

LIVING THE TEACHING GROUPS: ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

In their visit to the lakes in Northern Italy, Jesus had a long talk with Ganid concerning the impossibility of teaching a man about God if a man did not desire to know God.

“They had casually met a thoughtless pagan while on their journey up to the lakes, and Ganid was surprised that Jesus did not follow his usual practice of enlisting the man in conversation which would naturally lead to the discussion of spiritual questions. When Ganid asked his teacher why he evinced so little interest in this pagan, Jesus answered:

“ *‘Ganid, the man was not hungry for truth. He was not dissatisfied with himself. He was not ready to ask for help, and the eyes of his mind were not open to receive light for the soul.’* ” [1466]

Light for the soul

This was one of the very few times the Urantia Papers record the Master showing no interest in talking to someone. From this incident a description may be drawn of someone whom the Master might “pass by” as not yet teachable: *self-satisfied, believing in his or her own power to handle things, and close-minded to the inner light of the soul.*

Some of us began to believe sometime ago that ordinary study groups do not cultivate the inner life. Reading groups seem to be developed around “head knowledge.” We began to wonder if this was enough and had the feeling of *dissatisfaction* with our regular study groups. Something was missing.

Are study groups life-changing?

We could talk about the teachings of the Master in study groups, and most of us knew the Urantia Papers fairly well. But study groups did not seem to change the lives of those who attended. We came to believe that very few of us were *living* the teachings of the Master on a significant level. Intellectually, we thought we knew about the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. But even this knowledge — that which is “*of the greatest value*” to humankind — in and of itself was not enough. We knew about this religious life, but we did not, in a sense, “own” it.

We came to believe that we needed more than the knowledge and philosophy *about* the Master’s religious life. We decided we wanted to *experience* that religious life ourselves, and actually live it. We needed to live the religion *of* Jesus.

The group we now call Living the Teachings set about to learn and *define the religious life of Jesus, and to discover how he lived it.* We then sought to apply these ideas to our own lives. We discovered this process to be a mutual adventure, yet one that is profoundly personal and ongoing. More and more we discovered ourselves gravitating toward a religious belief. But not a religious belief like any we had known before. Not a belief of priests, and churches, and rules. **It was more a personal religious belief that addressed the inner life of each individual . . .**

The Urantia Papers provide new revelatory information about what it refers to on page 1467 as the “*new and everlasting religion of Jesus.*”

Some readers have protested that they “*already have a religion.*” They claim to be a Catholic, or a Methodist, or a Jew, or whatever. But the Urantia Papers generally use the word “religion” in a different context than we are accustomed. The Papers generally use the *first* definition of religion, as it was presented in dictionaries at the time and in virtually all modern dictionaries:

re-li-gion: 1. (a) Belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator(s) and ruler(s) of the universe (b) expression of such belief in conduct and ritual.

Yet sometimes the Papers do refer to what they call formal religion, or *organized* religion. In this case they are generally discussing specific “religions” such as the Catholic, Methodist, and Jewish religions. This is the common definition most people are accustomed to. This is also what most people think of when the word “religion” is used. *Formal* religion is traditionally described in the second dictionary definition:

2. (a) any specific system of belief and worship, often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy [*the Christian religion, the Buddhist religion, etc.*] (b) any system of beliefs, practices, ethical values, etc. resembling, suggestive of, or likened to such a system. [*humanism as a religion.*] [Compton’s 1997 Edition]

For most of us, our formal “religion” is an accident of birth. We may be Catholic, yet if we had been born into a Jewish family, we would likely be Jewish. If we were born in Syria we would more likely be Islamic. There are exceptions, but this is generally the case. It is similar to being born in Dallas and rooting for the Dallas Cowboys, or in Washington D.C. and rooting for the Washington Redskins.

As we shall see, the “new and everlasting religion of Jesus” is not an accident of birth. It has never been attempted on a large scale. This religion is indeed new, and it is a profoundly personal religion. It is an **inner life religion of the spirit** that is **defined by the individual believer** by means of his or her relationship to the living Spirit of Truth. There are not, nor can there ever be, “gurus” who can authentically know your inner life better than you. ***In the personal religion of Jesus, we are all equals.*** The Living the Teachings concept is a group of individual believers who come together to share their own hope, strength and wisdom as spiritual equals.

WHY DO WE FEAR THE RELIGION OF JESUS?

“Primitive man lived a life of superstitious bondage to religious fear. Modern, civilized men dread the thought of falling under the dominance of strong religious convictions. Thinking man has always feared to be held by a religion. When a strong and moving religion threatens to dominate him, he invariably tries to rationalize, traditionalize, and institutionalize it, thereby hoping to gain control of it. By such procedure, even a revealed religion becomes man-made and man-dominated.

