

The Urantia Book
A Summary and Commentary
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Introduction

This represents my attempt to provide a summary of *The Urantia Book*, an extraordinary work that has the potential to be life changing for individuals and for all humanity. I need to open with a disclaimer. While I am a student of *The Urantia Book*, I do not in any way hold myself out as an expert, either in its content or its origin. I have spent the past three plus years deeply engrossed in reading and rereading this document of almost 2100 pages. I've also participated in several online courses on *The Urantia Book* through the Urantia Foundation.¹ Yet I know of others who have spent many decades in the same effort, and I am humbled by their commitment and resulting grasp of this content. So if any reader identifies that something contained in this summary is in error, please contact me at drick@ricksheffmd.com so it can be corrected.

Reading *The Urantia Book* has become the daily practice in fulfilling my monastic vow to pray for the world every day, for that is the gift and the potential in this amazing book. It is in this spirit that I offer this summary, to make the awakening and transformational content of the gift, some would say the bestowal, that is *The Urantia Book* to as many as possible. Our world needs this awakening now, perhaps more than ever. So if you feel so moved, please share this summary and commentary with as many others as possible. If you would like to translate it into a language other than English, that would be welcome. Anyone interested in translating and distributing this summary in another language, please contact me at drick@ricksheffmd.com so this effort can be coordinated.

***The Urantia Book* Meets the Web of Belief**

In preparation for exploring the content of *The Urantia Book*, we need first to recognize the immense importance of a phenomenon characterized as the Web of Belief, a dynamic which manifests within all of us. Renowned 20th century Harvard philosopher, Willard Van Orman Quine, coined the phrase "Web of Belief" to describe the network of interconnected beliefs or knowledge claims any particular individual or group holds to be true about the world, including our religious and spiritual beliefs.

Critical to this recognition is that any answer to the question of whether a particular statement or claim is considered to be true depends upon the Web of Belief of the person making that determination. None of us, no matter how objective or scientific we think we may be, can escape making all judgments about the world in a manner that is filtered through our personal Web of Belief.

If a statement or claim does not fit our current Web of Belief, we have three choices (though we most often make these choices more unconsciously than consciously). One choice is to not see it as true, not see it as "data", and therefore dismiss it as false, irrelevant or inconsequential. Another choice is to see it as anomalous data, something that does not fit our current Web of Belief, but which we allow to

¹ The Urantia Foundation, the organization that has served as the custodian of *The Urantia Book* since 1950, is an outstanding resource for those who want to explore this work more deeply. Their website, urantia.org, provides many resources for learning and delving more deeply into *The Urantia Book*.

“hang out” in the periphery of our Web of Belief without significantly changing it. Or we could allow the statement or claim to serve as data that causes our previously held Web of Belief to shift or to change in some way.

In my particular case, over a 40-year journey I encountered increasingly challenging and impactful “data points” that did not fit the Web of Belief I’d learned both from my atheistic family of origin and in my science classes. Initially I dismissed them as coincidence or something that blatantly could not possibly be true (at least according to my then current Web of Belief). Eventually they began to take up residence in the periphery of my Web of Belief as inexplicable but intriguing data points. Finally, these experiences, these data points, became so compelling, even to the scientist in me, that they caused my old Web of Belief to shatter. That Web of Belief eventually reformed in ways I never could have imagined, and as a result my life has become immensely richer and more rewarding than I ever thought possible. This experience is the origin for the title of the book that tells the story of my journey, [*Joyfully Shattered: A Physician’s Awakening at the Crossroads of Science and Spirituality*](#). (For further information about the impact of our individual and shared Webs of Belief, you may want to watch my [YouTube video on the Web of Belief](#).)

As you encounter the content of *The Urantia Book* that follows, you will do so through the filter of your current Web of Belief. The question is whether, and to what extent, you will allow the intriguing, challenging, and potentially transformational content in *The Urantia Book* to shift, and even potentially to shatter, your current Web of Belief. Whether and to what extent you do is an act of your free will. As you prepare to choose how you will respond to this content, I invite you to take into account that according to *The Urantia Book*, the choices we make with our free will are more important and have far greater consequences than most of us realize.

With this introduction, let us begin.

What is *The Urantia Book* and Where Did It Come From?

The Urantia Book is a written document that was published in its current form as a single, bound book in 1955 by the Urantia Foundation. (www.urantia.org) One version of the origin of this book is that it suddenly “appeared” in 1933 on a table as a set of papers, with a mysterious origin. I find this version wholly unsatisfactory.

The back story, as best I understand it, is that in the early 1920s, an individual, while in some kind of altered state, began generating the content that eventually became *The Urantia Book*. A group of interested and committed people grew up around this process, recording and studying the content being produced. They kept the identity of the person through whom this information came a secret so the focus would remain on the content and not the individual who happened to serve as its vehicle of delivery, what some would label its “channel.” From this group’s effort over the ensuing years, the individual papers were produced and eventually collated into the coherent literary work now called *The Urantia Book*.

I cannot speak to the veracity of this account of the book’s origins with any authority. As a starting point, for those comfortable with the phenomenon of channeling, this account seems at least plausible. Of note, the entities which are the purported source of this content differentiate the manner through which this content was transmitted from what is typically referred to as “channeling” for reasons which are not clear. The reference to channeling is provided here only in an attempt to provide a context for

this phenomenon of content transmission rather than as a statement about the mechanism through which the information was produced. For the purposes of brevity, I will keep referring to the process through which this content was delivered as channeling while recognizing the term does not do justice to this process.

For those not comfortable with channeling or not familiar with it, channeling may seem questionable, dubious or even outrageously unacceptable. In other words, it may not fit your current Web of Belief. It is not my intention in this brief document to tackle the truth status or potential truth status of this material simply because of the mechanism through which it is alleged to have been produced. For those interested in learning more about the phenomenon of channeling, there are many sources. I've provided a personal contribution to exploring the phenomenon of channeling and its veracity in my book, [Joyfully Shattered](#), in which I share some of my prior experiences, reflections and insights about channeling.

During a course I took as an undergraduate on Plato's great work, *The Republic*, the professor offered sage advice that seems applicable to *The Urantia Book* as well. He said that when engaging one of the great books, read it through the first time as if it is the Truth (with a capital "T"). In other words, suspend disbelief based upon your current Web of Belief. Once you've digested the content, then it is appropriate to approach it critically, with the goal of discerning what truths (without the capital "T") can be gleaned from it. Approaching *The Urantia Book* in this manner will allow you first to engage its content uncritically, holding as possible that everything it contains is true. Then thoughtfully and self-consciously you will have the opportunity to consider if and to what extent you will allow the content of *The Urantia Book* to shift, change or perhaps shatter your current Web of Belief. It is in such a spirit that I will approach this summary and commentary. It will begin with a summary of the content, accepting for the moment that it is all true. This will be followed by commentary with the goal of beginning to probe, to discern as best as possible, the truth status, or at least potential truth status, of this astounding work.

***The Urantia Book* Content Overview**

Urantia is the name given to our planet earth in *The Urantia Book*. The book provides a comprehensive history and understanding of our world and the purpose for our existence in it. That's quite an ambitious goal. But the text doesn't stop there. In fact it doesn't even begin there. The work's audacious sweep can be gleaned simply by looking at the sections into which the book is divided, which are:

- Foreword (on the nature of divinity and deity)
- Part I: The Central and Superuniverses
- Part II: The Local Universe
- Part III: The History of Urantia
- Part IV: The Life and Teachings of Jesus

I need to take a step out of order here and add a commentary about the fact that Part IV (encompassing almost 800 pages) is about Jesus. I come to this portion of *The Urantia Book* with some history and a key bias. The relevant history is that I was raised in a family best described as culturally Jewish and passionately atheist. In the book [Joyfully Shattered](#) I tell the story of my more than 40-year journey from those origins to spirituality now serving a central role in my life, including my having professed vows as a monk in the Spirit of Peace international, interfaith monastic community. The key bias I refer to is revealed in the term interfaith. A critical element of my spiritual path has been the belief that there are many paths to spiritual awakening, and that all paths characterized by love, integrity and

compassion are equally valid. My most important spiritual teacher, Ron Roth, founder of [Celebrating Life Ministries](#), the parent organization of the Spirit of Peace monastic community, taught that there is only one religion, the religion of love, and that the masters at the origin of all the world's great religions were teaching this same perennial truth.

If this is true, then why would *The Urantia Book* dedicate more than a third of its voluminous content to the life and teachings of Jesus? If *The Urantia Book* is an accurate depiction of the Truth, does this mean Christianity wins? Does this mean all other religions, all other paths to God (or to enlightenment with no God as the Buddhists believe) are “wrong”, are false paths that should be abandoned in favor of Christianity? Something about this violates my deeply held belief that there are many paths to enlightenment, to awakening, to God, and that our world needs an embracing, interfaith approach to walking our individual and collective spiritual paths.

We will delve into this important question in the content that follows. The answer may surprise you.

Returning to the book's outline, the Foreword, though only 20 pages long, constitutes a dense and profoundly challenging text for any reader to grasp. This is not surprising since it takes as its task to describe the nature of divinity, deity, and God. In this summary, I will not begin with this portion but will tackle it at the right time in introducing you to the content of *The Urantia Book*. That's because in my experience one isn't ready to fully engage this content as a reader until having worked through, and wrestled with, most of the rest of the book.

We will instead begin by summarizing Parts I, II and III, as these provide an answer to the question, “What exists?” Together they provide an awe inspiring and thrilling depiction of what constitutes all that exists and how it came to be. Woven throughout these sections are clear answers to why we exist and the purpose of our lives. We will then call out a few highlights of Part IV because the life of Jesus of Nazareth is understood in *The Urantia Book* to be the epitome of a well-lived life by a fully God-conscious being, but more about this when we come to that section.

As we embark on the effort to share the contents of *The Urantia Book*, we must acknowledge the profound limits of language encountered in this process. As channeled content (or something like it), the source of the information provided in *The Urantia Book* is understood to be beings who exist on what can best be described as non-physical levels of existence. They exist beyond all space and all time, a concept we will wrestle with shortly. Therefore their consciousness, and whatever “language” may be used to express it, cannot be mapped or reduced to any human language.

