living again in our hearts and minds*. This is “the living Jesus” that shines through us and enables us to provide a real life demonstration of living the way of Jesus. This reflecting of “the living Jesus” by the life we lead is an essential part of the revelators plan for the spiritual baptism and renewal of our planet.

However, there is another crucially important sense in which “the living Jesus” is central to our revelation. This is “the living Jesus” as contrasted with “the crucified Christ,” whose perfected life on earth provides our most valuable knowledge. In our study of Jesus we naturally tend to emphasize his teachings and give much less attention to his life. However his inspirational life story of demonstrating those teachings is of the highest value to our spiritual progression. Just as it is much easier to learn a new physical skill when we have a visual demonstration, so we may best learn the way of Jesus by studying his real life actions and reactions.

Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. (196:1.3/2091)

One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. (196:1.3/2090)

Mortals in all stages of spirituality and on all worlds may find in the personal life of Jesus that which will strengthen and inspire them as they progress from the lowest spirit levels up to the highest divine values, from the beginning to the end of all personal religious experience. (106:2.4/2092)

Jesus is our living example and high ideal of personal religious living. But Christianity with its emphasis on the atoning death of Jesus tends to overlook the importance and value of his perfected life. This change of focus from the death of Jesus, the crucified Christ, to the inspirational story of his valiant life struggle is part of the new revelation of Jesus that the teacher-leaders will bring to earth.

*Paul's Christianity made sure of the adoration of the divine Christ, but it almost wholly lost sight of the struggling and valiant human Jesus of Galilee, who, by **the valor of his personal religious faith** and the heroism of his indwelling Adjuster, ascended from the lowly levels of humanity to become one with divinity.... (196:2.4/2092; my bold)*

Our ideal and goal is clearly spelled out by the revelators. Christianity unintentionally evolved into a religion about Jesus and thereby displaced the actual religion of Jesus. Our work is to reverse the situation and replace the theologic religion about Jesus with the true and living religion of Jesus.

*Indeed, the social readjustments, the economic transformations, the moral rejuvenations, and the religious revisions of Christian civilization would be drastic and revolutionary **if the living religion of Jesus should***

suddenly supplant the theologic religion about Jesus. (196:1.2/2090)

Just as we are called to undo the religion *about* Jesus by bringing to the world a new revelation of the actual religion *of* Jesus so are we likewise called to shift the emphasis from his death on the cross to his ideal life of living and demonstrating the teachings. Thus, his actual example of advancing to the highest level of spiritual living all the while dealing with the ups and downs of life on our dark and confused world is often overlooked. Jesus must be restored to struggling humanity as “the ideal of personal religious living.” In our lives when we face difficult moral and spiritual choices we may ask these simple questions: “What would Jesus do?” or “What would Jesus have me do?”

*Does institutional Christianity fear the possible jeopardy, or even the overthrow, of traditional ecclesiastical authority if the Jesus of Galilee is reinstated in the minds and souls of mortal men as **the ideal of personal religious living**? (196.1.2/2090; my bold)*

*Surely the Christian fellowship of believers will not hesitate to make such adjustments of faith and of practices of living as will enable it to **“follow after” the Master** in the demonstration of his real life of religious devotion to the doing of his Father’s will and of consecration to the unselfish service of man. (196.1.2/2090; my bold)*

So important is the new and expanded vision of Jesus’ actual earth life, as contrasted with Christianity’s emphasis on his atoning death, that the revelators present it as *part of the mission of the Urantia Revelation*:

*What a transcendent service if, **through this revelation**, the Son of man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and **be presented as the living Jesus** to the church that bears his name, and to all other religions. (196.1.2/2090C; my bold)*

And we who seek to bring this new revelation of the living Jesus to the world may be encouraged by the fact that that the revelators testify that the time for this return to the living Jesus is *now*.

*The **time is ripe** to witness the figurative resurrection of the human Jesus from his burial tomb amidst the theological traditions and the religious dogmas of nineteen centuries. Jesus of Nazareth must not be longer sacrificed to even the splendid concept of the glorified Christ. (196.1.2/2090C)*

1.9 Summary of Reasons for the Exclusivity Requirement

We have identified three major reasons for the revelators' directive to "depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings."

First and most crucially we must distinguish Jesus' actual life and teachings from the general body of Christian thought. The world does not know Jesus apart from the records of Christianity, and Jesus' teaching are combined and confused with teachings that depart widely from his original gospel. Jesus' actual teachings have not received the focused attention and study they deserve, and have in fact become submerged within the overall Christian belief system. The teachings *about* Jesus have displaced the actual teachings *of* Jesus. So our first job is to clearly distinguish the teachings *of* Jesus from the teachings *about* Jesus.

A second obvious reason for the exclusive focus on Jesus is that his teachings are *incomparable*; they are the highest, best, and most truly divine teachings ever to appear on our planet. They are our touchstone to truth. And his actual life of living those teachings, demonstrating the teachings in his life reactions, is our most valuable guide to attaining a spirit-dominated life.

The third reason for depending solely on Jesus is that only through the actual religion of Jesus can we effectively respond to the present "crisis of civilization." Christianity has done its job bringing forward Jesus' teachings from their inception 2000 years ago to modern times. But what the world most needs now is the living Jesus and his saving gospel. Nothing less than the best will do. It is our only hope of surviving, and emerging victorious over the three great modern challenges that threaten our world. It is only the religion of Jesus that has the power to put us back on the track of spiritual progression, guide us through a millennium of unceasing social

transformation, and triumph over the materialistic secularism of modern times.

1.10 Learn, Live, and Teach the Way of Jesus

Depending solely on Jesus in our efforts to reveal his actual life and teachings involves three major steps: First, we must learn his teachings; second, we must choose and institute those teachings in our lives, we must *live* the teachings; and third, after learning and living the teachings we are truly qualified to teach the teachings. In contrast to secular religionists, our efforts must be centered on first living the teachings, and second on teaching the teachings. Right teaching is crucial, but it is the example of our lives that will prove most effective. Words are meaningful but direct contact with a true follower of Jesus is even more valuable. Our life, our character, our words and our deeds, all will provide a real life example of living the way of Jesus. This is the life to which the new teacher-leaders are called. And here again is that call:

*Christianity has indeed done a great service for this world, but what is now most needed is Jesus. **The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit-born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men.** (195:10.1/2084; my bold)*

1.11 Spiritual Weapons

We are strengthened and inspired by the realization that Jesus is our full partner, our guiding partner, in the new revelation. We may also be uplifted and encouraged by the special powers and spiritual weapons that were bestowed upon us by Jesus' Spirit of Truth at Pentecost:

*...the teachers of this new religion are **now equipped with spiritual weapons**. They are to go out to conquer the world with unfailing forgiveness, matchless good will, and abounding love. They are equipped to overcome evil with good, to vanquish hate by love, to destroy fear with a courageous and living faith in truth. (194.3.11/2064C)*

Pentecost endowed mortal man with the power to forgive personal injuries, to keep sweet in the midst of the gravest injustice, to remain unmoved in the face of appalling danger, and to challenge the evils of hate and anger by the fearless acts of love and forbearance. (194.3.12/2064D)

The task is great but so are our advantages. We have Jesus' spirit of a universe on our side. We have spiritual weapons that go beyond merely human strength, and enable us to reflect the strong and loving reactions of the Master. When we depend solely on Jesus, his Spirit of Truth will guide us, strengthen us with new spiritual power, and lead us forward in achieving the new revelation of Jesus.