“Modern men and women of intelligence evade the religion of Jesus because of their fears of what it will do to them — and with them. **And all such fears are well founded. The religion of Jesus does, indeed, dominate and transform its believers, demanding that men dedicate their lives to seeking for a knowledge of the will of the Father in heaven and requiring that the energies of living be consecrated to the unselfish service of the brotherhood of man. Selfish men and women will not pay such a price even for the greatest spiritual treasure ever offered to humankind.**” [2083]

WHY DO WE NEED RELIGION?

God is not only the determiner of destiny; he is man's eternal destination. **All nonreligious human activities seek to bend the universe to the distorting service of self;** the truly religious individual seeks to identify the self with the universe and then to dedicate the activities of this unified self to the service of the universe family of fellow beings, human and superhuman. [67]

THE “LIVING THE TEACHINGS” group is based upon our conviction that, of all the knowledge we can ever acquire, that which has the greatest value is knowledge about the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. Yet, we discovered that having knowledge — simply knowing something — was not enough. For us, even believing the teachings of the Urantia Papers does not seem to answer the “still, small voice within.”

As we began to assemble quotes from the Urantia Papers to support and enlarge upon the primary premise about the religious life of Jesus, a compelling challenge seemed to emerge. More than simply knowing about the Master’s religious life, and beyond believing in him and the task he undertook, we are being called upon to follow the Master.

This is a distant cry from anything most of us expected when we first picked up the Urantia Papers. For nearly four decades we have been content to call ourselves “readers.” It is easy enough to be a “reader,” and to learn and teach others about the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.

Then, not long ago some of us took the more difficult step and began to declare ourselves “believers.” We thus profess our belief in the Urantia Papers as a revelation of epochal magnitude.

And yet, many of us now conclude that, beyond belief, we are to pick up our individual crosses and actually follow the Master. Thus, many of us are confronted with an immensely different challenge. Such a belief becomes a way of life, and cannot be confined to study groups. Such a belief might disrupt everything that we are doing.

If we entertain such a stunning idea, we might no longer find so much warmth and comfort in our study groups and our social gatherings, where we talk about the compelling life of Jesus.

On the contrary, we find ourselves back on the sun scorched roads of Israel, and through the dusty air we see that wondrous sunlit countenance turn toward us. He would probably not ask us: “Do you read the Urantia Papers?” nor “Do you believe the Urantia Papers?”

More likely the Master might ask: “Will you? Will you follow me?”
No spiritual self-examining

The ten cascading premises on the next pages are not “steps.” They do not require self-examination, as do Twelve Step Programs and most psychological methods. Although they will help the spiritual life of anyone, these cascading premises are not an attempt to take the place of, nor improve upon, the spiritual methods of introspective Twelve Step programs. Jesus offered a method of spiritual growth that was unlike any other, before or since his time.

“The three apostles were shocked this afternoon when they realized that their Master’s religion made no provision for spiritual self-examination. All religions before and after the times of Jesus, even Christianity, carefully provide for conscientious self-examination. The carpenter’s son never taught character building; he taught character growth, declaring the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed.” [1583]

• What, then, is the kingdom of heaven?

“Jesus never tired of telling them that the kingdom of heaven was their personal experience of realizing the higher qualities of spiritual living; that these realities of spirit experience are progressively translated to new and higher levels of divine certainty and eternal grandeur.”

A Living the Teachings group is, then, dedicated to nurturing the process of living at “higher levels of divine certainty.” To this end, we share our inner lives, and discuss our personal progress (or lack of progress) in achieving inner success. There can be no gurus nor experts in such a group. We do not give advice unless it is asked for. We share as spiritual equals, and we are united by our goals — not by our beliefs.

[1]. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. We believe the following passages form one possible path toward understanding that life, how Jesus lived it, and how we — as Urantian Believers — are called upon to develop and live our own religious lives. *[2090]*

[2]. The secret of his unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship--unbroken communion with God--and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices. *[2089]*

[3]. “Whence then comes the energy to do these great things? Look to your Master. Even now he is out in the hills taking in power while we are here giving out energy. 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. At least, that is the way the philosopher views it.” *[Rodan speaking]*
[1777]

[4]. But . . . mistakes of the intellect in no way interfered with the believer's great progress in growth in spirit. In less than a month after the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth, the apostles made more individual spiritual progress than during their almost four years of personal and loving association with the Master. *[2061]*