This channeled content happened to be delivered in English, an accident of the person through whom this material was channeled living in the United States in the 1920s. English is no better suited to expressing the extraordinary concepts found in this work than any other human language. Instead, we would be best served by thinking of the words and concepts expressed in *The Urantia Book* as pointing towards that which they are seeking to describe rather than literally denoting what is and why it is. This is self-consciously expressed in the text when in the Foreword it is noted,

It is exceedingly difficult to present enlarged concepts and advanced truth, in our endeavor to expand cosmic consciousness and enhance spiritual perception, when we are restricted to the use of a circumscribed language of the realm. But our mandate admonishes us to make every effort to convey our meanings by using the word symbols of the English tongue. We have been instructed to introduce new terms only when the concept to be portrayed finds no terminology

in English which can be employed to convey such a new concept partially or even with more or less distortion of meaning. (F:0.2)²

This passage provides a glimpse not only into the challenges of language, but what is appropriately understood to be the hierarchical nature of relationships in the spiritual realm. According to the text, the project to communicate the content that eventually became known as *The Urantia Book* was explicitly authorized by one group of beings to be carried out by another group of beings under guidelines strictly laid down by the authorizing beings. We will address more about these hierarchical relationships when we discuss what went wrong in the history of earth/Urantia that has created many of the challenges we face today.

Let us now turn to this extraordinary content and the reason it was revealed to humanity.

What Exists?

What exists is immense, more immense than has ever been conceived by today's science, and perhaps by any human being. What we call the universe is only a portion, in fact a dramatically small portion, of all that exists.

What exists includes all of the physical matter and energy of our material universe. Our universe is composed of a collection of local universes that together make up a superuniverse. However, our superuniverse is only one of seven "superuniverses", each of which exists within finite space and time. Each had a beginning, and each continues to evolve over time and within time. There is no clear boundary between one superuniverse and the next, so it is not clear how they are demarcated. The seven superuniverses together contain an evolutionary potential of around seven trillion inhabited planets.

Taken together, the seven superuniverses are called the grand universe. Earth (Urantia) is situated on an outer fringe of the seventh and youngest of the superuniverses. We are therefore early in our evolution as a planet compared to the rest of the grand universe, but more on this later.

Beyond these seven superuniverses is an immense realm of energy that is not well understood by those beings who are the source of *The Urantia Book*. It is thought to be of a size as to be able to form a hundred or more other universes. These other universes do not yet exist, but may develop (or be created—again more on this later) at some unfathomably distant time in the future.

Now comes a stretch. There exists another level of existence called the morontia level. These are complete worlds, existing as a system of morontia worlds contained within a local universe. The morontia level of existence is characterized by being partially within time and space and partially outside of time and space, a level of existence that incorporates a non-physical, non-spacial, and non-temporal

¹*The Urantia Book* is organized into papers that are numbered 1 to 196 plus the Foreword. The conventional notation to refer to specific content within the book is made with the paper number first followed by a colon, then the section number followed by a period, and then the paragraph. So this reference is to the second paragraph in the opening portion of the Foreword which precedes section I.

level of being, what we might call “spiritual”.³ So the morontia level might best be understood as being part physical and part spiritual in its makeup.

The next level “up”, if one wants to think in evolutionary or developmental terms, (which we will address soon), is the Havona level of existence. This might be thought of as entirely spiritual, though this term does not do justice to the perfection of this level. It is composed of a billion spheres which exist entirely beyond all time and beyond what may be thought of as space as we understand this term. It exists in perfection, a perfection in all that is and all that happens of which we cannot even conceive.

Yet there is another level beyond Havona, a level of perfection, power and immense dimension beyond all human conception: the Paradise Isle. This is the realm of existence in which God may be understood to exist. It is the source of all power, all gravity, all energy, all existence. It is directly connected with everything else that exists in every moment and in ways we cannot conceive through a mechanism referred to as universe reflectivity. We will come back to the role of universe reflectivity in the unique and troubled history of earth/Urantia.

Taken together, all that exists—the seven superuniverses including the morontia worlds, the vast realms of energy beyond the superuniverses, the Havona worlds, and the Paradise Isle—is referred to collectively as the master universe. *The Urantia Book* describes these realms of existence as being structured with the Paradise Isle at the immense, unmoving center, the Havona or central universe encircling the Paradise Isle, the seven superuniverses revolving in established orbits beyond this, and the vast, undeveloped realm of energy existing beyond these.

The Urantia Book describes three forms of what is called “force-energy” operating within the master universe: material, mindal and spiritual. It uses the term “gravity” to refer to the phenomenon through which everything that exists is connected, with gravity phenomena acting on the material, mindal and spiritual levels. All gravity originates from the Paradise Isle and stretches into, and remains connected with, all that exists. Each of these forms of force-energy may be understood as being capable of doing what physicists call “work” on its respective level or form of existence, namely of impacting and manifesting what exists in that level of existence.

Who Exists

The Urantia Book uses a term with which we are all familiar but in an unfamiliar way. That term is “personality”. Who exists are beings with the quality of personality. Human beings on Urantia, on earth, have this quality of personality. So do other beings, also referred to as humans, who exist on the vast number of other inhabited planets within the grand universe. *The Urantia Book* definitively answers the question of whether we are alone in the universe as intelligent life. We are not. And all beings with personality are linked through yet another type of gravity, personality gravity, but addressing this will have to wait until we get to the nature of divinity.

³ For some it is likely difficult to conceive of any realm that could be non-physical, non-spatial and non-temporal. Rather than reading an expository description of such a realm, the best way to allow yourself to open to this possibility is to have a subjective experience of it. To assist in this process, you may wish to listen to one of the guided meditations I’ve created to help listeners stretch, expand and grow through a personal experience of a non-physical, non-spatial and non-temporal level of being. These two guided meditations are entitled [Opening to Your High Self and Journey Into Oneness](#). For those interested, a related experience is available through my online course on prayer entitled [Prayer Power and Awakening: Discover Your Personal Path to Authentic Prayer](#)

We are not only intelligent life. We exist with free will. The free will of all humans on all planets in all superuniverses, on the morontia and Havona levels of existence, and even within the Paradise Isle, is a gift from God, a bestowal (again more on this later).

Yet humans are not the only free will creatures. Countless legions of other free will beings exist in realms that are non-physical, non-spatial, and non-temporal. Many of these beings are referred to as angels. In addition there exists a dizzyingly large number of other types and levels of these beings who may be thought of as existing in what we might call the spiritual or cosmic realm.

The Urantia Book describes so many different types and levels of beings with this quality of personality that it's almost impossible to keep track of them all. What is clear is that every type and level of being has a purpose. All are organized in a manner that might best be understood as a vast, hierarchical bureaucracy that is literally "managing" everything that happens on all levels throughout the master universe.

The Nature of Divinity

In order to understand how everything that is came into being and to answer the question, "Why do we exist?", we must first tackle the task we deferred at the beginning, namely trying to depict the nature of divinity, of God. As we do so, humility is the appropriate attitude. We have no language and no human cognitive capacity to comprehend or express the nature of that which is most ultimate, of divinity, of God. For this subject more than any other, our words can at best point to something we cannot fully comprehend or express.

As a starting point, the word God connotes an entity with the characteristic *The Urantia Book* calls personality. Whatever we are pointing to with the word God, it is only a subset or portion of the full nature of divinity as described in *The Urantia Book*. One of the ways this is expressed is,

Deity is personalizable as God, is prepersonal and superpersonal in ways not altogether comprehensible by man. (F:1.2)

The Urantia Book utilizes specialized vocabulary to describe the multiple levels, aspects and manifestations of divinity and deity. These are dense and difficult to comprehend. It will not be helpful in this brief summary to attempt to articulate, describe or understand these. Having said this, one concept worth highlighting is that nothing exists that is not already part of divinity or that can be separated from divinity. So even the entire master universe—composed of the Paradise Isle, Havona spheres, the seven superuniverses, the realm of unorganized energy beyond, and all the beings existing within these realms—is altogether languaged as God the Supreme, which itself is understood to be only an aspect or subset of all that is divinity.

So now comes another stretch. Divinity exists in eternity, beyond all time and all space. An aspect of divinity is changeless and perfect, what is languaged in the *The Urantia Book* as that which is absolute. But God the Supreme, the master universe, is evolving, meaning some aspect of it must be changing, and all change requires at least some element of time. The question arises, "How can that which is changeless, eternal, and outside of time also exist and evolve within time?"

The answer provided by *The Urantia Book* is that divinity is capable of differentiating within itself. Again, the levels and mechanisms of this differentiation are impossible to adequately express, though some attempts are made within the book to do so. Part of the answer given is that indivisible, unified divinity differentiates in a manner which can be described as composed of three parts. These are languaged as God the Father, the Eternal Son and the Infinite Spirit.

Again it appears that, based on the content in *The Urantia Book*, Christianity somehow “wins” among all the world’s great religions because it has espoused the concept of the Trinity since the early days of Christianity as an organized religion. However, it’s important to recognize that other religious and spiritual traditions have expressed a tripartite nature of divinity, which is why some refer to this as the “sacred Trinity of innumerable names.” We will come back to why there is overlap between the Trinity as described in *The Urantia Book* and the Trinity as understood in Christian theology when we speak more about Jesus.

Individually and collectively God the Father, the Eternal Son and the Infinite Spirit give rise to all that exists, including all of the vast array of types of beings and the master universe itself.

The Trinity as described in *The Urantia Book* differs somewhat from the Christian understanding of the Trinity. The Eternal Son is not the person known on earth/Urantia as Jesus of Nazareth. The Eternal Son is part of divinity and can be thought of as residing in the Paradise Isle. It is the source of what is languaged as spirit wherever it is found. The Eternal Son remains in contact with spirit wherever it exists in the master universe through the phenomenon of spiritual gravity.

The Eternal Son gives rise to a vast number of beings called Creator Sons. Each Creator Son is charged with responsibility for creating and administering/ruling a local universe (a portion of one of the superuniverses). Each Creator Son carries the name Michael, with the Creator Son who created our local universe named Michael of Nebadon because Nebadon is the name given to our local universe.

