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Essays by students of *The Urantia Book*

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From the Editor

Richard Jernigan

Two thousand years ago, Jesus delivered his Urmia lectures. His Caspian Sea caravan journey began April 1, 24 A.D. and he was back in Capernaum a "full year" later, so these lectures probably occurred in early 25 A.D.

I realized this coincidence after we had gathered the articles you see here. With that in mind, it's certainly fitting to publish this special edition of the Journal. And these lectures are contemplated and honored in almost every article.

The original impetus in publishing this edition is our current political environment, which is not just a United States phenomenon but a world-wide one.

When pondering government and politics in *The Urantia Book*, it is tempting to jump right into our current state of affairs. But our bigger motivation with this issue of the Journal was to start a conversation about what the revelators say to us about government and politics—and it's a lot. World government, democracy, military preparedness, diplomacy, industrial fairness—multiple topics that dominate our newsfeeds and our social media posts, are conveyed with wisdom, insight and sobriety. No traditional religious text does this. No religious text engages in the objective and relevant analysis of these subjects we find in *The Urantia Book*, nor do they encompass these human concerns with the profound spirituality of the book. It's a tremendous gift.

When we solicited articles for this edition, one important prerequisite was for each essay to "be non-partisan; avoid current political figures, parties, or 'tropes.'" The result is a rich focus on *The Urantia Book's* teachings with relevance beyond 2024.

I'm grateful to Anton Miroshnichenko of Ukraine, Olga Lopez of Spain, and Byron Belitsos, Claire Thurston, and Neal Waldrop of the United States for bringing their time, personal and professional experience, and insights into these articles. Equal gratitude goes to our editors Mark Blackham and James Woodward, who went above and beyond with this edition, carefully reviewing and critiquing the articles with both professionalism and a deep understanding of these teachings.

Of all the outstanding references in these articles from *The Urantia Book*, one paragraph is worth pondering concerning the role of religion in the political arena:

> Idealism can never survive on an evolving planet if the idealists in each generation permit themselves to be exterminated by the baser orders of humanity. And here is the great test of idealism: Can an advanced society maintain that military preparedness which renders it secure from all attack by its war-loving neighbors without yielding to the temptation to employ this military strength in offensive operations against other peoples for purposes of selfish gain or national aggrandizement? National survival demands preparedness, and **religious idealism alone** can prevent the prostitution of preparedness into aggression. **Only love, brotherhood**, can prevent the strong from oppressing the weak. 71:4.17 (804.17)

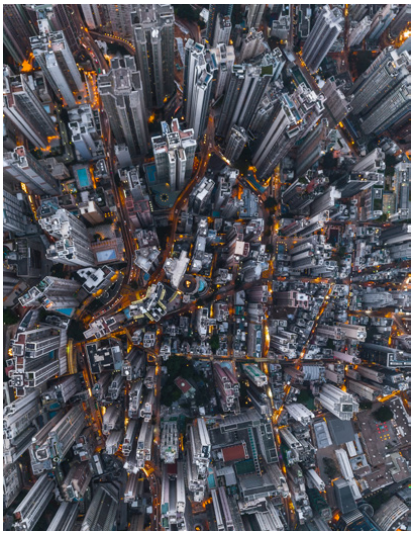
"Religious idealism alone....Only love, brotherhood..."

While treaties, pacts, checks and balances, governmental structures, and even the best legislation, are essentail for constructing an ideal civilization, religious idealism undergirds these efforts. *True* religious idealism, that is—the idealism detailed throughout the book. Not fanaticism or "fundamentalism," but "enthusiasm, zeal, and courage....controlled by spiritual insight and loyal devotion to the commonplace social obligations of human loyalties." (100:6.5)

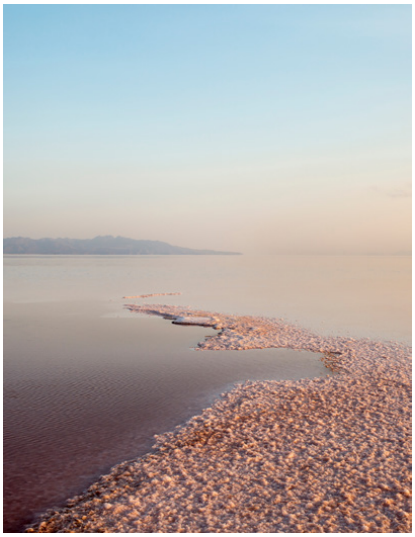
There is much to be said, written about, and acted upon in response to *The Urantia Book*'s teachings about politics and government. This is a good start.