The New Teacher-Leaders

A Training Manual

Appendix 2

Meditation in *The Urantia Book*

(Jesus-style meditation)

By Peter Holley

*[All **bold** words throughout indicate emphasis added by the author.]*

Words Change Their Meaning

The URANTIA Book tells us that Jesus meditated – a lot! What it doesn't say is that the word “meditation” has evolved away from its original meaning during the years following the revelation's final inditing in the mid 1930s. Such evolution of words was, of course, anticipated by the revelators, who tell us that the expression of religion “must be restated every time the dictionary of human language is revised” (1). Likewise the meaning of each affected teaching needs to be renewed when necessary.

The problem with changed words is that they can give us an altered picture if we aren't careful. The fact that Jesus used and taught meditation as a means to communicate with one's Thought Adjuster makes it vitally important for us to understand what is meant, if as *The URANTIA Book*

states on the last page, the “great challenge for modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Monitor that dwells within the human mind.”

A dictionary contemporary with the reception of the finalized Urantia Papers (as later originally published in *The URANTIA Book*) provides the following definition of the word “meditation”:

“... close or continued thought, the turning or revolving of a subject in the mind, serious contemplation; mental reflection; often specifically, thought devoted to religious subjects.” (2)

The type of “meditation” often associated with Eastern religions which requires an altered state of consciousness had not yet at that time migrated into the dictionary. It became a secondary definition of “meditation” sometime after Yogi Paramhansa Yogananda came to the West and brought about what has been called a religious revolution with the publication of his book *Autobiography of a Yogi* in 1946. Yet a look at a 1955 desk dictionary shows that the more intellectually passive type of meditation had not even appeared by *The URANTIA Book’s* publication date. Neither is it included in my 1982 “College” dictionary. Some modern dictionaries, however, now place it as the *preferred* definition. The following definition of the intransitive use of the verb is from an online dictionary (3):

meditate:

1. A. Buddhism & Hinduism. To train, calm, or empty the mind, often by achieving an altered state, as by focusing on a single object.
B. To engage in devotional contemplation, especially prayer.
2. To think or reflect, especially in a calm and deliberate manner.

This is not to say, however, that the Buddhism and Hinduism style of meditation was unknown in the middle thirties in the West, or that the word “meditation” was never used to denote it. It was, but it appears to have needed qualification. Apparently the Buddhism and Hinduism type is what the revelators meant when they referred to “mystic meditation” (see also “mystic trances,” “mystic communications,” “mystic experiences,” “mystic phenomena,” “mystic communion,” “mystic status,” and “mystical state”). The root of “mystic” is a Greek term meaning “belonging to secret rites” or “priest of mysteries,” and the word itself in the middle of the 1930s referred to things which were secret or obscure. The fact is that Buddhist and Hindu meditators at that time still kept their traditional techniques as highly guarded secrets, passing them on only to followers whom they considered to be qualified to receive them. And their meditative-techniques seemed even more “mystical” because they revolved around altered consciousness and brought about – to the Western way of thinking – extraordinary experiences. Some few Europeans living in the East had, however, submitted to yogis or to Buddhist masters and applied themselves to their esoteric teachings, and then, later, brought the practices back home with them.

One instance of such early, non-dictionary-defined use is found in a then-contemporary publication that is believed to have furnished the source for much of the Rodan material in *The URANTIA Book* (4). This example which is found in the book, *Issues of Life*, by Henry Nelson Wieman (5), demonstrates a need for the word “meditation” to be modified in order to indicate something akin to the Buddhism- and Hinduism-style technique. Wieman speaks of “a kind of worshipful, meditative waiting, in which one quietly hearkens until the call of the world and the deepest desire of his own

heart merge into a single demand. Waiting before the Highest,” he writes, “fosters inarticulate aspiration.” (6) Rather than simply calling it “meditation,” as many might today, Wieman had to coin the term “inarticulate aspiration” and link it to “a **kind of** worshipful, meditative waiting.”

But what is most illustrative by this example, however, is the fact that the revelators took Wieman’s passive “kind of worshipful, meditative waiting” and turned it into the dynamically active, reflective type of meditation in the above definitions, that is, the style of meditation that Jesus used and taught. The midwayer author of Part IV compared such *deep-thinking* meditators with “high-climbing souls” who reach a “mountaintop of intellectual thought” where they can “attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication.” (7). Elsewhere *The URANTIA Book* laments, however, that it is “sad to record that so few persons on Urantia take delight in cultivating these qualities of courageous and independent cosmic thinking.” (8)

Rodan

Rodan gives us what is perhaps the best view in *The URANTIA Book* of the type of meditation that Jesus both taught and practiced himself. Rodan had “become a disciple of Jesus through the teaching of one of Abner’s associates who had conducted a mission at Alexandria” (9). And Abner, of all of Jesus’ disciples, apparently had the best grasp on Jesus’ teachings. At least we are told that “during the later years of Abner and for some time thereafter, the believers at Philadelphia held more strictly to the **religion of Jesus, as he lived and taught**, than any other group on earth.” (10) In any

event the Rodan material certainly was not placed in *The URANTIA Book* to mislead us.

Rodan spoke of what Jesus “so consistently practices, and which he has so faithfully taught . . . the isolation of worshipful meditation . . . this habit of Jesus’ going off so frequently by himself to commune with the Father in heaven.” Jesus was, Rodan said, even as he spoke “out in the hills taking in power. . . .” (11)

Rodan went on to say that the “secret of all this problem is wrapped up in spiritual communion, in worship. From the human standpoint it is a question of combined meditation and relaxation. Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit; relaxation determines the capacity for spiritual receptivity. And this interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship.” (12) He observed that on “every mountaintop of intellectual thought are to be found relaxation for the mind, strength for the soul, and communion for the spirit.” And he indicated how the lower, egoistic thinking is to be overcome by higher thoughts:

“From such vantage points of high living, man is able to transcend the material irritations of the lower levels of thinking – worry, jealousy, envy, revenge, and the pride of immature personality. These high-climbing souls deliver themselves from a multitude of the crosscurrent conflicts of the trifles of living, thus becoming free to attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication.” (13)

The Greek philosopher-turned-disciple added:

“When these experiences are frequently repeated, they crystallize into habits, strength-giving and worshipful habits, and such habits eventually formulate themselves into a spiritual character, and such a character is finally recognized by one’s fellows as a mature personality. These practices are difficult and time-consuming at first, but when they become habitual, they are at once restful and timesaving.” (14)

Notice that for Rodan the relaxation associated with Jesus’ dynamic, thinking type of meditation is a *result* of having reached the “mountaintop of intellectual thought” and “spiritual communion” rather than being part of the *means* to attain it – that is, a more or less stand-alone part of the *technique* – as it is in Hinduism and Buddhism (and in *auto-hypnosis*).