Each Creator Son, as part of their own evolutionary development as a spirit being and administrator/ruler of their local universe, undergoes seven different incarnations on seven different planets within their local universe. According to *The Urantia Book*, Michael of Nebadon’s seventh and final incarnation was as Jesus of Nazareth on earth/Urantia. (We will have more to say about this incarnation later.)

As if the vastness of the master universe is not already enough to humble those of us living on earth/Urantia, according to *The Urantia Book*, Michael of Nebadon is the 611,121st of the Creator Sons. So there are that many and more local universes throughout the grand universe.

The Infinite Spirit is the source of mind in whatever form it manifests. The Infinite Spirit remains in contact with every manifestation of mind, wherever it exists within the master universe, through the phenomenon of mind gravity.

The Infinite Spirit gives rise at the local universe level to the Divine Minister, which is also called the Holy Spirit or the local universe Creative Spirit. Each Divine Minister is described as having a feminine nature in contrast to the masculine nature of the Creator Sons and God the Father, and is therefore sometimes referred to as the local universe Mother Spirit.

God the Father is understood as residing within the Paradise Isle and as the source of all personalities throughout the master universe. God the Father remains in contact with every manifestation of personality, wherever it exists, through the phenomenon of personality gravity.

It is God the Father who bestows the gift of free will upon what are then known as free will creatures. We will address the purpose of this free will bestowal and of God the Father's continuous connection with all free will creatures when we tackle the question of why we exist a little later.

How Did Everything That Exists Come to Be?

In describing how what is came into existence, *The Urantia Book* directly takes on the question of creationism vs. evolution and provides perhaps a surprising answer: both are true.

Regarding how the Trinity, the Paradise isle, the Havona spheres, each of the Superuniverses and every local universe came into being, for the purposes of this summary only a few pieces will be briefly mentioned. First is to recognize that one aspect of divinity is to serve as the original first mover, the causeless cause of everything else. Second, each local universe comes into being through the conjoint action of a Creator Son and a local universe Mother Spirit, assisted by a myriad of other beings we will not attempt to describe here. This is the creationism answer to how everything came to be.

Once a local universe is created, the evolutionary process begins. *The Urantia Book* describes a process of evolution for our stars and planets, including earth/Urantia, that is fairly consistent with the timeline currently supported by today's science, including our planet being on the order of five billion years old. The evolution of life forms on our planet is described in a timeline and manner that again are similar to, but not fully in accord with, our current scientific understanding of the evolutionary process. Of note, *The Urantia Book* seems to imply that the development of new branches on the evolutionary tree do not occur only through random mutations, as today's modern theory of evolution holds. Instead, the emergence of new life forms is described as occurring through direct intervention by spiritual beings working in alignment with a highly intentional plan to foster evolution on each planet, including ours. The manner through which this intervention occurs is not elucidated. In this view, there is room for both random mutations and intentionality in evolution.

This is possible because the physical universe follows law-like behavior that can be discovered by science and is also directly impacted by non-physical forces. *The Urantia Book* describes this dynamic interplay by saying,

In the evaluation and recognition of mind it should be remembered that the universe is neither mechanical nor magical; it is a creation of mind and a mechanism of law. (41:11.1)

Later in this section it is written,

Since mind co-ordinates the universe, fixity of mechanisms is nonexistent. (42:11.7)

So while science can identify these laws in the realms of physical forces and matter-energy, the realms of mind and spirit can do "work" that can modify how these laws play out, even on the physical/energetic level of existence.

Interestingly, the laws governing the function and evolution of living, biological entities on any given planet need not be identical. *The Urantia Book* states that on nine out of ten planets, the mechanisms that generate life and govern the function and evolution of living, biological entities are the same. One out of ten planets is considered an “experimental” planet, in which the beings which create the structure, function and evolution of biological entities for that planet try new arrangements for the substrates and processes of life. Earth/Urantia is one of these experimental planets.

Regardless of the mechanisms through which evolution occurs, at such time on any particular planet as an animal being evolves with the capacity for worship and wisdom, this animal being and its descendants begin to experience what is called the “ministry of the Spirit.” (34:5.3) From that point forward, they become endowed with free will. Surprisingly, all mortals endowed with free will (all of which are called human beings regardless of their planet of origin) are erect, biped animals, though they otherwise may demonstrate wide variation in appearance. This striking commonality appears to be a result of the impact of intentional mindal and spiritual influences on evolution across the different planets. Perhaps also surprisingly, all human beings demonstrate male and female sexes. Male and female are equal in mind endowment and spiritual status.

Of note, *The Urantia Book* focuses on this type of human being, noting its presence is widespread through all the superuniverses, but also makes reference to the existence of other life forms without further elaboration.

Concluding this section on how what exists came to be, let us now turn to the developed and developing nature of human beings, especially our capacity for free will. Free will is an aspect of what has been called personality. As all personality ultimately derives from God the Father, free will can be understood as a gift, a bestowal, from God the Father to all human beings wherever they exist. Intimately connected with this capacity for free will is another, even more astounding bestowal from God the Father. Every free will creature receives a portion of God the Father that literally dwells within them, hence it is called the indwelling Thought Adjuster. It is also sometimes called the Mystery Monitor for reasons that are not clear.

A human being receives their Thought Adjuster to indwell within them the first time they exercise their personal free will to make a moral choice, which typically occurs on earth/Urantia around the age of five or six.

Now that we have covered what exists, who exists, the nature of divinity and how everything that exists came to be, we are prepared to directly address the purpose of human life.

Why We Exist

While other living beings exist, including all the plants and animals that makeup the biosphere of our planet and the many other inhabited planets, beings with free will fulfill a unique role.

We will focus this discussion on free will as it functions within humans, within the class of free will creatures that begins their evolutionary journey through life on one of the physical planets like earth/Urantia, because that is who we are. (Note: This sets aside discussing the function of free will in other types of beings, including angels.)

I previously used the term “countless” to connote the astoundingly large number of free will creatures, both humans and others, throughout the master universe, well into the trillions and orders of magnitude beyond. But *The Urantia Book* makes clear that they are not “countless”. In fact, every single free will creature at every level of existence is counted. And what each does with that free will counts, matters. According to *The Urantia Book*, what we each do with our free will is at the essence of why we exist. Let me explain.

We have each been born on earth/Urantia to begin a personal evolutionary journey (in contrast to a biological or species evolutionary journey, which is also occurring). Central to that journey is our free will and the choices we make with it. This personal evolutionary journey is characterized, defined and traveled each time we make one of three related types of choices. The first is the degree to which we use our free will to choose love, beauty and goodness, especially in the face of the challenges we encounter during our existence here. Second is the degree to which we make the choice in every moment whether to choose with our free will to align with the will of God or to align with our personal ego-based will. Third is the degree to which we open to and succeed in merging with the aspect of God already present within each of us, the indwelling Thought Adjuster.

Let us unpack each of these choices for better understanding.

Life on earth/Urantia is difficult, filled with challenges, pain and loss. According to *The Urantia Book*, we evolved from lemur-like mammals (something on which *The Urantia Book* and the current theory of evolution agree) whose primary emotion was fear. So we are deeply biologically wired to experience fear in the face of the challenges we encounter. When we encounter these challenges, and our natural response of fear, we are blessed with the opportunity to exercise our free will. *The Urantia Book* is clear that each individual’s personal evolution advances to the extent they choose love, beauty and goodness in every moment, especially in the face of challenges. (Of note, I was personally surprised to find that choosing beauty is part of our ascending evolutionary journey. *The Urantia Book* indicates that aspiring to, creating and appreciating beauty calls upon and strengthens the higher aspects of our nature in a manner that supports and enhances our personal evolutionary journey.)

During our lives on earth/Urantia, we are endowed with what we call ego, which can be understood as an inner sense of self through which we experience our capacity to exercise free will. A strong and effectively functioning ego seems to be essential for navigating our lives, especially when we encounter challenges. *The Urantia Book* presents a counter intuitive way of understanding such moments. Instead of choosing with our personal ego, choosing what we think is in our personal best interests, or choosing on some higher, more ethical basis, we grow and evolve most to the extent we learn to make every choice, especially the most difficult ones, in alignment with the will of God. If we hold a picture of God as described in *The Urantia Book*, this will is of infinite compassion, love, and wisdom. It encompasses a level of complexity regarding the purpose and functioning of all that is, and how and why it is unfolding as it is, that we cannot possibly grasp with our earth-level consciousness. In the face of this awareness, ironically the highest use of our free will is to give it away, to choose in every situation, in the face of every challenge, to embrace in the most profound way possible the stance, “Not my will but Thy will.”

As noted, according to *The Urantia Book* we receive a bestowal of a “piece” of God, the indwelling Thought Adjuster. A key part of our evolutionary journey is to gradually merge into oneness with this aspect of God within us. This isn’t something we can simply choose or will to do. It’s something we must evolve into. And we make progress on this evolutionary journey every time we encounter a challenge and respond with love, beauty and goodness. We make progress every time we choose to align with the

will of God. And the greater the challenge we face, the greater the opportunity to make progress on our evolutionary journey to merging with God.

We also can make progress through worship. Growing up in an atheist family, one of the most foreign experiences for me has been worshipping and praising God. My ego-based rationality holds that if God is as expanded and transcendent as I now believe is the case, God has no need of our worship and is not influenced to “do” more for us because we worship God. *The Urantia Book* makes it clear that the purpose of worship and praise of God is to change us, not God. Authentic worship helps us expand, grow and evolve in a direction and a manner that helps in our journey to merging with the aspect of God within.

We do not accomplish our evolutionary journey, including but not limited to merging with our Thought Adjuster, in a single lifetime on earth/Urantia, but we do begin it. When we die on earth, *The Urantia Book* says that we are reborn on the first of the morontia worlds. (Of note, *The Urantia Book* says that our descriptions of heaven are an approximation of existence on the initial morontia world.) There we awaken with precisely the degree of spiritual progress we made during our lifetime on earth/Urantia. Then in a series of incarnations on these morontia worlds, we continue to evolve with the same goals. After what typically are many, many lifetimes progressing through higher and higher morontia worlds, we “graduate” to a series of incarnations on the Havona worlds. There we continue to evolve to ever higher levels of perfection in these same evolutionary tasks. Eventually, after eons of time as reckoned on earth/Urantia, we graduate to the Paradise Isle. There we become members of what is called the Corps of the Finality.