[5]. Before Pentecost the apostles had given up much for Jesus. They had sacrificed their homes, families, friends, worldly goods, and positions. At Pentecost they gave themselves to God, and the Father and the Son responded by giving themselves to man--sending their spirits to live within men. This experience of losing self and finding the spirit was not one of emotion; it was an act of intelligent self-surrender and unreserved consecration. *[2089]*

[6]. Thus it appears that the Spirit of Truth comes really to lead all believers into all truth, into the expanding knowledge of the experience of the living and growing spiritual consciousness of the reality of eternal and ascending sonship with God. Do not make the mistake of expecting to become strongly intellectually conscious of the outpoured Spirit of Truth. The spirit never creates a consciousness of himself, only a consciousness of Michael, the Son. From the beginning Jesus taught that the spirit would not speak of himself. The proof, therefore, of your fellowship with the Spirit of Truth is not to be found in your consciousness of this spirit but rather in your experience of enhanced fellowship with Michael. *[2061]*

[7]. 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. *[1865]*

[8]. There must come a revival of the actual teachings of Jesus, such a restatement as will undo the work of his early followers who went about to create a sociophilosophical system of belief regarding the fact of Michael's sojourn on earth. [2089]

[9]. 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. It is futile to talk about a revival of primitive Christianity; you must go forward from where you find yourselves. Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus' life and illuminated with a new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation. **And when Jesus becomes thus lifted up, he will draw all men to himself. Jesus' disciples should be more than conquerors, even overflowing sources of inspiration and enhanced living to all men. Religion is only an exalted humanism until it is made divine by the discovery of the reality of the presence of God in personal experience.** [2084]

[10.] We believe this series of quotes represent one way the Urantia Revelation will: “flash upon earth in the lives of the men who reveal God to their fellows.” This also is a basis of the “new and everlasting religion . . . this new way of salvation, the revelation of God to man through, and in, Jesus . . . When man goes in partnership with God, great things may, and do, happen.” [1467]

“LIVING THE TEACHINGS” group is safe, loving, nurturing, and more spiritually progressive than any group process most of us have known. The key element is a singleness of purpose, that of helping one another live at a higher level. To be successful and pleasant for all, there can be no competitiveness, nor secondary agendas.

EVERYTHING WE SUGGEST here was arrived at by trial and error. In the process of creating a Living the Teachings group we had attempted open study group-type meetings for a year, meetings patterned after AA step programs, and other formats. None of these worked well with Urantians. Then, at last, we arrived at the pattern that worked for us.

Start with a closed group

About a year ago we discovered that we had a nucleus of a few kindred spirits who were still interested in the idea of a spiritual group dynamic for the teachings of the Urantia Papers. And this is the first suggestion: **Begin with a group that is compatible and willing to learn from one another.** Establish a time frame of commitment, say six months or a year. Unless everyone agrees on adding a new member — **maintain a closed group.** You will discover that a trusting, sharing group suffers from casual drop-ins or curiosity seekers. **We discovered that eight or so people is about maximum.** We meet on Sunday afternoons, and have juggled the time several times to meet the needs of members.

Your group will develop its own personality, and begin to have a life of its own. This group dynamic and wisdom will establish its own “rules,” so to speak.

Create a “safe” group

We have learned it is best to begin with a moment of silence, and a prayer offered by a member. This sets the tone of the meeting. We do not read any “rules” or guidelines, since we are all committed to living the teachings of the Urantia Papers. We are all there to seek to live at a higher level.

The concept of the group is one of sharing our inner lives. It soon becomes obvious that this leaves one vulnerable. After a moment of silence and a prayer, we begin sharing what we have experienced in our spiritual lives for the previous week. We may talk about our failures or successes in living the teachings, our progress in prayer and meditation, or a troublesome

problem, or an individual we have difficulty with. **This group sharing is casual and takes about an hour or so of our two hour meeting.** We do not rush it.

After each member shares, the leader establishes a topic, and the balance of the meeting is developed around this topic. In the pages that follow, dozens of ideas will occur to you. The structure, method or technique does not matter so much as the atmosphere the group generates.

The important thing is to make the ambiance of the meeting loving, safe, and fun. Our meetings have spiritual goals and use spiritual methods. We found it best to avoid too much psychological theory, even though there are two professional therapists in our group. Guided meditations, when we use them, are lifting and fresh, and use wholesome images and symbols to stimulate the creative imagination.