Rodan’s most profound statement is, “***Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit.***” In other words, spirit is contacted by the actively thinking mind. And this is entirely consistent with what we are taught elsewhere in *The URANTIA Book* about the nature of the Thought Adjusters *vis a vis* the mortal mind.

Thought Adjuster

We are told quite clearly and in a number of ways that the Thought Adjusters dwell and interact within “the **thinking centers** of the individual’s mind” (15):

“If one is disposed to recognize a theoretical subconscious mind as a practical working hypothesis in the otherwise unified intellectual life, then, to be consistent, one should postulate a similar and corresponding **realm of ascending intellectual activity** as the superconscious level, the zone of

immediate contact with the indwelling spirit entity, the Thought Adjuster.”(16)

“Human consciousness rests gently upon the electrochemical mechanism below and delicately touches the spirit-morontia energy system above. Of neither of these two systems is the human being ever completely conscious in his mortal life; therefore must he work in mind, of which he is conscious.”(17)

Notice how closely this idea of “ascending intellectual activity” parallels Rodan’s image of meditation being intellectual mountain climbing. Notice also that it is not the lower area of consciousness which is involved, but the upper “spirit-morontia energy system.”

“The chief difficulty you experience in contacting with your Adjusters consists in [your] very inherent material nature. *So few mortals are real thinkers*; you do not spiritually develop and discipline your minds to the point of favorable liaison with the divine Adjusters. The ear of the human mind is almost deaf to the spiritual pleas which the Adjuster translates from the manifold messages of the universal broadcasts of love proceeding from the Father of mercies. The Adjuster finds it almost impossible to register these inspiring spirit leadings in an animal mind so completely dominated by the chemical and electrical forces inherent in your physical natures”(18)

Here the assumption is that *thinking* both contacts and “hears” the Thought Adjuster, since nothing is being said about passive “listening.” The Thought Adjusters do not speak *to* our minds but must use our minds to speak for them. They do this with our own thinking processes:

“The Thought Adjuster has no special mechanism through which to gain self-expression; there is no mystic religious faculty for the reception or expression of religious emotions. These experiences are made available through the naturally ordained mechanism of mortal mind. And therein lies one explanation of the Adjuster’s difficulty in engaging in direct communication with the material mind of its constant indwelling.

“The divine spirit makes contact with mortal man, not by feelings or emotions, but in the realm of the **highest and most spiritualized thinking.**”
(19)

[The Thought Adjuster] “is the higher and truly internal spiritual **stimulus of thought**” (20)

“The Adjuster is not trying to control your thinking, as such, but rather to spiritualize it, to eternalize it. Neither angels nor Adjusters are devoted directly to influencing human thought; that is your exclusive personality prerogative. The Adjusters are dedicated to improving, modifying, adjusting, and co-ordinating your **thinking processes**” (21)

The divine indwellers adjust our thinking until it speaks for them, until the content of our thoughts coincides with higher truth and their translations of the universal broadcasts from the Paradise Father. What we experience in the perfecting of Jesus-style meditation is at the same time their thinking and our own! Also, Rodan likewise spoke of the need for the mental discipline found in the frequent repetition of the practice of worshipful, dynamic-thinking-coupled-with-relaxation, that is, Jesus-style meditation, in order to *develop* the mind for spiritual communication.

It is plain to see that in Jesus-style meditation the “worry, jealousy, envy, revenge, and the pride of immature personality” of which Rodan spoke are to be to be **harnessed and used by us rather than being emptied from the mind at the start** as both the yogis and the Buddhists do. It is we who must take our thoughts – as we find them – and aim them Godward. Jesus said:

“Be not constantly overanxious about your common needs. Be not apprehensive concerning the problems of your earthly existence, but in all these things by prayer and supplication, with the spirit of sincere thanksgiving, let your needs be spread out before your Father who is in heaven.” (22)

At the same time Jesus exhorted “his believers to employ prayer as a means of leading up through thanksgiving to true worship” (23). And Rodan speaking of these same things wrapped up meditation, relaxation, and spiritual communion into the same ball of wax as constituting “worship” or “worshipful meditation.” So from this we see that there is really only a difference in degree between all of this God-directed thought: prayer, cosmic thinking, thanksgiving, meditation, and worship. They are like different members of a family rather than different species. For instance, in some of its aspects meditation differs little from prayer, and in others it is the same as worship. It may, likewise, be productive of great outpourings of thanksgiving.

Prayer, *The URANTIA Book* reveals, is the only “technique whereby every man, regardless of all other mortal accomplishments, can so effectively and immediately approach the threshold of that realm wherein he can communicate with his Maker, where the creature contacts with the reality of the Creator, with the indwelling Thought Adjuster.” (24) Also,

“Prayer will lead the mortals of earth up to the communion of true worship.” (25) But “meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit,” and the “moment the element of self-interest intrudes upon worship, that instant devotion translates from worship to prayer” (26) – the same is no doubt true concerning the higher and lower aspects of Jesus-style meditation. Its lower aspect is commonly a quest for knowledge and understanding of a subject or problem, a factual elucidation. The higher aspect – transcendent, worshipful meditation – is a type of self-forgetful cosmic thinking, and it is here that knowledge and understanding, or spiritual elucidation, is likely to be found.

“Thinking surrenders to wisdom, and wisdom is lost in enlightened and reflective worship.” (27) – “wisdom [is] meditative and experiential thinking” (28); “worship is self-forgetting – superthinking.” (29)

Or restated:

“Ordinary thinking ascends to meditative and experiential thinking, and it, in turn, transcends into enlightened and reflective worship.”

And again:

“Why do you not aid the Adjuster in the task of showing you the spiritual counterpart of all these strenuous material efforts? Why do you not allow the Adjuster to strengthen you with the spiritual truths of cosmic power while you wrestle with the temporal difficulties of creature existence? Why do you not encourage the heavenly helper to cheer you with the clear vision of the eternal outlook of universal life as you gaze in perplexity at the problems of the passing hour? Why do you refuse to be enlightened and inspired by the universe viewpoint while you toil amidst the handicaps of time and flounder in the maze of uncertainties which beset your mortal life

journey? Why not allow the Adjuster to **spiritualize your thinking**, even though your feet must tread the material paths of earthly endeavor?” (30)

It was in this sense that Jesus told Peter:

“Let experience teach you the value of **meditation** and the power of intelligent reflection.” (31).