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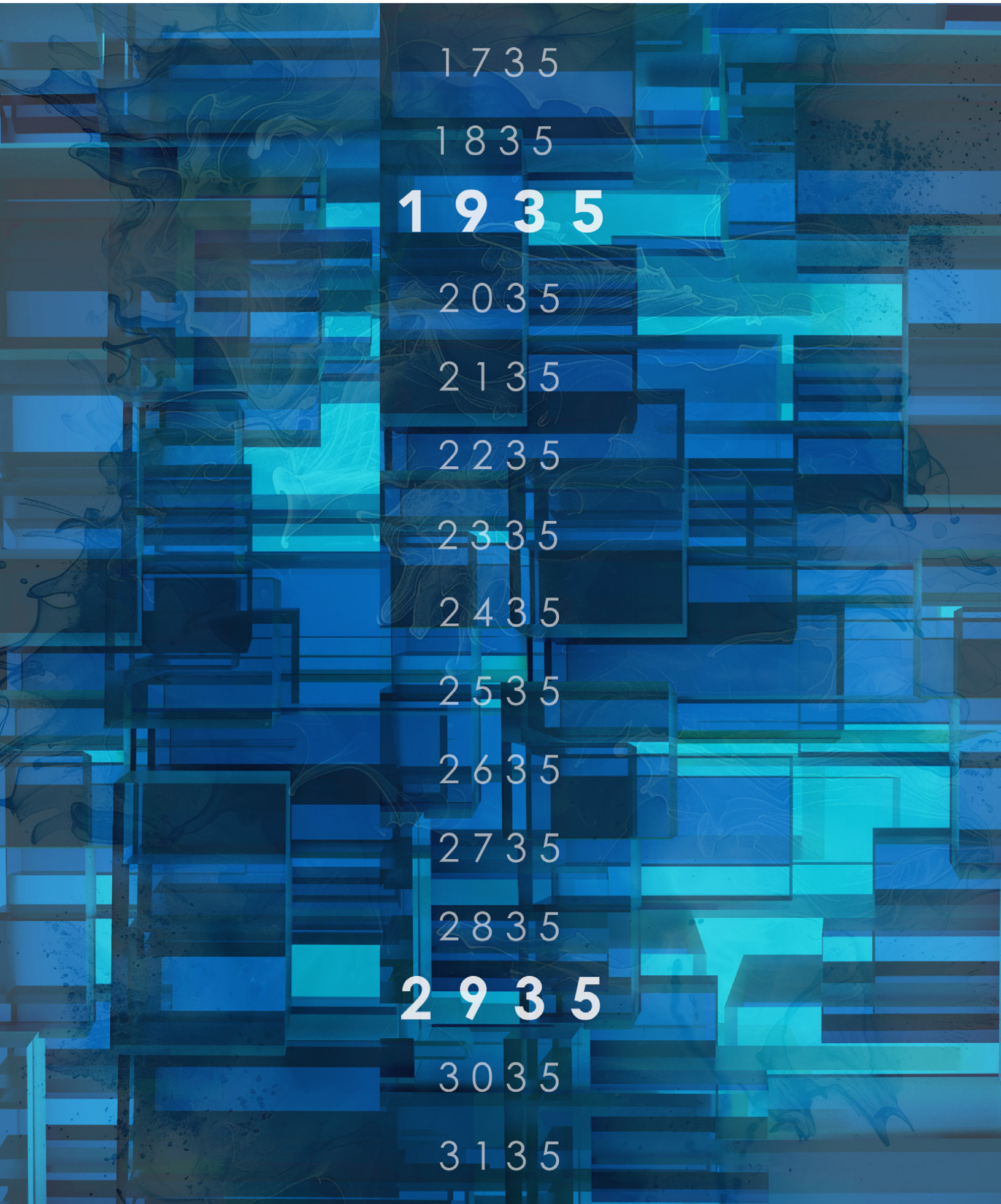
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Mastering the Millennium

Neal Waldrop, USA

The revelators who gave us *The Urantia Book* were not free to improvise or extemporize, neither when they called for human beings living on Urantia to establish a world government, nor in other contexts. Instead, the revelators had received strict instructions telling them what they must explain and must not reveal:

> 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. 00:0.0 (1.1) emphasis added in bold

> **The sixteenth proscription of the mandate** authorizing these narratives says: "If deemed wise, the existence of the Architects of the Master Universe and their associates may be disclosed, but their origin, nature, and destiny may not be fully revealed." 31:9.2 (351.3) emphasis added

> Mankind should understand that we who participate in the revelation of truth are very rigorously limited by the instructions of our superiors. We are not at liberty to anticipate the scientific discoveries of **a thousand years**. … Let it be made clear that revelations are not necessarily inspired. The cosmology of these revelations is not inspired. It is limited by our permission for the co-ordination and sorting of present-day knowledge. While divine or spiritual insight is a gift, human wisdom must evolve. 101:4.2 (1109.3) emphasis added