“Finaliters” as they are called, at least those who earn membership in this Corp as ascending, Adjuster-fused mortals of time, have experienced countless challenges, have overcome countless obstacles, have learned to unfailingly choose with their own free will to align with the will of God in the face of every challenge and in every moment, and in the process have fully merged with the aspect of God within them, their Thought Adjuster.

Here we may ask a critical question to which *The Urantia Book* provides a stunning answer. The question is, “If divinity is already completely perfect in eternal existence, why does divinity go to the ‘trouble’ of creating and overseeing the master universe?” At least part of the answer is that the master universe is the necessary vehicle for evolution of free will creatures into finaliters. And here is the stunning piece. At the end of their journey through countless challenges, finaliters have achieved a kind of perfected wisdom that even divinity cannot possess because it has never experienced anything but eternal perfection, it has never experienced and had to overcome challenges. Combining the wisdom of this divinity of perfection with the wisdom of finaliters achieves an integrated and new kind of wisdom that divinity can never know without the journey of the finaliters.

So our purpose in our life on earth/Urantia becomes clear. We are at the earliest stages of a deeply personal journey to God. Every challenge we encounter becomes an opportunity to take another step, positive or negative, on that journey. It’s relieving to know that perfection on this journey is not expected of us. But progress is.

Now we come to a universal aspect of this journey: accountability. Each Creator Son has flexibility in how they can choose to organize the manner through which they will deal with the actions of free will creatures living within their local universe. However that is done, *The Urantia Book* makes clear that there exists exquisite intention, structure and accountability in how all levels of organization within the

master universe interface with free will creatures. Regardless of the flexibility given to each Creator Son within their local universe, every free will creature is definitely held accountable for each act of free will.

According to *The Urantia Book*, the history of our planet is unique and deeply troubled because beings who lived on earth/Urantia in our distant past made critical decisions, acts of free will, that were not aligned with the will of God. We are living with the consequences of these decisions today. It is to these startling revelations that we turn now.

The Unique and Troubled History of Earth/Urantia

According to *The Urantia Book*, the first human beings, animals capable of free will choice, consciousness and worship, evolved on earth almost one million years ago. Their evolution continued until approximately 500,000 years ago when the state of human beings on the planet was deemed ready to take the next step in evolution in moral and spiritual development. At that time, as is the process on all evolutionary planets throughout the superuniverses, a being referred to as a Planetary Prince, along with a staff of 100 other beings, was assigned to oversee/guide/rule/ manage our planet. A critical role played by each Planetary Prince and their accompanying entourage is to “upstep” human evolution on the planet by introducing a higher level of being, consciousness, morality and spirituality than could be developed through human evolution alone. A Planetary Prince is another bestowal for our planet and the humans living upon it from the Creator Son and Mother Spirit of our local universe.

For earth/Urantia, this Planetary Prince was a being known as Caligastia. Beginning around 500,000 years ago, Caligastia and his staff of 100 associated beings organized schools in which human beings learned cultivation of the soil, home building, and other vocational training, social and emotional development, as well as spiritual training. On the vast majority of planets, these educational and development activities initiated by a Planetary Prince lead to human evolution through the following seven stages:

- The *nutrition epoch* in which in which humans spend their waking time either in seeking food or in fighting offensively or defensively
- The *security age* in which all spare time not spent in pursuit of food is engaged in enhancing security, including home fortification, defining kinship relationships, and developing and enhancing techniques of war
- The *material-comfort era* in which growing amounts of leisure time are devoted to personal comfort and pleasure, with a tendency towards tyranny, intolerance, gluttony and drunkenness, eventually giving way to stronger, truth-loving elements of advancing civilization
- The *quest for knowledge and wisdom* as material and security needs are increasingly met and the higher yearnings of human beings manifest in a hunger for learning and education
- The *epoch of philosophy and brotherhood* in which reason and ethics lead to the development of humans as truly moral beings, establishing connections of brother/sisterhood built upon the golden rule
- The *age of spiritual striving* in which the search is for spiritual satisfactions and cosmic understandings, including evolution of religions built upon the pursuit of cosmic wisdom and personal spiritual experience

- The *era of light and life* characterized by all human accomplishments being blended in cosmic unity and unselfish service.

These stages represent the typical development of humanity on inhabited planets throughout the superuniverses. On earth/Urantia, human development became distorted through three tragic events. The first is known as the Lucifer Rebellion.

Lucifer was a created being of one of the orders of angels. He had served in leadership in many systems throughout the local universe of Nebadon with “wisdom, sagacity and efficiency”. (53:0:1) But at a critical point, he chose to rebel against the existing hierarchical order of the local and master universe. His rebellion and the decision of all those who chose to join in this rebellion are characterized as a terrible evil by the authors of *The Urantia Book* because their rebellious acts represent an exercise of free will in direct opposition to the will of God.

As noted earlier, the organization of all personalities across the vastness of all that exists is characterized by hierarchy. Individual beings of a “higher” order are placed in positions of authority. Groups of beings are often organized into councils and other structures for deliberation and decision making or for giving advice to those with the authority to rule.

This intensely hierarchical structure exists in dynamic tension with the gift of free will bestowed upon all creatures with personalities, including angels and humans. As noted earlier, our developmental task is to grow through challenges into an ever deeper choice to align our free will with the will of God.

Lucifer eventually concluded that the hierarchical authority structure of all beings with personality is not the product of a divinity possessed of unfathomable love and wisdom. He concluded instead that it was put in place by those in power, including Michael of Nebadon, creator of our local universe. He claimed that God does not exist and is a fabrication created to perpetuate the power of those in positions of power in this hierarchy. (From our earthbound perspective, we will need to set aside the stunning illogic of an angelic being who exists in a spiritual realm outside of space and time claiming that God does not exist.)

Multiple references to the Lucifer Rebellion and how evil it was preceded the in depth description that was eventually provided. As a result I was prepared to fully and self-righteously join in condemning his heinous acts. Then I read Lucifer’s Declaration of Liberty which he promulgated approximately 200,000 years ago as he launched his rebellion. Its key points are:

1. The Universal Father does not exist. Physical gravity and space-energy are inherent in the universe. The Father is a myth invented by the Paradise Sons to enable them to maintain the rule of the universes in the Father’s name.
2. The local system of Nebadon should exercise self-rule rather than be subject to the rule of Michael of Nebadon or any of the other appointed leaders of the system. In fact, self-rule should apply to all orders of intelligence.
3. The alleged plan for training ascending mortals for eventual roles in the Corp of the Finaliters is a waste of time and energy as the destiny of this Corp is a pure fiction. All ascenders should

enjoy the liberty of individual self-determination rather than be trained to give their will over to the will of a God that does not exist. (53:3.1-6)

Reading this I felt stunned. First, it reads like a call for liberty and democratic self rule, not unlike America's Declaration of Independence. But on a personal level, for the first part of my life I had completely agreed with every point in Lucifer's Declaration of Liberty, except as a passionate atheist I had applied the same criticisms to leaders of religious institutions. I did not then and do not now consider myself to be evil, including when professing atheism. Then, as now, I held deep moral and loving convictions that guided my life. I only gradually and begrudgingly evolved from certainty in the truth of atheism to questioning it and eventually to growing beyond it, a long and complex journey I describe in the book [Joyfully Shattered](#). I therefore found it profoundly challenging to discover the beliefs I had deeply held to be characterized in *The Urantia Book* as so evil. I still do. We will explore more on this in the commentary that follows.

Lucifer recruited others within the local universe of Nebadon to support his rebellion, notably Satan, another being of a high angelic order who had previously served with distinction.

The second tragic event in the history of earth/Urantia occurred around the same time as the Lucifer Rebellion when Satan succeeded in recruiting Caligastia, the Planetary Prince of earth/Urantia, to join the rebellion, an act characterized as the Caligastia Betrayal. Once this happened, earth/Urantia was immediately quarantined from connection with the rest of the local, grand and master universe through temporary severing of our connection to universe reflectivity.

All of Caligastia's assistants, as well as all angelic and other spiritual beings on or associated with earth/Urantia at that moment found themselves suddenly cut off from all sources of mindal and spiritual consciousness and from any communication with celestial beings outside of earth/Urantia. In their isolation, each had to make a choice between joining Caligastia and the Lucifer rebellion or remaining loyal to Michael of Nebadon and serving the will of God. For seven earth/Urantia years this battle raged, a battle of wills, not of violence. When the last free will being had made his/her choice, 60 of Caligastia's 100 assistants and half or more of the angelic hosts and other celestial beings associated with earth/Urantia had joined the rebellion.

Once all free will beings had made their choice, Caligastia was removed from all responsibilities as Planetary Prince by the authorities of the local universe.

Over the ensuing years since the Caligastia Betrayal, the initial work of Caligastia and his assistants to upstep human development was lost in disorder and war. Biological development continued apace, but social, cultural, mental, and spiritual development regressed to primitive levels.

Approximately 35,000 years ago, it was recognized that biologic development of human beings on earth/Urantia had progressed to the point of warranting the next planned upstep in human development. This happens on every developing planet and involves assignment of what are called a Material Son and Material Daughter to a planet. These are beings of a spiritual nature who are materialized in human bodies for the purpose of enhancing development of the population of human beings on a planet. On each planet to which such a pair is assigned they are given the names Adam and Eve, hence giving rise to the stories we have today of Adam and Eve. However, *The Urantia Book* tells a significantly different version of the story than is found in the Bible.

The guardians of earth/Urantia knew that an Adam and Eve pair would be coming to the planet and provided instructions to some groups living in the Middle East to prepare a suitable home for them and their descendants. A beautiful peninsula of land jutting into the eastern Mediterranean Sea was selected, and decades were spent preparing this area as an exquisite garden with suitable housing for a large community. And yes, it was named Eden, though this was in honor of Edentia, the name of the capital planet for our constellation.

Adam and Eve arrived and established their home in Eden. They had been given extensive instructions prior to being sent to earth/Urantia. These included being explicitly told to reproduce amongst themselves to create a race of highly developed beings, as well as working with nearby tribes and communities to teach them aspects of commerce, culture, knowledge, ethics and religion that would help them develop in these areas. They were instructed to mate exclusively within their own race until they had reached approximately half a million in population, at which time they would spread out to mate with the best in the tribes and communities of other human beings in a manner that would vastly upstep and enhance the evolution of human beings throughout the planet. These same steps are planned and executed on every planet with human beings, accelerating their development through the stages of planetary evolution towards reaching the stage of light and life.