Also Jesus-style spiritual meditation is an essential factor of spiritual growth:

“Habits which favor religious growth embrace cultivated sensitivity to divine values, recognition of religious living in others, **reflective meditation on cosmic meanings**, worshipful problem solving, sharing one’s spiritual life with one’s fellows, avoidance of selfishness, refusal to presume on divine mercy, living as in the presence of God” (32)

Jesus Meditating

In almost every instance of examples in *The URANTIA Book* wherein Jesus meditated, the context clearly shows that he was engaged in thought (see list below). In those few in which it is not abundantly apparent it may be assumed that he was since nowhere is any contrary notion maintained. In fact in *The URANTIA Book* the meditative doctrine of “thinking nothing” (along with “seeing” and “doing” nothing), which was derived from the teaching by Lao T’su on “nonresistance and the distinction which he made between action and coercion” (and which can still be found in the teachings of Buddhism) is called “perverted” by the revelators (33). And cultivation of the “mystical state” (or “trancelike state of visionary consciousness”) which is described of consisting in part of a “comparatively passive intellect” – we are warned – should be in all circumstances shunned as a means of religious

experience because it “gravitates consciousness toward the subconscious rather than in the direction of the zone of spiritual contact” (34), that is, toward the lower, animal level rather than the upper, morontia-spiritual level of consciousness. Whether or not this warning speaks directly to the meditation practices of Hindus and Buddhists is problematical (but see below). In the final analysis it is up to the devotees of the more passive intellect styles of meditation to make such discernments for themselves. Personally, as a follower of Jesus, I prefer to align my meditation practices with those of my Master and Elder Brother, Jesus of Nazareth:

1. As early as his eleventh year Jesus engaged in “**profound meditation** and serious contemplation.” The content of this mental discipline, we are told, was his “**thinking** about how he was to carry out his obligations to his family and at the same time be obedient to the call of his mission to the world.” (35)

2. When Jesus was thirteen he visited the temple in Jerusalem for the first time. When he first saw the throngs gathered together for Passover, he “**meditated deeply** on how these Jews had assembled here from the uttermost parts of the known world.” (36) During this visit his family stayed at Bethany and he spent “much of the time alone in the garden **meditating.**” (37) And we are told that at least some of this meditation in the garden “was concerned with the **contemplation of weighty problems.**” (38)

3. In Jesus fourteenth year “he made frequent trips to the top of the hill to the northwest of Nazareth for prayer and **meditation.**” During this time he “would gaze upon Megiddo and **recall the story** (thought) of the Egyptian army winning its first great victory in Asia; and how, later on, another such army defeated the Judean king Josiah. Not far away he could

look upon Taanach, where Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera. In the distance he could view the hills of Dothan, where he had been taught Joseph's brethren sold him into Egyptian slavery. He then would shift his gaze over to Ebal and Gerizim and **recount to himself** (thought) the traditions of Abraham, Jacob, and Abimelech. And thus he recalled and **turned over in his mind** (thought) the historic and traditional events of his father Joseph's people." (39) Notice that the revelators used almost the *precise mid-1930s definition of "meditation"*: "the turning or revolving of a subject in the mind"!

4. When Jesus was fifteen, we are told that his "**profound periods of meditation**, his frequent journeys to the hilltop for prayer, and the many strange ideas which Jesus advanced from time to time, thoroughly alarmed his mother." (40) And again this is directly related to his thinking, although this is not quite as clear as in some other examples:

"Jesus was learning not to speak of all his **thoughts**, not to present all his **ideas** to the world, not even to his own mother. From this year on, Jesus' disclosures about **what was going on in his mind** steadily diminished; that is, he talked less about those things which an average person could not grasp, and which would lead to his being regarded as peculiar or different from ordinary folks." (41)

5. At the age of twenty-five, Jesus' "**seasons of deep meditation** were often broken into by Ruth and her playmates." And we are informed that the content of this deep meditation was, again, the "contemplation of his future work for the world and the universe" (42)

6. Immediately after Jesus' baptism he went into the hills for forty days because "he desired to be away for a season of quiet **meditation so that he**

could think out the plans and decide upon the procedures for the prosecution of his public labors in behalf of this world and for all other worlds in his local universe.” (43) During this period of meditation he went without food for two days because “he was so engrossed with his **thinking** that he forgot all about eating” (44). And the “results of this momentous season of **meditation** demonstrated conclusively that the divine mind has triumphantly and spiritually dominated the human intellect.” (45). And it should likewise be the goal of our own Jesus-style meditation to identify ourselves more and more with our “divine mind,” the mind of our Thought Adjuster, accepting its spiritualized version of our thoughts as being our own!

7. Sometime later Jesus spent a whole “night of **meditation**” on the shore of the Sea of Galilee “**thinking, thinking** until the dawn of the next day” (46).

8. Whether Jesus’ season of meditation was over a month in length, overnight, or compressed into a fleeting moment, he was engaged in thinking: “And when Jesus had bowed his head a moment in silent **meditation**, he suddenly spoke, ‘Return to your home; your son will live.’ . . . this was not a miracle of curing physical disease. It was merely a case of **preknowledge** concerning the course of natural law, just such **knowledge** as Jesus frequently resorted to subsequent to his baptism.” (47) Knowledge, of course, is indivisible from the thoughts and concepts which contain and express it.

9. And later we see Jesus sitting in an old boat where he “**meditated** on the next move to be made in the work of extending the kingdom.” (48) Again, look at the content of his “meditation.” It clearly implies thought.

We can be assured that in all of these instances of meditation (at least after he was grown) Jesus was engaged in transcendent thinking in his higher mind and/or with direct or indirect communication with his Thought Adjuster, or as Rodan put it, his “consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication.” Jesus meditated and came away with knowledge of the Father’s will. And so can we all! That is Jesus-style meditation’s most obvious purpose.