We have a rule that we are not to interrupt anyone who is talking. This has required, at times, the use of a “talking stone” which is passed from member to member. Only the person with the stone can talk. **We do not offer advice after someone speaks unless it is specifically asked for. We do not critique the views of someone. Cross talk is not encouraged.** The principle here is that we are all spiritual equals. We are experts in only one person’s inner life, our own. There should be no “wannabe” gurus in the group. Each individual must feel safe to speak without fear of a subtle, judgmental response. Of all the “rules” we suggest, the **“no advice unless requested”** is most important. The rest of the structure of the meeting depends upon who is leading it. **We always alternate leaders,** unless a topic is carried forward and the group agrees to keep the same leader for two or three, or even more meetings. (We recently spent six weeks on meditation, with a group leader who was especially knowledgeable about it.)

Problems and problem members

This kind of spiritual dialogue is not for everyone. It is not conducive to the competitive intellectual arena that some Urantians, especially males, seem to enjoy. Some people don’t like to share their inner lives and are embarrassed to do so. Although we all share certain deep spiritual hungers and longings, modern men and women are conditioned to avoid discussion about them; it is virtually a “forbidden dialogue.” For this reason, if there is not a good “fit” for a member, it is better to let this individual go and form his or her own group along the lines they like. We all have different perspectives, and it is advisable that those who have similar perspectives and problems form their own groups. *Limited, closed groups make membership precious, and each member of a group should wholeheartedly participate, or make room for someone else.*

BUT THE GREATEST OF ALL methods of problem solving I have learned from Jesus, your Master. I refer to that which he so consistently practices, and which he has so faithfully taught you, the isolation of worshipful meditation. In this habit of Jesus’ going off so frequently by himself to commune with the Father in heaven is to be found the technique, **not only of gathering strength and wisdom for the ordinary conflicts of living, but also of appropriating the energy for the solution of the higher problems of a moral and spiritual nature.**

. . . “I am deeply impressed with the custom of Jesus in going apart by himself to engage in these **seasons of solitary survey of the problems of living;** to seek for new stores of wisdom and energy for meeting the manifold demands of social service; to quicken and deepen the supreme purpose of living by actually subjecting the total personality to the consciousness of contacting with divinity; to grasp for possession of new and better methods of adjusting oneself to the ever-changing situations of living existence; to effect those vital reconstructions and readjustments of one’s personal attitudes which are so essential to enhanced insight into everything worth while and real; and to do all of this with an eye single to the glory of God—to breathe in sincerity your Master’s favorite prayer, “Not my will, but yours, be done.”

“This worshipful practice of your Master brings that relaxation which renews the mind; that illumination which inspires the soul; that courage which enables one bravely to face one’s

problems; that self-understanding which obliterates debilitating fear; and that consciousness of union with divinity which equips man with the assurance that enables him to dare to be Godlike. **The relaxation of worship,** or spiritual communion as practiced by the Master, relieves tension, removes conflicts, and mightily augments the total resources of the personality. And all this philosophy, plus the gospel of the kingdom, constitutes the new religion as I understand it.

“ . . . 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 time-saving.** The more complex society becomes, and the more the lures of civilization multiply, the more urgent will become the necessity for God-knowing individuals to form such protective habitual practices designed to conserve and augment their spiritual energies.”

[Rodan, 1774, 1777, 1778. Quotes were selected and arranged for this presentation.]

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. *[1095]*

MEDITATION & BALANCED LIVING

[Referring to Jesus]

As he grew up to manhood, he passed through all those conflicts and confusions which the average young persons of previous and subsequent ages have undergone. And the rigorous experience of supporting his family was a sure safeguard against his having overmuch time for idle meditation or the indulgence of mystic tendencies. *[1393]*

“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. The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in an attitude of true worship.” *[1641]*

Worship is the highest privilege and the first duty of all created intelligences.

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We share our progress in reaching these levels of relaxation, prayer, thanksgiving and worship, and receptivity. The group was to discover how very difficult it is to create strong, daily habits of meditation, worship, and prayer.

These pages and the pages that follow supply supportive quotes for the cascading premises.

[2]. “THE SECRET OF HIS UNPARALLELED RELIGIOUS LIFE WAS THIS consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship--unbroken communion with God--and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices.” *[2089]*

[3]. “WHENCE COMES THE ENERGY TO DO THESE GREAT THINGS? Look to your Master. Even now he is out in the hills taking in power while we are here giving out energy. 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. At least, that is the way the philosopher views it." [Rodan speaking, 1777]

MEDITATION & BALANCED LIVING

(Further references)

The more healthful attitude of spiritual meditation is to be found in **reflective worship** and in the **prayer of thanksgiving**. The direct communion with one's Thought Adjuster, such as occurred in the later years of Jesus' life in the flesh, **should not be confused with these so-called mystical experiences**. The factors which contribute to the initiation of mystic communion are **indicative of the danger of such psychic states**. The mystic status is favored by such things as: physical fatigue, fasting, psychic dissociation, profound aesthetic experiences, vivid sex impulses, fear, anxiety, rage, and wild dancing. Much of the material arising as a result of such preliminary preparation has its origin in the subconscious mind. [1100]