This Adam and Eve pair faced uniquely daunting challenges on earth/Urantia. The state of development of the human communities around them had reverted to highly primitive stages because of the Caligastia Betrayal, far more primitive than are encountered by Adam and Eve pairs on other planets. Also because of the Caligastia Betrayal, earth/Urantia remained under quarantine from all contact through universe reflectivity, so they were isolated from all celestial beings who might otherwise have provided them guidance and counsel in dealing with the almost overwhelming challenges they faced. After more than 100 years on earth, they had grown their local community in Eden, but had otherwise made little progress in the other tasks they had been charged with accomplishing to help human development on their new home planet.

Adding to their challenges, both Caligastia and Satan remained at large and able to move about and interact freely on earth/Urantia. This requires that we take a tangent occasioned by the aftermath of the Lucifer Rebellion and Caligastia Betrayal. Once all individuals with free will had determined whether they would side with the rebellion or with the existing universe order, there existed adequate authority to put an end to the rebellion, imprison all rebels, and punish them. In the spiritual realm, punishment means complete and total termination of their personal existence. They would be no more on any level or realm of existence.

But Michael of Nebadon and other leaders of the local and superuniverse did not take this course. Instead, they decided to allow all rebels, including Lucifer, Satan, Caligastia, and all of their followers, to continue to execute their attempted rebellion. *The Urantia Book* goes into some depth regarding the reason for this decision. It speaks to the highest level of respect and honoring of the gift of free will and its unfettered exercise that exists at all levels up to and including God respecting the expression of free will throughout all creation. This means that countless individual free will beings have had to encounter and re-encounter the choice to side with the rebellion or to align with the will of God. As of a result of this process, *The Urantia Book* reports that the amount of good that has come out of not interfering with the rebellion and allowing the continued exercise of free will by all who encounter it to be one thousand times greater than the amount of evil that has resulted from the rebellion.

Because of this decision, the rebellion has been allowed to continue for 200,000 years without interference from any of the authorities within the grand or master universe. This has had ongoing repercussions on earth/Urantia, especially regarding what happened with Adam and Eve.

The challenges faced by Adam and Eve on earth/Urantia surpassed those faced by almost every other Adam/Eve pair on the tens of thousands of other inhabited planets in our local universe. Seeing so little progress after more than a hundred years and in complete communication isolation from all outside sources of support, communication and guidance, Adam and Eve each began to feel despair regarding their ability to fulfill their mission.

At the same time, Caligastia and his agents were conspiring to influence several human beings living in communities near Eden to place into their minds a plan to accelerate upstepping human evolution and fulfillment of the Adam/Eve mission by having the best of the human stock mate with the best of the Adam/Eve stock sooner than had been planned in the instructions given to Adam and Eve. These humans shared this plan with Eve over a period of time, playing on her despair and her heartfelt desire to fulfill their mission. Then, through a process not well described, Eve decided to mate with the finest human specimen available with the sincere intention to accelerate development of humans and their civilization.

The Urantia Book makes clear that Eve and the humans with whom this plan developed were each acting with the highest of intentions. However, they were being manipulated by Satan, Caligastia and their agents to act upon their own will choice rather than align with the will of God.

When Adam learned of these events, he recognized the consequences that would befall Eve for not choosing to comply with the will of God. He chose to share those consequences rather than be separated from his beloved partner of more than 100 years. So he, too, mated with a human woman of high stock so that he would share Eve's fate.

The results quickly became catastrophic. Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden for disobeying the will of God. They no longer had access to the Tree of Life which enabled their physical bodies to not age and die, leading to their physical decline and eventual death. Spiritual and mindal consequences to their not aligning with the will of God further contributed to their decline and death.

Caine was born of the union of Eve with the human male. Abel was born of Adam and Eve two years later. When they were 20 and 18, Caine did slay Abel, though Abel was not completely innocent in their sibling tensions. Caine left and went on to be a leader in his adopted new tribe.

Eventually Adam and Eve died, with their descendants mating with other tribes and contributing to some degree to upstepping human development on earth/Urantia. However *The Urantia Book* makes clear that if they had shown patience, if they had trusted in following the will of God, Adam and Eve would have eventually fulfilled their mission. Had that happened, had there been no Adamic default (as it is labeled), the human race on earth would have been far better developed and further progressed on the path to light and life than we are today.

Taken together, the Lucifer Rebellion, the Caligastia Betrayal and the Adamic default make life on earth/Urantia uniquely challenging among all the populated worlds in our local universe. But each of these events, tragic on one level, stands as testimony to the exquisite value placed on the unfettered exercise of free will. Free will exercised in an imperfect realm of time and space inevitably leads to error,

sin, evil and iniquity. But one of the gifts that results from living in a realm of time is the opportunity to learn, to grow, and to make different choices over time. In fact, *The Urantia Book* teaches that time is fundamentally a tool, a vehicle, for learning, growth and evolution. This may even be the fundamental purpose for which time exists.

We also learn in the book that being born on earth/Urantia may result in a particular individual's evolutionary journey taking a longer time than had they been born on a different world. But it also makes clear that diligent effort to grow and evolve, to learn to exercise our free will in ever greater alignment with the will of God, will guarantee each of us a path to the Paradise Isle, to eventually joining the Corp of the Finaliters.

The Urantia Book describes this interplay between perfection and imperfection as follows:

But in our evolving universe of relative perfection and imperfection we rejoice that disagreement and misunderstanding are possible, for thereby is evidenced the fact and the act of personality in the universe. And if our creation is an existence dominated by personality, then you can be assured of the possibilities of personality survival, advancement, and achievement; we can be confident of personality growth, experience, and adventure. What a glorious universe, in that it is personal and progressive, not merely mechanical or even passively perfect! (75:8.6)

Who Are the Sources of *The Urantia Book* and How Do They Understand Its Purpose?

We are finally in a position to ask and answer these questions. The sources of *The Urantia Book* content are highly developed beings who exist in a spiritual or cosmic realm. They have been charged by beings higher than themselves in the hierarchy of the master universe to share this content with all humanity on earth/Urantia at this particular time in the evolution on our planet and our species to once again "upstep" our evolutionary development towards our ultimate goal and fate, which is to settle our entire planet in light and life.

There have been many previous moments in human history when revelation was gifted or bestowed upon our species from spiritual beings for the purpose of upstepping the evolution of consciousness and religion on our planet. However, the import of *The Urantia Book* is made clear when its sources characterize it as only the fifth bestowal of revealed wisdom on earth/Urantia that qualifies as being of epochal significance. Each of these bestowals has been provided at a carefully selected time to upstep the development of all humanity. These five bestowals are:

1. The teachings of the Planetary Prince, Caligastia, and his staff of 100 from 500,000 years ago until his betrayal 200,000 years ago
2. The Material Son and Material Daughter, Adam and Eve, beginning 35,000 years ago until their default
3. Melchizedek of Salem, teacher of Abraham, who went on to teach the world the oneness of God 4,000 years ago and eventually became the father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam
4. Christ Michael's incarnation as Jesus of Nazareth 2,000 years ago
5. *The Urantia Book* in the 1920s and 1930s.

If *The Urantia Book* truly is one of the five most significant and transformational bestowals of revealed wisdom from the spirit realm in all of human history, it is worth taking into our hearts, minds and souls with the utmost seriousness and attention.

The Life of Jesus

The Urantia Book takes almost 800 pages to tell the life of Jesus. The sources of *The Urantia Book* do so because they state that the life lived by Jesus of Nazareth in every detail is the epitome of a life well lived, a life lived in complete alignment with the will of God, a life we are all to emulate if we wish to make the greatest possible progress in our own personal evolutionary path to the divine.

We obviously can only touch on a few highlights from the life of Jesus in this summary.

The first is to answer the question of who the historic Jesus was. He was a man born into a Jewish family in Nazareth who lived a life as a child, brother, and eventual head of his family's household after his father died. He went on to a public ministry as a spiritual teacher and leader for approximately five years, culminating in his death by crucifixion in Jerusalem.

But as noted before, the being that incarnated as Jesus of Nazareth is Michael of Nebadon, the Creator Son who, with his partnering Mother Spirit, created our local universe. His life on earth/Urantia was his seventh and final incarnation on a world within the local universe he created. His life on earth/Urantia is the only one of his incarnations in which he was born, lived a full life, and died as a creature of the planetary realm. In the others he incarnated and disincarnated without living a full life span, including not undergoing birth, maturation or death.

We should pause here to consider what *The Urantia Book* says concerning why the number seven holds special meaning, including why Michael of Nebadon needed to complete seven incarnations. The answer lies in the Trinity. That's because there are seven possible combinations of the three elements within the Trinity:

- Father
- Eternal Son
- Infinite Spirit
- Father and Eternal Son
- Father and Infinite Spirit
- Eternal Son and Infinite Spirit
- Father, Eternal Son and Infinite Spirit

Each of Michael of Nebadon's incarnations was focused upon one of these possible combinations. Each served as an ideal example for how to live a life dedicated to that particular aspect of the Trinity in all its possible combinations. His life on earth/Urantia as Jesus of Nazareth was dedicated to the Father, especially to how to live a life wholly guided by the will of the Father. This is the explanation *The Urantia Book* gives for why so much of Jesus' teachings are focused upon the Father aspect of divinity.

It is reasonable to ask why Michael of Nebadon would choose earth/Urantia as the site for his seventh and last incarnation, especially given the tragic history of our planet and the numerous ways human evolution has been hampered, delayed and misdirected by them. *The Urantia Book* answers this question by saying,

It is not that Urantia needed a Creator Son to set its tangled affairs in order; it is rather that the evil and sin on Urantia afforded the Creator Son a more striking background against which to reveal the matchless love, mercy and patience of the Paradise Father.” (76:5.7).

Until completing his seventh and final incarnation on earth/Urantia, Michael of Nebadon served as a regent over the local universe he had created without full authority to rule. Upon completing his seventh incarnation, he became the full ruler of this local universe in his own right.