Hearing God

I have pointed out that it must not be assumed that thoughtful meditation is a one-way street. We “hear” our Thought Adjuster’s communication within our minds by the very higher-level thoughts with which we access the area of mind in which the Monitor indwells. God speaks to us with what to all intents and purposes are our own thoughts:

“You are quite incapable of distinguishing the product of your own material intellect from that of the conjoint activities of your soul and the Adjuster.” (49)

Here is the way that Jesus’ Thought Adjuster communicated with him when he was thirteen:

“It was about the middle of February that Jesus became humanly assured that he was destined to perform a mission on earth for the enlightenment of man and the revelation of God. Momentous decisions, coupled with far-reaching plans, were formulating in the mind of this youth, who was, to outward appearances, an average Jewish lad of Nazareth. The intelligent life of all Nebadon looked on with fascination and amazement as

all this began to unfold in the thinking and acting of the now adolescent carpenter's son." (50)

We are also told that "worship may be compared to the act of tuning in the soul to catch the universe broadcasts of the infinite spirit of the Universal Father" (51), and worship, as we have seen from Rodan, is part of the same ball of wax as meditation. Worship is defined in one place in *The URANTIA Book* as "superthinking," that is, egoless or "self forgetful" thought. And again reflecting what happens on Rodan's "mountaintop of intellectual thought," it is "effortless attention, true and ideal soul rest, a form of restful spiritual exertion." (52)

What happens is that somewhere along the line during worshipful meditation (after sufficient practice and personal growth – the need for this cannot be stressed enough) our own thought-producing effort more or less ceases and that of the Adjuster mind takes over and directs our thinking, providing a spiritualized counterpart. But as we have seen above, what we perceive in our mind cannot be in any way distinguished from our own thinking. It is in fact our own thinking! There is no real difference in this sense between what happens in worshipful meditation and what takes place during worship:

"The worship experience consists in the sublime attempt of the betrothed Adjuster to communicate to the divine Father **the inexpressible longings and the unutterable aspirations of the human soul** – the conjoint creation of the God-seeking mortal mind and the God-revealing immortal Adjuster. Worship is, therefore, the act of the material mind's assenting to the attempt of its spiritualizing self, under the guidance of the associated spirit, to communicate with God as a faith son of the Universal

Father. The mortal mind consents to worship; the immortal soul craves and initiates worship; the **divine Adjuster presence conducts such worship** in behalf of the mortal mind and the evolving immortal soul. True worship, in the last analysis, becomes an experience realized on four cosmic levels: the **intellectual**, the morontial, the spiritual, and the personal – the consciousness of mind, soul, and spirit, and their unification in personality.” (53)

The distinction between prayer, worship, and Jesus-style meditation seems to be quite fine:

“Subsequent to the baptism of Jesus and the forty days in the Perea hills, it is hardly proper to speak of these seasons of communion with his Father as prayer, nor is it consistent to speak of Jesus as worshiping, but it is altogether correct to allude to these seasons as personal **communion with his Father.**” (54)

And that was precisely how Rodan defined the meditation which Jesus “so consistently practices, and which he has so faithfully taught . . . the isolation of **worshipful meditation** . . . this habit of Jesus’ going off so frequently by himself to **commune with the Father** in heaven.”

“**Silent Receptivity**”

It is true indeed that “Jesus taught his followers that, when they had made their prayers to the Father, they should remain for a time in **silent receptivity** to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul.” (55) But in determining its relationship to meditation we should first of all note that this concerns a communication to the *soul* rather

than to the conscious mind; the latter which is, of course, the goal of meditation.

Next, we should look at the broader context wherein Jesus taught this to his followers. At that time they hardly knew how to pray, let alone worship or meditate. And at that time Jesus also “deplored that **so little of the spirit of thanksgiving** was to be found in the prayers and worship of his followers.” (56) A year earlier, in January of A.D. 27, Jesus had ordained his apostles. Six months later, in June, after Jesus teachings to them on the nature of prayer and worship, we are told that ‘the apostles grasped only a few of his teachings’ (57). And around September of that same year, his apostles were still asking him for “a model prayer which they could teach the new disciples” (58).

Three months later, in January of A.D. 28 – one year after their apostleship had begun – the group which by this time also contained twelve of John the Baptist’s former disciples, set out on their first preaching tour of Galilee. When they got to Jotapata, we are told that Nathaniel expressed confusion “in his mind about the Master’s teachings about prayer’ (59). In response to his confusion Jesus gave the long and involved teaching in which the time of silent receptivity is to be found.

Jesus’ “followers” to whom these teachings were directed were comprised of both his own apostles as well as those who had been with John The Baptist, plus a number of “disciples” who had attached themselves to the group and who were being instructed at least partially by the various apostles, who, themselves, for the first time Jesus permitted “to preach without restraint” (60). The unavoidable conclusion, when looked at in its full context, is that this time of silent receptivity which was to follow prayer

was strictly meant for people who did not really understand what prayer and worship (or thanksgiving) should actually be. We are told that not many of his *apostles* “could fully encompass his teaching” on prayer and worship at Jotapata (61), so likely the whole body of “*followers*” to whom the silent receptivity teaching had been directed, understood even less!

The statement in *The URANTIA Book* which says .” ... they should remain for a time in **silent receptivity** to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul,” is followed immediately by:

“The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in an attitude of true worship. We worship God by the aid of the Father’s indwelling spirit and by the illumination of the human mind through the ministry of truth.” (62)

Thus the statement does not stand alone but must be viewed in its relationship to worship, and by extension, to worshipful, Jesus-style meditation. And since such instruction requiring silent receptivity is given nowhere else in the entirety of *The URANTIA Book’s* teachings, it most reasonably represents merely a stop-gap measure which Jesus designed to hold his followers in place after they had either *recited* their prayers or made totally inadequate ones. By allowing time for the Thought Adjuster to make some sort of registration on their soul – if only of their sincere motive to pray – unconscious growth would follow and they would in this manner move forward toward the actual techniques of “ethical prayer” (63), thanksgiving, worship and worshipful meditation whereby contact with their Thought Adjuster might eventually be made. In any event there is nothing to

indicate that “silent receptivity” was meant to be either a type of or a part of meditation.

Dangers

The “great challenge” to communicate with one’s Thought Adjuster, which I referred to at the beginning, demands a “**well balanced and sane** effort to advance the borders of self-consciousness out through the dim realms of embryonic soul consciousness in a wholehearted effort to reach the borderland of spirit consciousness – contact with the divine presence.” Such balance and sanity is of primary importance:

“When the development of the intellectual nature proceeds faster than that of the spiritual, such a situation renders communication with the Thought Adjuster both difficult and dangerous. Likewise, overspiritual development tends to produce a fanatical and perverted interpretation of the spirit leadings of the divine indweller. Lack of spiritual capacity makes it very difficult to transmit to such a material intellect the spiritual truths resident in the higher superconsciousness. It is to the mind of perfect poise, housed in a body of clean habits, stabilized neural energies, and balanced chemical function – **when the physical, mental, and spiritual powers are in triune harmony of development** – that a maximum of light and truth can be imparted with a minimum of temporal danger or risk to the real welfare of such a being.” (64)

“Even when they do find it possible to flash a gleam of new truth to the evolving mortal soul, this spiritual revelation often so blinds the creature as to precipitate a **convulsion of fanaticism** or to initiate some other intellectual upheaval which results disastrously. Many a new religion and

strange “ism” has arisen from the **aborted, imperfect, misunderstood, and garbled communications** of the Thought Adjusters.” (65)