This year his seasons of deep meditation were often broken into by Ruth and her playmates. **And always was Jesus ready to postpone the contemplation of his future work for the world and the universe that he might share in the childish joy and youthful gladness of these youngsters**, who never tired of listening to Jesus relate the experiences of his various trips to Jerusalem. They also greatly enjoyed his stories about animals and nature. [1416]

Altogether too frequently that which the overwrought mystic evaluates as divine inspiration is the uprisings of his own deep mind. 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**.

. . . The great religious teachers and the prophets of past ages were not extreme mystics. They were God-knowing men and women who best served their God by unselfish ministry to their fellow mortals. 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**. [1000]

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORSHIP & PRAYER

Worship is for its own sake; prayer embodies a self- or creature-interest element; that is the great difference between worship and prayer. There is absolutely no self-request or other element of personal interest in true worship; we simply worship God for what we comprehend him to be. Worship asks nothing and expects nothing for the worshiper. We do not worship the Father because of anything we may derive from such veneration; we render such devotion and engage in such worship as a natural and spontaneous reaction to the recognition of the Father's matchless personality and because of his lovable nature and adorable attributes . . . The moment the element of self-interest intrudes upon worship, that instant devotion translates from worship to prayer and more appropriately should be directed to the person of the Eternal Son or the Creator Son. But in practical religious experience there exists no reason why prayer should not be addressed to God the Father as a part of true worship. [65]

In contrast with conversion-seeking, the better approach to the morontia zones of possible contact with the Thought Adjuster would be **through living faith and sincere worship, wholehearted and unselfish prayer**. 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. [1099]

Prayer is indeed a part of religious experience, but it has been wrongly emphasized by modern religions, much to the neglect of the more essential communion of worship. The reflective powers of the mind are deepened and broadened by worship. **Prayer may enrich the life, but worship illuminates destiny.** [1123]

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORSHIP & PRAYER

Worship is intended to anticipate the better life ahead and then to reflect these new spiritual significances back onto the life which now is. **Prayer is spiritually sustaining, but worship is divinely creative** . . . Prayer is self-reminding--sublime thinking; worship is self-forgetting--superthinking. Worship is effortless attention, true and ideal soul rest, a form of restful spiritual exertion. [1616]

“Prayer is entirely a personal and spontaneous expression of the attitude of the soul toward the spirit; prayer should be the communion of sonship and the expression of fellowship. Prayer, when indited by the spirit, leads to co-operative spiritual progress. **The ideal prayer is a form of spiritual communion which leads to intelligent worship.** True praying is the sincere attitude of reaching heavenward for the attainment of your ideals.” [1618 - *Jesus speaking*]

Prayer and its associated worship is a technique of detachment from the daily routine of life, from the monotonous grind of material existence. It is an avenue of approach to spiritualized self-realization and individuality of intellectual and religious attainment . . . **Prayer is the breath of the spirit life in the midst of the material** **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORSHIP & PRAYER**

Civilization of the races of mankind. Worship is salvation for the pleasure-seeking generations of mortals. . . . **As prayer may be likened to recharging the spiritual batteries of the soul, so 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.** [1621]

Prayer does not move the divine heart to liberality of bestowal, **but it does so often dig out larger and deeper channels wherein the divine bestowals may flow to the hearts and souls of those who thus remember to maintain unbroken communion with their Maker through sincere prayer and true worship.** [2066]

Jesus never prayed as a religious duty. **To him prayer was a sincere expression of spiritual attitude,** a declaration of **soul loyalty,** a recital of **personal devotion,** an expression of **thanksgiving,** an avoidance of emotional tension, a prevention of conflict, an exaltation of intellection, an ennoblement of desire, a vindication of moral decision, an enrichment of thought, an invigoration of higher inclinations, a consecration of impulse, a clarification of viewpoint, a declaration of faith, a transcendental surrender of will, a sublime assertion of confidence, a revelation of courage, the proclamation of discovery, a confession of supreme devotion, the validation of consecration, a technique for the adjustment of difficulties, and the mighty mobilization of the combined soul powers to withstand all human tendencies toward selfishness, evil, and sin. [2089]

When you deal with the practical affairs of your daily life, you are in the hands of the spirit personalities having origin in the Third Source and Center; you are co-operating with the agencies of the Conjoint Actor. And so it is: **You worship God; pray to, and commune with, the Son; and work out the details of your earthly sojourn in connection with the intelligences of the Infinite Spirit operating on your world and throughout your universe.** [66]