A critical crisis point in this transition occurred shortly before he began his public ministry. Several months prior to being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan river, Jesus had gone on a six week solo pilgrimage to Mount Hermon. There he completed the process of fusing with his indwelling Thought Adjuster. He finished fully integrating his divine nature with his human nature. He also asked God the Father for permission to directly confront the rebels of his local universe and was granted this permission. There, on Mount Hermon, he confronted Satan and Caligastia, who spoke for Lucifer as well as for themselves. He did so as the Son of Man, as Joshua ben Joseph, not as a universe sovereign. This last temptation of Christ was not about worldly goods and power. Instead these rebels made their arguments for the exercise of free will and the right of self-determination unfettered by the will of God. This was a battle for the sovereignty of a mighty and glorious universe. To every proposal, every “temptation” to personal will he responded “May the will of my Paradise Father prevail” and “The will of my Father in Paradise be done.” That afternoon, Michael of Nebadon won the unquestioned sovereignty of his universe by defeating these rebels in their attempt to assert individual self-determination over obedience to the will of God.

He could have chosen to end his incarnation at that time without ever having embarked on a career of public ministry. But again, he opened to the will of God, which guided him to complete this incarnation through public ministry and eventually death as a human.

The guidance he had received prior to this incarnation included specific instruction to leave behind no writings and no artifacts. Ironically this instruction was to guard against anyone creating a religion about Jesus. This guidance stated,

“As you may see fit, you are to identify yourself with existing religious and spiritual movements, as they may be found on Urantia but in every possible manner seek to avoid the formal establishment of an organized cult, a crystalized religion, or a segregated ethical grouping of mortal beings. Your life and teachings are to become the common heritage of all religions and all peoples.” (120:3.6)

He came to earth/Urantia to demonstrate by how he lived, and eventually what he preached, how to live a life fully dedicated to the will of God. This included living in a manner that finds and manifests the Kingdom of God that is always accessible to each of us in every moment simply by going within, for there we find God.

The Urantia Book makes clear that his apostles and other disciples never fully understood this aspect of Jesus’ mission. Because of their religious, cultural and historical context as Jews, for the most part they saw Jesus as the Messiah predicted by the Jewish scriptures, a Messiah who would be a liberator and king on this earth plane in the tradition of King David. He sought time and again to disabuse them of this misperception, but he was never fully successful.

Jesus did predict that he would die and rise on the third day. But he never claimed his death was related in any way to absolving the sins of anybody. Instead, his death was the ultimate example of opening to and embracing the will of God, even when to do so was so challenging and painful. He showed by how he lived and died that truly choosing to align with the will of God could ultimately overcome even death.

The Urantia Book makes clear that Jesus' apostles and other disciples misunderstood and misinterpreted his mission. They took the message Jesus had intended to be his legacy, which was the religion of Jesus, and transformed it into a religion about Jesus.

This becomes the answer to the question of whether Christianity "wins" because of what is contained in *The Urantia Book*. What Christianity gets right is the divinity of Jesus. What Christianity gets very wrong, at least according to *The Urantia Book*, is the claim that the true authentic path to awakening, to enlightenment, to God, can only be attained by believing in Jesus, including that his death somehow atoned for the sins any of us commit. Instead, it requires believing as Jesus did. It requires each of us living a righteous life as Jesus exemplified in the extraordinary gift that was the life he lived and how he lived it. This allows for there to be many paths to enlightenment, for there to be many valid religions, as long as they are characterized by love, forgiveness, compassion and alignment with the will of that which is most ultimate.

Commentary

Is *The Urantia Book* "true"?

The most obvious and important question when thinking critically about *The Urantia Book* is to ask if, and to what extent, its contents are true. As noted previously, any answer to this question can only be made within the context of your personal Web of Belief. As a stepping off point, I leave it to each reader to determine where the phenomenon of channeling fits in their personal Web of Belief. For some, saying any material is "channeled" immediately makes it untrue. I used to believe this. But as I describe in [Joyfully Shattered](#), my Web of Belief has shifted through personal experiences to now hold that channeled material may be true. But, as noted below, one needs to exercise discernment in assessing all material that is claimed to be channeled.

Many of you come to the material of *The Urantia Book* with strongly held elements within your personal Web of Belief based upon your religious upbringing and current religious (or anti-religious) convictions. It is important to remember that if some content in *The Urantia Book* clashes with a portion of your current personal Web of Belief, you have the same three choices you always do in such a circumstance. You can reject it outright, allow it to be held as a possibility somewhere in your Web of Belief, or allow it to shift or change your Web of Belief in some way.

In preparation for making comments about how *The Urantia Book's* content may align with or be in conflict with the tenets of Christianity, it is important to recognize that the history and current state of Christianity is as a collection of religious traditions, doctrines and practices organized into a myriad of sects and practiced by individuals whose personal Web of Belief may or may not be fully aligned with everything that may be claimed to be true by any particular sect. As a result, anyone identifying themselves as a Christian, or a believer in Christianity, may hold within their Web of Belief elements that may or may not overlap with other self-identified Christians. Therefore the comments that follow which

make reference to Christian beliefs or the Web of Belief of Christians should be read with full recognition of the richness and diversity across all those who identify themselves as Christians.

For those who believe strongly in the foundational tenets of Christianity, including who the historic Jesus was and who the being of Jesus still is today, *The Urantia Book* has a mixed message. On one hand, Jesus is recognized to be a spiritual being of inexpressible power and grace, the same being who created our local universe. In addition, the nature of divinity is recognized to be characterized by the Trinity, a long held belief in Christian doctrine. On the other hand, Jesus is understood to be an incarnation of Michael of Nebadon who is one of more than 600,000 Creator Sons. As a result, he is not fully and alone the second element of the Trinity, but instead is a being derived from, but not the same as, the Eternal Son portion of the Trinity. Both of these descriptions of Jesus are not consistent with generally accepted Christian doctrine.

Other content within *The Urantia Book* challenges the current Web of Belief of many Christians. For example, it makes clear that Jesus did not die for our sins and that we are not forgiven through the crucifixion. Instead, we each remain fully responsible in a moral and spiritual sense for every act of our free will. Yet divinity remains characterized by infinite mercy, compassion and forgiveness. There is no condemnation for the countless errors we each make with our free will, no original sin, and no punishment in any version of hell. Instead, we are presented with an ongoing, humbling array of ever new opportunities to choose differently and more wisely, to learn, grow and evolve as a spiritual being.

The Urantia Book makes clear that the New Testament gospels do not depict the life of Jesus or his teachings with full accuracy or understanding. The book claims that its 800 plus page telling of Jesus's life is far more accurate because it was generated directly out of content recorded by the apostle, Andrew, and by eyewitness accounts from spirit beings who existed on earth at that time and who hold a far more enlightened understanding of all that Jesus said, did and taught than did the authors of the four gospels. For those who believe in the veracity of everything contained in the New Testament, this again presents significant challenges.

Another example of a challenge to many believing Christians in *The Urantia Book* is that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is depicted in highly unflattering ways in the story of Jesus's life. She is an all too human anxious mother who never grasps Jesus's true mission and teachings. For those who hold Mother Mary to have been a blessed and divine being not just now but during her incarnation as the mother of Jesus, this depiction of Mary will likely be difficult to accept.

For believers in non-Christian religions, the divinity of Jesus, even in the somewhat diminished form it is depicted in *The Urantia Book*, may be equally challenging to accept. So might characterization of the holy scriptures of non-Christian religions, such as the Jewish bible, Upanishads, Buddhist sutras, or Koran, as not being worthy of being characterized as one of the epochal revelations in human history. And it goes without saying that the existence of divinity in any form is challenging to accept for atheists.

For those who believe in reincarnation, *The Urantia Book* provides another mixed message. It appears to dismiss as completely untrue any belief that we each reincarnate on earth/Urantia for multiple lives. Instead, our reincarnations occur on other worlds in other realms of existence following our current and only life on earth/Urantia. We are said to reincarnate many times in the morontia worlds, sometimes referred to as the mansion worlds. We go on to reincarnate multiple times in the Havona worlds. Eventually we cease reincarnation once we attain the Paradise world as a member of the Corps of the Finality.

The question facing readers of this summary and commentary or of *The Urantia Book* itself is to consider to what degree you will dismiss all of the rest of the content/teachings of this work because after engaging this material you continue to hold as true any particular portion of your current Web of Belief that contradicts content in *The Urantia Book*. Again, this is a choice, an act of your free will.

The most relevant question regarding the veracity of the content in *The Urantia Book*, indeed the veracity of any particular set of religious beliefs (as well as all other beliefs), is the skeptic's favorite question: How do you know? The answer given in most religious traditions is faith without other proof. The answer given in *The Urantia Book* is testimony from beings who already exist in a spiritual realm and who are providing this content in service to the upward evolution of humanity on earth/Urantia. You get to decide how each of these claims fits into or otherwise impacts your Web of Belief.

Another challenge related to the truth status of the content in *The Urantia Book*, which was previously noted in the introduction to the book summary, is that the sources of the book's content readily acknowledge that using human language limits their ability to deliver information that might be considered "true" when speaking about that which is beyond our space/time level of existence. So in descriptions about the mindal and spiritual levels of existence, we need to think of the content in *The Urantia Book* as pointing towards an aspect of truth rather than denoting anything that is definitively "true."

An intriguing added insight into the problem of discerning what is true is that *The Urantia Book* describes truth statements on the morontia level of existence as being different in some fundamental way from truth statements on the earth plane of existence. The book uses the term "mota" for a philosophic statement of truth that is true on the morontia plane of existence. Mota have both an earth plane meaning that is true and a spiritual plane meaning that is true at the same time, but these are not the same truth values or content. On the Havona and Paradise Isle levels, truth exists in a manner we cannot even express in our language. Again this should humble us and give us pause in assuming anything with certainty about truth regarding mindal and spiritual levels of phenomena, including assessing whether and to what extent the content of *The Urantia Book* is true.

Another caution is that the truth status of channeled material seems to be highly dependent upon the integrity and degree of enlightenment of the person serving as the channel for the content. We know nothing about the person who served as the channel for *The Urantia Book*, therefore we need to suspend judgment based upon this factor, but not give it up altogether.