Speaking of the “high-climbing souls” who are able by Jesus-style meditation to “attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication,” Rodan adds:

“But the life purpose must be jealously guarded from the temptation to seek for **easy and transient attainment**; likewise must it be so fostered as to become immune to the **disastrous threats of fanaticism.**”

Mainly the dangers to be encountered during all attempts to achieve contact with the Thought Adjuster fall into one or both of two distinct categories: “subconscious delusions or superconscious illusions” (66). And this is because the unspiritualized or partially-spiritualized creative imagination is such a powerful force in the mind of individuals. Compare the following:

“Since this inner life of man is truly creative, there rests upon each person the responsibility of choosing as to whether this creativity shall be **spontaneous and wholly haphazard or controlled, directed, and constructive.** How can a creative imagination produce worthy children when the stage whereon it functions is already preoccupied by prejudice, hate, fears, resentments, revenge, and bigotries?” (67)

“Supreme and self-acting Adjusters are often able to contribute factors of spiritual import to the human mind when it flows freely in the **liberated but controlled channels of creative imagination.**” (68)

“Most of the spectacular phenomena associated with so-called religious conversions are entirely psychologic in nature, but now and then there do

occur experiences which are also spiritual in origin. When the mental mobilization is absolutely total on any level of the psychic upreach toward spirit attainment, when there exists perfection of the human motivation of loyalties to the divine idea, then there very often occurs a sudden down-grasp of the indwelling spirit to synchronize with the concentrated and consecrated purpose of the superconscious mind of the believing mortal. . . . To the extent that such psychic mobilization is partial, and in so far as such human-loyalty motivation is incomplete, to that extent will the experience of conversion be a **blended intellectual, emotional, and spiritual reality.**” (69)

“While their mortal hosts are asleep, the Adjusters try to register their creations in the higher levels of the material mind, and some of your **grotesque dreams** indicate their failure to make efficient contact. The absurdities of dream life not only testify to pressure of unexpressed emotions but also bear witness to the **horrible distortion** of the representations of the spiritual concepts presented by the Adjusters. Your own **passions, urges, and other innate tendencies translate themselves into the picture and substitute their unexpressed desires for the divine messages** which the indwellers are endeavoring to put into the psychic records during unconscious sleep.” (70)

“The **great danger** in all these psychic speculations is that visions and other so-called mystic experiences, along with extraordinary dreams, may be regarded as divine communications to the human mind.” (71)

As an illustration of the power of the creative imagination; children at their “dawn of creative imagination . . . evince a tendency to converse with imaginary companions” (72), and in adults this same creative imagination

has been responsible for the projection of gods which “are figments of the imagination, illusions of mortal mind, distortions of false logic, and the self-deceptive idols of those who create them.” (73) This applies not only to cultural gods, but to our private perceptions of the divine as well.

“The philosophic elimination of religious fear and the steady progress of science add greatly to the mortality of false gods; and even though these casualties of man-made deities may momentarily befog the spiritual vision, they eventually destroy that ignorance and superstition which so long obscured the living God of eternal love.” (74)

Unfortunately *The URANTIA Book* readers’ private perception of the divine is seen in terms not only of the Paradise Father, but as one’s Thought Adjuster. That is, the mind can easily create, as it were, a *false* thought Adjuster:

“But a human being would do better to err in rejecting an Adjuster’s expression through believing it to be a purely human experience than to **blunder into exalting a reaction of the mortal mind to the sphere of divine dignity**. . . . In varying degrees and increasingly as you ascend the psychic circles, sometimes directly, but more often indirectly, you do communicate with your Adjusters. But it is dangerous to entertain the idea that every new concept originating in the human mind is the dictation of the Adjuster. More often, in beings of your order, **that which you accept as the Adjuster’s voice is in reality the emanation of your own intellect**. This is **dangerous ground**, and every human being must settle these problems for himself in accordance with his natural human wisdom and superhuman insight.” (75)

“Mortal man has a spirit nucleus. The mind is a personal-energy system existing around a divine spirit nucleus and functioning in a material environment. Such a living relationship of personal mind and spirit constitutes the universe potential of eternal personality. Real trouble, lasting disappointment, serious defeat, or inescapable death can come only after **self-concepts presume fully to displace the governing power of the central spirit nucleus**, thereby disrupting the cosmic scheme of personality identity.” (76)

Whatever material that has been stored in the unconscious memory – including the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* – can become the costume wherein the creative imagination dresses up its hallucinatory subconscious delusions and superconscious illusions:

“Altogether too much of the uprush of the **memories of the unconscious levels** of the human mind has been mistaken for divine revelations and spirit leadings,” (77)

“Certain abrupt presentations of thoughts, conclusions, and other pictures of mind are sometimes the direct or indirect work of the Adjuster; but far more often they are the **sudden emergence into consciousness of ideas which have been grouping themselves together in the submerged mental levels**, natural and everyday occurrences of normal and ordinary psychic function inherent in the circuits of the evolving animal mind.” (78)

“The human mind may perform in response to so-called inspiration when it is sensitive either to the **uprisings of the subconscious** or to the stimulus of the superconscious. In either case it appears to the individual that such augmentations of the content of consciousness are **more or less foreign.**” (79)

If these communications with the false gods created by our minds contain the highest truths which we have ever encountered (for instance the teachings in the *Urantia Papers*) they may prove to be altogether too believable. When subconscious delusions or superconscious illusions displace truth and are raised to the sphere of divine dignity and are believed to be genuine spiritual communications, fanaticism – or worse – is the likely outcome. It appears that it was for these reasons that the warnings in *The URANTIA Book* were given to us.

In apparent response to these very same illusionary/delusionary dangers, internationally recognized expert on herbal healing, reciprocal mind-body influence, and “Integrative Medicine,” physician-author Andrew T. Weil, writes: “Zen masters warn their meditating students to ignore makyo-sensory distortions that often take the form of visions seen by mystics in rapturous states or hallucinations similar to those of schizophrenics” (80). And the Hindu *Upanishads* “prescribe external and internal purity, continence, non-stealing, truthfulness, not injuring any being either by words or deeds, [and] similar moral-ethical basic values to achieve the state of samadhi (e.g., “a state of altered consciousness, the state to which a person reaches or is expected to reach through spiritual disciplines of meditation and Yoga.”) (81).”

Questioned privately, senior-certified Iyengar yoga instructor Sam Dworkis, told me (82):

“After due deliberation, my general response to your second email has to be simply based upon one sentence, to wit: ‘Under no circumstances should the trancelike state of visionary consciousness be cultivated as a religious experience.’

“When I was younger and when I was living a much more protected lifestyle, I did experiment with the more esoteric concepts of yoga. However now that I am older and living more conventionally, I do not enter into esoteric practices either in personal practice or teaching. Because my “work” is now predicated upon “maximizing potential and minimizing liability,” and as a Westerner living in a Western body, I must reject using yoga to push into potentially dangerous territory.