UT WE KNOW THAT THERE dwells within the human mind a fragment of God, and that there sojourns with the human soul the Spirit of Truth; and we further know that these spirit forces conspire to enable material man to grasp the reality of spiritual values and to comprehend the philosophy of universe meanings. [17]

Having started out on the way of life everlasting, having accepted the assignment and received your orders to advance, **do not fear the dangers of human forgetfulness** and mortal inconstancy, do not be troubled with doubts of failure or by perplexing confusion, do not falter and question your status and standing, for in every dark hour, at every crossroad in the forward struggle, **the Spirit of Truth will always speak, saying, “This is the way.”** [383]

“By the old way you seek to suppress, obey, and conform to the rules of living; **by the new way you are first transformed by the Spirit of Truth** and thereby strengthened in your inner soul by the constant spiritual renewing of your mind, and so are you endowed with the power of the certain and joyous performance of the gracious, acceptable, and perfect will of God. Forget not — it is your personal faith in the exceedingly great and precious promises of God that ensures your becoming partakers of the divine nature.” *[Jesus speaking]* [1609]

“The spirit which my Father shall send into this world is not only the Spirit of Truth but also the spirit of idealistic beauty.” *[Jesus]* [1732]

Truth is living; the Spirit of Truth is ever leading the children of light into new realms of spiritual reality and divine service. You are not given truth to crystallize into settled, safe, and honored forms. **Your revelation of truth must be so enhanced by passing through your personal experience that new beauty and actual spiritual gains** will be disclosed to all who behold your spiritual fruits and in consequence thereof are led to glorify the Father who is in heaven. Only those faithful servants who thus grow in the knowledge of the truth, and who thereby develop the capacity for divine appreciation of spiritual realities, can ever hope to “enter fully into the joy of their Lord.” [1917]

The fruits of the spirit, **your sincere and loving service**, are the mighty social lever to uplift the races of darkness, and this Spirit of Truth will become your power-multiplying fulcrum.[1930]

These believers suddenly found themselves translated into another world, a new existence of joy, power and glory. [2059]

He has told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they are endowed with power--until the Spirit of Truth shall come. And on the day of Pentecost this new teacher comes, and they go out at once to preach their gospel with new power. **They are the bold and courageous followers of a living Lord, not a dead and defeated leader. The Master lives in the hearts of these evangelists; God is not a doctrine in their minds; he has become a living presence in their souls.** [2066]

Do not overlook the fact that the Spirit of Truth was **bestowed upon all sincere believers**; this gift of the spirit did not come only to the apostles. The one hundred and twenty men and women assembled in the upper chamber all received the new teacher, as did all the honest of heart throughout the whole world. This new teacher was bestowed upon mankind, and every soul received him in accordance with the love for truth and the capacity to grasp and comprehend spiritual realities. **At last, true religion is delivered from the custody of priests and all sacred classes and finds its real manifestation in the individual souls of men.** [2063]

URANTIANS MUST BE IMPRESSED BY the implications of these quotes. We can no longer simply envy the apostles who lived with the Master . . . the Master is alive *now* — in a more profound way than he was then. He is also far more available to us now than he was to the apostles. No wonder Jesus makes people so uncomfortable! He is not simply an interesting character in history, *Jesus is a living presence*, the mightiest force on our planet. People see the Master coming and they know he will not simply rearrange the intellectual “furniture” of their spiritual lives, he will tear out all of the old and rotten timbers of the house and build a completely new spiritual edifice.

[4]. “BUT . . . MISTAKES OF THE INTELLECT IN NO WAY INTERFERED WITH THE believer's great progress in growth in spirit. In less than a month after the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth, the apostles made more individual spiritual progress than during their almost four years of personal and loving association with the Master.” [2061]

[5]. “BEFORE PENTECOST THE APOSTLES HAD GIVEN UP MUCH FOR JESUS. They had sacrificed their homes, families, friends, worldly goods, and positions. At Pentecost they gave themselves to God, and the Father and the Son responded by giving themselves to man--sending their spirits to live within men. This experience of losing self and finding the spirit was not one of emotion; it was an act of intelligent self-surrender and unreserved consecration.” [2089]

[6]. “THUS IT APPEARS THAT THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH COMES REALLY TO LEAD all believers into all truth, into the expanding knowledge of the experience of the living and growing spiritual consciousness of the reality of eternal and ascending sonship with God . . . Do not make the mistake of expecting to become strongly intellectually conscious of the outpoured Spirit of Truth. The spirit never creates a consciousness of himself, only a consciousness of Michael, the Son. From the beginning Jesus taught that the spirit would not speak of himself. The proof, therefore, of your fellowship with the Spirit of Truth is not to be found in your consciousness of this spirit but rather in your experience of enhanced fellowship with Michael.” [2061]