This leads to what could be called the spiritual "smell test." My teacher mentioned earlier, Ron Roth, used to talk about the importance of our faculty of discernment. There is frankly a lot of stuff out there in the spiritual/New Age space, indeed in all religion in its multitudinous forms, that is highly suspect, often does not vibrate at a very high level, and does not have the ring of truth. My experience reading *The Urantia Book* is that the language vibrates at an exceptionally high level, as does most of the content. It is inspiring and clearly focused on "love, beauty and goodness". Many times I wanted to stand up and cheer at the messages presented in the various sections because of how much they validate and inspire a high state of being and intention.

As a skeptic seeking high integrity, I have to address two more questions that arise in evaluating *The Urantia Book*. First, at every twist and turn in the book I keep asking myself whether the group that met over a dozen years to put together this material may simply have made it up as a hoax. Of course this

remains a possibility. However, the profundity of the book's content, the often breathtakingly soaring quality of its language, the degree of novelty and complexity in each section, and the immense coherence in this complex narrative of more than 2100 pages all leave me highly suspect that any group of individuals, no matter how intelligent and how hard working, could have developed this content as a hoax.

The second takes a different perspective. If we grant as true the existence of non-human entities who are communicating to us this content (whether they be spiritual beings, extraterrestrials, or some other category of beings), could these beings have motivations that might not be in the highest and best interests of we who are living on earth/Urantia as human beings? Could they have some self-serving motive in teaching us untruths? For example, could they have some hidden agenda in telling us to turn our free will over to the will of a higher being? This is precisely the criticism leveled by Lucifer and his followers. For the same reasons I have concluded the possibility of *The Urantia Book* being a hoax is highly unlikely, I find the extraordinarily uplifting language, content and messages in this amazing work to be unlikely to be shared with us to deceive and misguide humanity.

On both of these skeptical questions you get to make discerning judgment for yourself.

Science and *The Urantia Book's* Content

One avenue for assessing the truth status of *The Urantia Book's* content is to examine the claims and descriptions within the book related to content science has investigated and continues to investigate. In doing so, it is important to maintain a high degree of humility regarding the truth status of today's scientific theories and models. I consider myself a scientist and value science very highly. But I am also a student of the history of science. Thomas Kuhn's seminal work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago Press, 1962) introduced the concept of paradigm shifts occurring in scientific fields. When such a paradigm shift occurs, the nature of what is true in a particular scientific field changes dramatically. Examples of such paradigm shifts are Copernicus proposing the sun is at the center of our solar system rather than the earth and Einstein proposing that energy and mass are interchangeable. The risk is that scientists in any particular age believe their paradigm is the "truth", including today's scientists. We need to remain open to the possibility of future, potentially radical, paradigm shifts in what science holds to be true.

In [Joyfully Shattered](#) I make the case that we are in the early stages of just such a paradigm shift in science. I believe the coming new scientific paradigm will integrate what today we call spiritual phenomena with our understanding of matter and energy, and not by simply explaining away spiritual phenomena through a scientific materialism framework. The new paradigm will include phenomena of a spiritual nature with matter and energy in a new way of understanding all that exists. If you are interested in learning more about the coming new scientific paradigm, you may want to read the free downloadable expanded chapter from [Joyfully Shattered](#) entitled "[When Science Meets God: A Glimpse into the Coming new Paradigm.](#)"

Still, it is worth asking to what extent does the content in *The Urantia Book* related to what has been studied by science fit our best current scientific theories. Here we find a mixed picture. The sources of the book's content make clear that some of what they disclose related to information that can be studied by science is truncated or otherwise not expressed in full accuracy so as not to interfere with the pace of scientific discovery as it unfolds in human history. They explicitly state,

We full well know that...within a few short years many of our statements regarding the physical sciences will stand in need of revision in consequence of additional scientific developments and new discoveries. These new developments we even now foresee, but we are forbidden to include such humanly undiscovered facts in the revelatory records. (101:4.2)

The content for *The Urantia Book* was collected from the early 1920s to the early 1930s, so we should evaluate the scientific content in the book in light of what was known and developing in science at the time.

This is the period during which an astronomer named Edwin Hubble was discovering that our universe is expanding. He began to make measurements that were proving the universe is much bigger than had been previously thought. These and later discoveries eventually contributed to what today we call the Big Bang Theory. The Big Bang theory, especially the exquisitely detailed cosmology that's been developed to flesh out this theory, constitutes one of the most stunning, brilliant and compelling scientific developments of the past century. Some descriptive content in *The Urantia Book* is consistent with today's model of the cosmos (like that the universe is expanding and could have been initially created through a process consistent with today's descriptions of the Big Bang) and some is not (like saying the universe will at one point stop expanding and begin contracting because the Paradise Isle acts like an unimaginably huge piston driving alternately the expansion and contraction of all that is).

To my reading, the time frames for creation and evolution of the grand universe, to the extent they are addressed in *The Urantia Book*, are reasonably consistent with today's theory regarding the timeline for the Big Bang and all that has followed since that event. However, the distances and sizes of the structures in the grand universe provided in *The Urantia Book* appear to be too small compared to today's cosmological models. This may be an artifact of when the material was channeled and what our understanding of the size of the universe was at that time, or this may stand as a concern undermining the truth status of this part of the content provided in *The Urantia Book*, and hence potentially putting in question the truth status of all other parts of the book.

So much of today's cosmological model depends on interpreting the source and meaning of the background "hum" of electromagnetic radiation found everywhere we look in the universe. Today scientists believe this data is best interpreted as the faint remnants of the original Big Bang event. While this may be the case, *The Urantia Book* presents a potential alternative interpretation of the same measurement data. It describes a vast area surrounding the 7 superuniverses in which there appears to be developing enough energy and the potential for matter to generate on the order of 100 more superuniverses. It might be intriguing to reinterpret the background hum data in this light to see if it might be compatible with such a very different structure, and hence history and future, for our universe.

Many of the timelines and descriptions of the development of earth as a planet and the evolution of its biosphere given in *The Urantia Book* are consistent with current scientific models. Of course any implication that the development of matter, energy, or biologic organisms, including evolution, occurred and is occurring through intelligent design flies in the face of the well-developed science of evolution, including our ever deepening understanding of genetics and mutations. However, *The Urantia Book* describes evolutionary processes that seem to include "both/and", with mutations and natural selection playing a role as well as intelligent design playing a role. As a scientist, I find this formulation both challenging and intriguing.

Regarding the origins of our human species, our best current theories of human evolution place the emergence of human-like animals in Africa sometime around two plus million years ago, with this timeline changing with each new discovery. *The Urantia Book* describes humans evolving in west Asia, not Africa, and with the first human beings being born on a precise date 993,419 years before 1934. Based upon content in *The Urantia Book*, the discoveries being made in Africa represent branches of the evolutionary tree that eventually died out or gave rise to today's gibbons and apes, rather than giving rise to today's Homo sapiens. This is an area in which the book's content is not compatible with today's scientific theories regarding human evolution.

Perhaps the deepest challenge to our current scientific paradigm in *The Urantia Book* material is the claim that phenomena exist outside of space and time, both structures and beings. I used to dismiss such a claim out of hand, as a passionately self-assured atheist. As my 40-year journey described in [Joyfully Shattered](#) makes clear, I have encountered what I call "data points" that have taught me the world does not work as I learned at my parents' knee or in my science classes. But I'm still a scientist. With humility I've learned that when theory and data don't agree, the data wins. This is why I believe we are in the early stages of a paradigm shift in science that will eventually integrate phenomena of a non-spatial and non-temporal nature, what today we call spiritual, with our understanding of spatio-temporal phenomena in a new and exciting scientific paradigm.

Eugenics and Race in *The Urantia Book*

The content I personally find most challenging in *The Urantia Book* relates to what it says about eugenics and race. Eugenics is the science of improving a human population by controlled breeding to increase the occurrence of desirable heritable characteristics. The sources of *The Urantia Book* content blatantly advocate the practice of eugenics on every planet. They do not hesitate to identify some human traits as better than others and worthy of being the target of selective breeding. They make clear that war, while tragic and something that will gradually fade away as we evolve towards a stage of light and life on any given planet, plays an important and constructive role in weeding out weaker genetic strains and enhancing reproduction of individuals and groups with more successful (and for the most part desirable) genetic characteristics. (They do describe multiple examples in which humans with highly developed traits were killed through wars, lamenting the loss of such exceptional genetic traits that might have otherwise helped humanity's evolution.) In a similar manner, the challenges encountered by the successive ice ages required adaptations of action, invention and resourcefulness that favored survival by individuals and tribes with superior genetic traits as well.

The Urantia Book provides multiple references to "upstepping" human development. Some of this occurred through training and the development of culture, which were tasks assigned to the Planetary Prince and his assistants as well as to Adam and Eve. But it clearly includes improvements in the human gene pool, which also occurred when the Planetary Prince and his assistants and Adam and Eve and their descendants mated with the then resident human population.

The Urantia Book provides a sometimes surprising history of the various races of human beings on earth/Urantia. On most planets, differentiation into races tends to develop over long periods of time. On earth/Urantia, it is described as occurring in a single generation. For unexplained reasons, one specific set of parents in the central highlands of Asia over one generation gave birth to 19 children who looked and acted differently enough to constitute six different races, each associated with a color because their skin tended to assume that color upon exposure to sunlight. These races were red, orange, yellow, green, blue and indigo. This racial color proved to be a dominant trait, giving rise to differentiating races

over the ensuing generations. Previously, a differentiated race had developed that had evolved from an especially successful inherited line descending from the first human beings. It is referred to as the Andonite race because the very first human being brother/sister pair had the names Andon and Fonta.

Over hundreds of thousands of years, these seven races continued to differentiate and to migrate to different parts of the world. The Eskimo and related tribes descend from the original Andonite race. The orange and green races did not effectively compete in the evolutionary struggle and died out as distinct races. The yellow race came to dominate eastern Asia. The red race eventually migrated to the Americas over the Bering land bridge, essentially pushed out of Asia by the yellow race, giving rise to the Native Americans. The indigo race migrated to and dominated Africa. The blue race remained in eastern Asia and migrated to Europe. India became a place of the highest degree of racial mixing.