“That is not to say I believe using yoga to alter consciousness is *per se* wrong, but I instead look at its implications as a normal westerner living a relatively normal western existence.

“That being said, if I were again living within the environs of in a “protected ashram,” eating strictly vegetarian, and limiting the amount of external stimulation entering my nervous system, I might be inclined to push the boundaries of “visionary consciousness.” However, since I am not living in such a protected environment, it is my considered opinion that it is dangerous to push such edges. Not wrong, but dangerous.”

The URANTIA Book appears to warn us away from this particular altered state of consciousness altogether:

“Under no circumstances should the trancelike state of visionary consciousness be cultivated as a religious experience.

“The characteristics of the mystical state are diffusion of consciousness with vivid islands of focal attention operating on a comparatively passive intellect. All of this gravitates consciousness toward the subconscious rather than in the direction of the zone of spiritual contact, the superconscious.

Many mystics have carried their mental dissociation to the level of abnormal mental manifestations.” (83)

And it immediately follows that negative warning with positive instruction on what we *should do* instead:

“The more healthful attitude of spiritual **meditation** is to be found in reflective worship and in the prayer of thanksgiving.” (84)

That is, the more healthful attitude is to be found in *Jesus-style meditation!*

Mysticism

For many readers, meditation in *The URANTIA Book* cannot be considered apart from mysticism. In spite of the many places that variations of the word “mystical” show up in its teachings in a less than favorable light, the revelators clearly tell us that mysticism, “as the technique of the cultivation of the consciousness of the presence of God, is altogether praiseworthy” (85). How is this apparent contradiction to be reconciled?

Notice that the passage speaks of only one special form of mysticism, that is, “the technique of the cultivation of the consciousness of the presence of God.” That is entirely different from what this article has been discussing, which is primarily meditation as a technique of *communicating* with one’s Thought Adjuster (one’s indwelling fragment of God). It is quite possible to communicate with God without a “consciousness of the presence of God,” and the act of experiencing that presence may be outside of the realm of communication *per se*. God communicates with us in our thinking processes, but we *feel* or *sense* God’s presence.

Jesus taught that “God is love” (86), and we are told that a “human being can actually feel – literally experience – the full and undiminished impact of such an infinite Father’s LOVE.” (87) In fact we are informed that such an experience may encompass the acme of religious evolution:

“Evolutionary religion is born of a simple and all-powerful fear, the fear which surges through the human mind when confronted with the unknown, the inexplicable, and the incomprehensible. **Religion eventually achieves the profoundly simple realization of an all-powerful love, the love which sweeps irresistibly through the human soul when awakened to the conception of the limitless affection of the Universal Father for the sons of the universe.** But in between the beginning and the consummation of religious evolution, there intervene the long ages of the shamans, who presume to stand between man and God as intermediaries, interpreters, and intercessors.” (88)

And if *The URANTIA Book* gives us a technique for attaining to this divine, experiential love, it is likely to be compressed in the following:

“When men search for God, they are searching for everything. When they find God, they have found everything. The search for God is the unstinted bestowal of love attended by amazing discoveries of new and greater love to be bestowed.

“All true love is from God, and man receives the divine affection as he himself bestows this love upon his fellows. Love is dynamic. It can never be captured; it is alive, free, thrilling, and always moving. Man can never take the love of the Father and imprison it within his heart. The Father’s love can become real to mortal man only by passing through that man’s personality as he in turn bestows this love upon his fellows.” (89.)

There may be other ways of experiencing a consciousness of the presence of God, but we should not – again – in attempting to cultivate this experience mistake what is human for that which is divine. The scientific investigations of Michael Persinger have demonstrated that when magnetic “fields are applied to the right hemisphere (particularly the parietal/temporal regions) the most typical experience is that of a sensed presence, or entity.” Persinger remarks that the subjective “details of the experience are strongly determined by the person’s beliefs which are supplied by the culture,” that is, a Buddhist will experience the presence of Buddha, and a Christian will experience the presence of Jesus or God, and so forth. Persinger adds, there “are also likely to be many different stimuli that can evoke the same or [a] similar electromagnetic pattern and hence experience. Our experimental procedure is one method.” (90) In all likelihood this experience is entirely a “reaction of the mortal mind,” or more particularly of the brain, to various stimuli, and we would do well either to ignore it or to believe it to be of human origin. Thus, “the steady progress of science add[s] greatly to the mortality of false gods.”

Neither, in attempting the praiseworthy cultivation of this mystical experience, should we forget the warning against employing the “trancelike state of visionary consciousness.” That prohibition applies in *every* circumstance, not just in “meditation” *per se*. Likewise we are to avoid “such things as: physical fatigue, fasting, psychic dissociation [apparently the primary factor in initiating yogic and Buddhist meditation], profound aesthetic experiences, vivid sex impulses, fear, anxiety, rage, and wild dancing,” (91) which are said to initiate the “mystic” state, some of which

are used by religionists to attain an altered consciousness, and all of which *The URANTIA Book* implies are dangerous to some degree.

Altogether praiseworthy or not, The URANTIA Book adds that “when such practices lead to social isolation [such as, perhaps, living in an ashram or monastery] and culminate in religious fanaticism, they are all but reprehensible.” And elsewhere:

“There is great danger associated with the habitual practice of religious daydreaming; mysticism may become a technique of reality avoidance, albeit it has sometimes been a means of genuine spiritual communion. Short seasons of retreat from the busy scenes of life may not be seriously dangerous, but prolonged isolation of personality is most undesirable.” (92)

But the word “mysticism” itself, as defined circa 1934, included “a view or tendency in religion which implies a direct communication between God and man through the inward perception of the mind,” and that is almost a definition of Jesus-style meditation. And according to Rodan it is “a means of genuine spiritual communion”:

“These high-climbing souls deliver themselves from a multitude of the crosscurrent conflicts of the trifles of living, thus becoming free to attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication.”