The Creator Son, in the flesh, revealed God to men; the Spirit of Truth, in the heart, reveals the Creator Son to men. 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. When Jesus was on earth, he lived his life as one personality--Jesus of Nazareth. **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. [2062]**

Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings. 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. **And then will these spirit-born souls quickly supply the leadership and inspiration requisite for the social, moral, economic, and political reorganization of the world.** The modern age will refuse to accept a religion which is inconsistent with facts and out of harmony with its highest conceptions of truth, beauty, and goodness. The hour is striking for a rediscovery of the true and original foundations of present-day distorted and compromised Christianity--the real life and teachings of Jesus. [2082-83]

Some day a reformation in the Christian church may strike deep enough to get back to the unadulterated religious teachings of Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. **You may preach a religion about Jesus, but, perforce, you must live the religion of Jesus. [2091]**

Jesus founded the religion of personal experience in doing the will of God and serving the human brotherhood [2092]

The world needs more firsthand religion. Even Christianity--the best of the religions of the twentieth century--is not only a religion about Jesus, but it is so largely one which men experience secondhand. They take their religion wholly as handed down by their accepted religious teachers. What **an awakening the world would experience if it could only see Jesus as he really lived on earth and know, firsthand, his life-giving teachings!** Descriptive words of things beautiful cannot thrill like the sight thereof, neither can creedal words inspire men's souls like the experience of knowing the presence of God. But expectant faith will ever keep the hope-door of man's soul open for the entrance of the eternal spiritual realities of the divine values of the worlds beyond. [2064]

Pentecost lessoned the self-assertiveness of individuals, groups, nations, and races . . .

Mankind can be unified only by the spiritual approach, and the Spirit of Truth is a world influence which is universal. [2065]

STRANGE THING HAPPENED NOT LONG after the Spirit of Truth was bestowed. A kind of male-dominated social-philosophical club developed. The kingdom was modified from the personal adventure of finding and doing the will of God, to the joining of a group. The relationship of Jesus and the Father to each individual believer was transferred to the group. In precise language, the Urantia Papers reveal that a restatement of the actual teachings of Jesus — such as are contained within the Papers themselves — must *undo* the work of Paul and his contemporaries.

[7]. **“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.” [1865]

[8]. **“THERE MUST COME A REVIVAL OF THE ACTUAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS, SUCH** a restatement as will **undo the work of 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.” [2089]

[9]. **“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.** It is futile to talk about a revival of primitive Christianity; you must go forward from where you find yourselves. Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus' life and illuminated with a new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation. **And when Jesus becomes thus lifted up, he will draw all men to himself. Jesus' disciples should be more than conquerors, even overflowing sources of inspiration and enhanced living to all men. Religion is only an exalted humanism until it is made divine by the discovery of the reality of the presence of God in personal experience.”** [2084]

THEN EXCLAIMED GANID: “Teacher, let's you and I make a new religion, one good enough for India and big enough for Rome, and maybe we can trade it to the Jews for Yahweh.” And Jesus replied: “Ganid, religions are not made. The religions of men grow up over long periods of time, while the revelations of God flash upon earth in the lives of the men who reveal God to their fellows.”

. . . What a scene for the celestial intelligences to behold, this spectacle of the Indian lad proposing to the Creator of a universe that they make a new religion! And though the young man did not know it, they were making a new and everlasting religion right then and there —this new way of salvation, the revelation of God to man through, and in, Jesus . . . When man goes in partnership with God, great things may, and do, happen. [1467]

We of the Living the Teachings group see the Urantia Papers as an exposition of a task that we are called upon to complete. The task began 400 billion years ago when Michael and the Mother Spirit went forth from Paradise to duplicate, using grossest physical matter and rawest energy, the eternal pattern of Paradise — and to manifest in time and space the awesome attributes of God the Sevenfold.

So important is this task, that the Creator Son himself came to our planet in behalf of completing it. As Jesus of Nazareth, Michael carried forth the mission over much of the known world, and in the temples and councils of power of Israel. Jesus would live in light and life as an ordinary mortal of the realm, and would give his life for the love of humankind.

The cascading premises and the supporting quotes on the previous pages support the notion that we are called upon to assume the task that Jesus so nobly advanced. All the deeper concepts of the Urantia Papers, such as the completion of the Supreme, the actualization of personality by means of circle achievement, the service motive, and so on, may be said to revolve around the task of which Michael has entrusted each of us a portion.