Adam and Eve and their descendants constitute what is called the violet race. Mating between the violet and blue race, combined with matings with some red and yellow strains, eventually gave rise to the white race, or what today we call Caucasians. The yellow race received some upstepping from the violet race, but not so for the red race as they had already been cutoff in the Americas by the sinking of the Bering land bridge. Similarly the indigo race received little upstepping from mixing with the purple race because of being so centered in Africa.

Here is where I have the greatest difficulty with this part of the content. *The Urantia Book* provides repeated descriptions characterizing the different races, making sweeping claims about specific traits that make one race or another superior to other races in identifiable ways. Today we would characterize such claims as blatantly racist. Even within races, tribes and clans, the sources of the book strongly advocate for selectively breeding the best with the best for the overt goal of practicing eugenics on a local and worldwide scale. With unbridled enthusiasm for such elitism, the fall of civilizations is attributed to failure to practice eugenics, as in the following passage:

And thus it has ever been on Urantia. Civilizations of great promise have successively deteriorated and have finally been extinguished by the folly of allowing the superior freely to procreate with the inferior. (64:1.8)

Such a perspective seems to come from viewing the one million year history of human beings on earth/Urantia through an evolutionary lens as well as the long term agenda of supporting human evolution and development towards eventually settling the entire planet in light and life. While I understand this perspective, it sits very uneasily with me because of my personal, deeply held belief in the value of every human being and a celebration of the richness in our diversity.

The Urantia Book and Democracy

Another deeply challenging message from *The Urantia Book* is that democracy is not the highest form of government. Certainly authoritarian governments led by unenlightened leaders are to be condemned. Democracy can be an important advance on such forms of governing. And in the spiritual realms, *The Urantia Book* describes numerous deliberative bodies that provide input and guidance. But the overall structure of governance, management and oversight for the grand and master universes is clearly hierarchical.

Lucifer's allegedly heinous crimes included advocacy for self-determination, a value I and many others hold dear today. As noted earlier, *The Urantia Book's* harsh condemnation of Lucifer and his followers feels deeply challenging on this point.

Plato in his work *The Republic* referenced earlier, advocated governance by philosopher kings rather than democracy. He came to this conclusion after witnessing the Athenian democracy condemn and execute his beloved teacher, Socrates. In spite of such dark moments for democracy as a form of government, human history to date has shown authoritarian regimes governing without the consent of the governed to be worse than democracies. Whether one day this will change as we evolve towards a world settled in light and life with the emergence of truly enlightened leaders worthy of being followed, will have to await unfolding of our future.

The Future of Humanity

There are both challenging and comforting elements in *The Urantia Book's* long term view of the sweep of human evolution and its implications for the future of humanity. First is recognizing that we are being supported, guided and cared for on our individual, species and planetary evolutionary journey in an almost overwhelming myriad of ways of which we can barely conceive. This is particularly comforting as we consider doomsday scenarios such as nuclear desolation of our planet or the overthrow of humanity by machines through artificial intelligence. In this light such knowledge is comforting.

On the flip side, *The Urantia Book* makes clear that all these beings working on our behalf, up to and including divinity, will not interfere with the exercise of free will, even if it is likely to lead to cataclysmic suffering and destruction. So when we say the fate of our world hangs in the balance based on the choices we make as individuals and nations, we are speaking the truth.

The Urantia Book's extraordinarily long term view leads to a humbling perspective regarding the urgency with which many of us work and pray for and otherwise seek to influence awakening throughout our planet. On one level I am optimistic because of the world-wide burgeoning of spirituality we've witnessed occurring in recent decades in most countries and regions of the world. Yet we see darkness, hatred, xenophobia and violence on the rise as well.

The story of Adam and Eve is telling here. Theirs was to be a mission that would last for thousands of years to upstep all humanity on our planet. They encountered such darkness and resistance to the light that after a little more than 100 years, they began to lose trust and faith that things would one day get better. *The Urantia Book* states clearly that had Adam and Eve been patient and stayed the course in alignment with the will of God, they would have succeeded in fulfilling their mission, and our species and planet would have been vastly the better as a result. It was this failure of patience more than anything else that most contributed to the Adamic default which has made human evolution so much more challenging on earth/Urantia than it might have been. So we, too, can and should be patient and trust in the long term success of our planet eventually being settled in light and life. At the same time, it is our duty with every free will choice to do our part to help bring such a time ever closer.

The Urantia Book makes clear that one of the needed changes to continue our successful evolution as a species is to release our attachment to nationalism, to tying our identity and allegiance to one specific country. We need to outgrow a belief that the success of one nation over others is a worthy goal. Instead our evolution towards a state of light and life depends upon all of us recognizing that our shared fate as a world depends upon our embracing all human beings as sharing in one world-wide nation.

Our natural evolution as a species makes this difficult. We evolved from lemur-like species deeply characterized by fear. Our biologic, cultural and historic evolution has encompassed hundreds of thousands of years of violence by one group of humans against another. This began as family against family and clan against clan, eventually evolving to tribe against tribe. Today our conflicts are mostly characterized as nation against nation and religion (often transcending individual nation-states) against religion. The long term historic trend shows that we are evolving towards ever larger group identity. Our next developmental step is to shift from nation, ethnic and religion-based allegiances to embrace our oneness as a species seeking to share our world in peace, light and love. *The Urantia Book* provides historic perspective and hope that we will indeed succeed in making this important leap. When this will occur depends, as always, upon our free will choices.

Connecting with God

The Urantia Book can be read as providing guidance for each free will creature to connect directly with God. This guidance has become part of my daily spiritual practice, which is offered here for those who may find it helpful.

We can begin with the momentous statement in *The Urantia Book* that we each have received the bestowal of an aspect of God that dwells within us. So our most accessible and direct access to connecting with God is to go within, to raise our thoughts, our intention, the frequency or vibration of our whole consciousness, as high as possible towards divinity. This is us reaching up to God, to the aspect of God ever present within us. We are assured in *The Urantia Book* that God is reaching down to us, seeking to connect with us as much, and likely more, than we seek to connect with God. Be in joy with the awareness that you cannot be separate from God for an aspect of God is already within you and available to you in every moment. Our destiny is to fuse fully with this aspect of God. Feel yourself taking a step closer to your personal destiny to merge with God every time you turn within and reach for God with all your being.

The Urantia Book also teaches that we all exist within God the Supreme, the master universe, and that God is ever in direct contact and present with all within the master universe. Becoming aware of this phenomenon some describe as opening to the Presence, the presence of God with us, surrounding us, and filling the very space in which we exist. As we open to, some would say call in, the Presence, we can experience the ever nearness of God all around us.

Finally *The Urantia Book* teaches the existence of divinity dwelling in the Paradise Isle and in existence beyond what can be communicated to us. This is the transcendent aspect of divinity, more expansive than anything we can possibly conceive or put into language. Meditating or praying with the intention to open to, and connect with, this aspect of God helps us expand, release all experience of limitations of time and space, and grow beyond all we ever thought possible. In doing so, recognize that because the Indwelling Adjuster within you is an aspect of God, you have already been gifted with the capacity to connect with God the transcendent. *The Urantia Book* teaches that this direct experience of divine transcendence, too, is available to us in every moment.

Guidance for Living Your Life

This brings us to some final reflections regarding what guidance *The Urantia Book* can offer us as we exercise our free will moment to moment in our individual lives. The first is to recognize the awesome

gift and responsibility that is our free will. It is a gift from divinity. The responsibility is that how we exercise it can contribute to or hamper the development of our souls and our planet.

The Urantia Book teaches that each of us is on a highly personal journey for the development, evolution and enlightenment of our soul. It is a spiritual journey. One's participation in any particular organized religion or religious community can help or hinder this journey, but the journey is ultimately one we take as individuals.

Key to this journey are the challenges we encounter in living our lives and how we respond to them. *The Urantia Book* teaches us to reframe these challenges as opportunities. This is obviously much harder to do than to say, yet it can bring comfort and guidance. Each challenge we encounter is actually a dual opportunity. First is the opportunity to choose right action, which we will further comment on below. Second is the opportunity to make meaning of any particular challenge and its consequences. We are wired to make meaning of the events in our lives. So when faced with a difficult, painful challenge, it is natural to ask, "Why is this happening to me (or a loved one)?" Victor Frankle, in his great book, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Beacon Press, 2006), helps us recognize that the answer to this question is deeply personal, and also an act of free will. He eloquently makes clear that there is one thing nobody can ever take from us: the freedom to make meaning of all we encounter. In this spirit *The Urantia Book* provides inspiring guidance in how to reframe the challenges we experience as opportunities to progress upon our spiritual evolutionary journey, and in doing so, to do our part to contribute to evolution on our planet.

In choosing right action, we are told to choose love, beauty and goodness at every opportunity. A life lived in this manner holds great promise for a life well lived.

Yet even as we seek to choose right action, *The Urantia Book* makes clear the most important guidance is to choose in alignment with the will of God. If we do all we can to open to, hold in our hearts, and say yes to an infinitely loving, compassionate and wise God, and to freely choose to align our will with the will of such a God, this, too, holds great promise for a life well lived.

Yet we can go one step further. Perhaps the most profound teaching of *The Urantia Book* is that each of us is already gifted with a "piece" of God, the indwelling Thought Adjuster. Our evolutionary and developmental journey is to merge with this very presence of divinity within us. As noted before, to do so, we must do all we can to elevate our intention, our very consciousness, to merge with God. This, too, holds great promise for a life well lived.

Also as previously noted, being gifted with some aspect of God that dwells within us means we have direct connection with, and access to, God in every moment. Often, especially in the face of our most profound challenges, we experience being very far from God. We may find ourselves in what has been called the dark night of the soul. But *The Urantia Book* teaches us we can never be separated from God. In one of my favorite passages it states,

No matter how remote from Paradise, how deep in space, a material survival personality may take origin, God the Sevenfold will be found there present and engaged in the loving and merciful ministry of truth, beauty, and goodness to such an incomplete, struggling, and evolutionary creature. (106:1.3)

So though living on earth/Urantia we are as far from God as it is possible to be in the master universe, God is with us and available to us in every moment. No matter what is happening around us or to us, we have the opportunity to turn within and elevate our thoughts to God. In doing so we will be met with more love, compassion and forgiveness than we ever thought possible. Knowing this, too, holds great promise for a life well lived.