Growth and Service

Jesus-style meditation in conjunction with prayer, thanksgiving and worship seems to be the *safest* technique for achieving the goal of Thought Adjuster communication. First of all it does NOT require an altered state of consciousness. And, next, it is in no way a short-cut method, – or as Rodan

put it, an “easy and transient attainment” – depending as it does first and foremost upon growth. Not only does habitual Jesus-style meditation “favor religious growth” (see above), but “genuine prayer adds to spiritual growth, modifies attitudes, and yields that satisfaction which comes from communion with divinity.” (93) It appears to be only with Jesus-style meditation (including prayer and worship), operating in a circular (more accurately, an upwardly-directed spiral-like), hand-in-hand, feedback relationship with spiritual growth, that Thought Adjuster communication can be achieved in a healthful, sane and well-balanced manner:

“The Adjusters are always near you and of you, but rarely can they speak directly, as another being, to you. Circle by circle your intellectual decisions, moral choosings, and spiritual development add to the ability of the Adjuster to function in your mind; **circle by circle you thereby ascend** from the lower stages of Adjuster association and mind attunement, so that the Adjuster is increasingly enabled to register his **picturizations** of destiny with augmenting vividness and conviction upon the evolving consciousness of this God-seeking mind-soul.” (94)

But there is an additional factor which is equally necessary that must be added to meditation and growth (or without which balanced growth is impossible). **And that is service:**

“The contact of the mortal mind with its indwelling Adjuster, while often favored by **devoted meditation**, is more frequently facilitated by **wholehearted and loving service** in unselfish ministry to one’s fellow creatures. . . . Jesus often took his apostles away by themselves for short periods to **engage in meditation** and prayer, but for the most part he kept

them in **service-contact** with the multitudes. The soul of man requires spiritual exercise as well as spiritual nourishment.” (95.)

In Conclusion

Although the meaning of the word “meditation” has changed in the decades since *The URANTIA Book* was indited, a study of the context in which the word appears keeps the meaning clear and unmistakable. Jesus used active, dynamic thought to contact and communicate with his Thought Adjuster, and he taught this method to his followers. This form of meditation is not without its dangers and disciplines, and those of us who follow Jesus today will do well to take heed of both the instructions and warnings given in *The URANTIA Book* concerning Jesus-style meditation, and for all other forms of meditation or mysticism which we may choose to practice as well.

In this matter, as in most, we cannot go too wrong if we keep our eyes on Jesus:

“To “follow Jesus” means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master’s life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.” (96.)

FOOTNOTES

NB: Right click the link you want and open in a new window or a new tab

[All number entries below refer to Paper:Section.paragraph #list number
in *The URANTIA Book*]

1. [\(99:1.6\)](#)
2. Websters Universal Dictionary, Vol. II, World Syndicate Publishing Co.,
193
3. <http://www.dictionary.com>
4. see [Rodan Parallels](#)
5. New York: Abingdon Press, 1930
6. p. 94
7. [\(160:3.5\)](#)
8. [\(16:6.9\)](#)
9. [\(160:0.1\)](#)
10. [\(166:5.6\)](#)
11. [\(160:1.10\)](#)
12. [\(160:3.1\)](#)
13. [\(160:3.5\)](#)
14. [\(160:3.2\)](#)
15. [\(34:5.6\)](#)
16. [\(100:5.6\)](#)
17. [\(111:1.5\)](#)
18. [\(110:7.6\)](#)
19. [\(101:1.3\)](#)
20. [\(108:6.4\)](#)
21. [\(110:2.3\)](#)
22. [\(146:2.16\)](#)
23. [\(146:2.15\)](#)
24. [\(91:6.7\)](#)

25. [\(144:4.4\)](#)
26. [\(5:3.4\)](#)
27. [\(112:2.7\)](#)
28. [\(85:7.3\)](#)
29. [\(143:7.7\)](#)30. [\(111:7.2-3\)](#)
31. [\(192:2.2\)](#)
32. [\(100:1.8\)](#)
33. ref., [\(94:6.7\)](#)
34. [\(100:5.8\)](#)
35. [\(124:3.10\)](#)
36. [\(124:6.11\)](#)
37. [\(125:4.1\)](#)
38. [\(125:4.4\)](#)
39. [\(126:1.1\)](#)
40. [\(126:3.13\)](#)
41. [\(126:3.14\)](#)
42. [\(128:6.10\)](#)
43. [\(136:3.3\)](#)
44. [\(136:4.3\)](#)
45. [\(136:4.4\)](#)
46. [\(137:5.3\)](#)
47. [\(146:5.2\)](#)
48. [\(151:1.1\)](#)
49. [\(110:4.2\)](#)
50. [\(124:5.3\)](#)
51. [\(144:4.8\)](#)
52. [\(143:7.7\)](#)

53. [\(5:3.8\)](#)
54. [\(144:1.5\)](#)
55. [\(146:2.1\)](#)#16
56. [\(146:2.1\)](#) #14
57. [\(143:7.9\)](#)
58. [\(144:3.1\)](#)
59. [\(146:2.1\)](#)60. [\(146:0.2\)](#)
61. [\(146:2.2\)](#)
62. [\(146:2.1\)](#)#16
63. see [\(91:4.0\)](#)
64. [\(110:6.4\)](#)
65. [\(110:4.5\)](#)
66. [\(110:5.11\)](#)
67. [\(111:4.9\)](#)
68. [\(109:5.11\)](#)
69. [\(100:5.4-5\)](#)
70. [\(110:5.4\)](#)
71. [\(100:5.6\)](#)
72. [\(91:3.1\)](#)
73. [\(160:5.9\)](#)
74. [\(102:6.1\)](#)
75. [\(110:5.5-6\)](#)
76. [\(12:9.6\)](#)
77. [\(100:5.7\)](#)
78. [\(110 :4.3\)](#)
79. [\(91 :7.4\)](#)
80. (Weil also says, "Except for its voluntary and purposeful nature,

meditation is not easily distinguishable from trance"). A Report to the Ford Foundation, THE DRUG ABUSE SURVEY PROJECT, STAFF PAPER 6:[Altered States of Consciousness](#), by Andrew T. Weil, M.D.

81. The writer, C. S. Shah, continues, "Another word 'mystic introversion' may be used in place of samadhi, but the use of word 'trance' is ambiguous and is, therefore, avoided."

82. Private email, published with his permission. [Sam Dworkis](#) may be contacted through his website

83. [\(100:5.8-9\)](#)

84. [\(100:5.10\)](#)

85. [\(91:7.1\)](#)

86. [\(130:1.5\)](#)

87. [\(3:4.6\)](#)

88. [\(90:0.3\)](#)

89. [\(117:6.9-10\)](#)

90. see [this link](#)

91. [\(100:5.10\)](#)

92. [\(100:5.8\)](#)

93. [\(91:8.10\)](#)

94. [\(110 :6.5\)](#)

95. [\(91:7.1-2\)](#)

96. [\(196:1.3\)](#)

Bio-

Peter Holley discovered *The URANTIA Book* within weeks of a conversion

experience attendant upon his having asked Jesus into his heart some 35 years ago. Presently he is experientially investigating the new, living, revelation of Jesus as revealed primarily in [Paper 195](#), Sections 9 and 10, and in [Paper 196](#), Section 1. Peter understands this new, living, revelation of Jesus as being the second part of Jesus' prophesied visitation of "an enlarged revelation of truth and an enhanced demonstration of righteousness" [\(176:2.3\)](#)

NOTE: Peter Holley graduated from Urantia some years ago