Pentecost, with its spiritual endowment, was designed forever to loose the religion of the Master from all dependence upon physical force; 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.** Jesus had already taught his followers that his religion was never passive; always were his disciples to be active and positive in their ministry of mercy and in their manifestations of love . . . **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.** [2064]

Jesus is truly a savior in the sense that his life and death do win men over to goodness and righteous survival. Jesus loves men so much that his love awakens the response of love in the human heart. Love is truly contagious and eternally creative. Jesus' death on the cross exemplifies a love which is sufficiently strong and divine to forgive sin and swallow up all evil-doing. Jesus disclosed to this world a higher quality of righteousness than justice--mere technical right and wrong. Divine love does not merely forgive wrongs; it absorbs and actually destroys them. The forgiveness of love utterly transcends the forgiveness of mercy. Mercy sets the guilt of evil-doing to one side; but love destroys forever the sin and all weakness resulting therefrom. Jesus brought a new method of living to Urantia. He taught us not to resist evil but to find through him a goodness which effectually destroys evil. The forgiveness of Jesus is not condonation; it is salvation from condemnation. Salvation does not slight wrongs; it makes them right. True love does not compromise nor condone hate; it destroys it. [2018]

THE GENUINE GREATNESS OF JESUS

This young man, the penitent brigand, had been led into a life of violence and wrongdoing by those who extolled such a career of robbery as an effective patriotic protest against political oppression and social injustice. And this sort of teaching, plus the urge for adventure, led many otherwise well-meaning youths to enlist in these daring expeditions of robbery. This young man

had looked upon Barabbas as a hero. Now he saw that he had been mistaken. **Here on the cross beside him he saw a really great man, a true hero. Here was a hero who fired his zeal and inspired his highest ideas of moral self-respect and quickened all his ideals of courage, manhood, and bravery. In beholding Jesus, there sprang up in his heart an overwhelming sense of love, loyalty, and genuine greatness.** [2009]

The Secret of Greatness and the Soul of Goodness. The ascending pilgrims having awakened to the import of time, the way is prepared for the realization of the solemnity of trust and for the appreciation of the sanctity of service. While these are the moral elements of greatness, there are also secrets of greatness. When the spiritual tests of greatness are applied, the moral elements are not disregarded, **but the quality of unselfishness revealed in disinterested labor for the welfare of one's earthly fellows, particularly worthy beings in need and in distress, that is the real measure of planetary greatness. And the manifestation of greatness on a world like Urantia is the exhibition of self-control.** The great man is not he who "takes a city" or "overthrows a nation," but rather "he who subdues his own tongue." [317]

Greatness is synonymous with divinity. God is supremely great and good. Greatness and goodness simply cannot be divorced. They are forever made one in God. **This truth is literally and strikingly illustrated by the reflective interdependence of the Secret of Greatness and the Soul of Goodness, for neither can function without the other . . .** Greatness cannot be estimated without knowing the content of goodness, while goodness cannot be portrayed without exhibiting its inherent and divine greatness. [317]

Goodness is the mental recognition of the relative values of the diverse levels of divine perfection. **The recognition of goodness implies a mind of moral status,** a personal mind with ability to discriminate between good and evil. **But the possession of goodness, greatness, is the measure of real divinity attainment.** [647]

Even on Urantia, these seraphim teach the everlasting truth: **If your own mind does not serve you well, you can exchange it for the mind of Jesus of Nazareth, who always serves you well.** [533]

Because of the presence in your minds of the Thought Adjuster, it is no more of a mystery for you to know the mind of God than for you to be sure of the consciousness of knowing any other mind, human or superhuman. Religion and social consciousness have this in common: They are predicated on the consciousness of other-mindness. **The technique whereby you can accept another's idea as yours is the same whereby you may "let the mind which was in Christ be also in you."** [1123]

The Nazareth carpenter now fully understood the work before him, but he chose to live his human life in the channel of its natural flowing. And in some of these matters he is indeed an example to his mortal creatures, even as it is recorded: **"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being of the nature of God, thought it not strange to be equal with God.** But he made himself to be of little import and, taking upon himself the form of a creature, was born in the likeness of mankind. **And being thus fashioned as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross."** [1408]

"Love men with the love wherewith I have loved you and serve your fellow mortals even as I have served you. By the spirit fruits of your lives impel souls to believe the truth that man is a son of God, and that all men are brethren. **Remember all I have taught you and the life I have lived among you. My love overshadows you, my spirit will dwell with you, and my peace shall abide upon you.** Farewell." [2057]