The same period of one thousand years is also a prominent feature when a Melchizedek warns us about an extended process of "economic adjustments and social changes":

> Mechanical inventions and the dissemination of knowledge are modifying civilization; certain economic adjustments and social changes are imperative if cultural disaster is to be avoided. This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for **a millennium**. The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustments. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny. 99:1.1 (1086.4) emphasis added

These passages and many others enable us to understand that the challenges and achievements of an entire millennium were the net context that the Midwayer Commission envisioned when they launched their task of adapting, paraphrasing, and summarizing Jesus' teachings at Urmia (the entirety of sections 3 through 6 of Paper 134). These analytical efforts of theirs sparked intense controversy:

> When we, the midwayers, first prepared the summary of Jesus' teachings at Urmia, there arose **a disagreement between the seraphim**

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> **of the churches and the seraphim of progress** as to the wisdom of including these teachings in the Urantia Revelation. Conditions of the twentieth century, prevailing in both religion and human governments, are so different from those prevailing in Jesus' day that it was indeed difficult to adapt the Master's teachings at Urmia to the problems of the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of men as these world functions are existent in the twentieth century. We were never able to formulate a statement of the Master's teachings which was acceptable to both groups of these seraphim of planetary government. Finally, the Melchizedek chairman of the revelatory commission appointed a commission of three of our number to prepare our view of the Master's Urmia teachings as adapted to twentieth-century religious and political conditions on Urantia. Accordingly, we three secondary midwayers completed such an adaptation of Jesus' teachings, restating his pronouncements as we would apply them to present-day world conditions, and we now present these statements as they stand after having been edited by the Melchizedek chairman of the revelatory commission. 134:3.8 (1486.3) emphasis added

This wording highlights a frank and free exchange of views[1] that had arrayed the seraphim of the churches against the seraphim of progress, and it is quite possible that there were several such exchanges. It seems clear that the Melchizedek chairman of the revelatory commission still confronted sensitive and delicate tasks when he adjudicated and edited the compromise wording that the Midwayer Commission eventually prepared, even though the paragraph implies that the authors had already made an earnest effort to reconcile conflicting viewpoints and perceptions.

Colleagues, you are free to draw your own conclusions, but here are mine: (a) intense controversy; (b) a complicated and extended process in order to develop the wording that now appears in sections 3 through 6 of Paper 134; and (c) an implicit timeline of one thousand years that should enable humanity to carry out their recommendations that we establish a world government. As we seek to grasp all that, it seems useful to repeat a short statement excerpted above: "human wisdom must evolve." (101:4.2) We must also heed an explicit warning that an Archangel of Nebadon imparts in section 6 of Paper 81:

> Man should be unafraid to experiment with the mechanisms of society. But always should these adventures in cultural adjustment be controlled by those who are fully conversant with the history of social evolution; and always should these innovators be counseled by the wisdom of those who have had practical experience in the domains of contemplated social or economic experiment. No great social or economic change should be attempted suddenly. Time is essential to all types of human adjustment—physical, social, or economic. 81:6.40 (911.5)

Since the extensive introductory remarks you have read up to now may have tried your patience, here are some of the explicit and emphatic statements about sovereignty and world government that the Melchizedek chairman of the revelatory commission preserved and retained when he edited the summary and paraphrase of Jesus' teachings at Urmia that the Midwayer Commission had submitted to him:

A War on Urantia will never end so long as nations cling to the illusive notions of unlimited national sovereignty. There are only two levels of relative sovereignty on an inhabited world: the spiritual free will of the individual mortal and the collective sovereignty of mankind as a whole. Between the level of the individual human being and the level of the total of mankind, all groupings and associations are relative, transitory, and of value only in so far as they enhance the welfare, well-being, and progress of the individual and the planetary grand total—man and mankind. 134:5.2

B Urantia will not enjoy lasting peace until the so-called sovereign nations intelligently and fully surrender their sovereign powers

1 In the traditions of diplomacy, this ostensibly innocuous phrase is code for intense arguments—contentions that are often heated and sometimes confrontational.

into the hands of the brotherhood of men—mankind government. 134:5.10

C Religion makes it spiritually possible to realize the brotherhood of men, but it will require mankind government to regulate the social, economic, and political problems associated with such a goal of human happiness and efficiency. 134:6.2

D The individual will enjoy far more liberty under world government. Today, the citizens of the great powers are taxed, regulated, and controlled almost oppressively, and much of this present interference with individual liberties will vanish when the national governments are willing to trustee their sovereignty as regards international affairs into the hands of global government. 134:6.10

From my perspective, excerpts A, B, and D are essentially statements of principles, whereas excerpt C includes practical implications that ought to exert a strong influence on how human beings respond to the fifth epochal revelation in this generation and for several succeeding centuries:

1. Religion is not enough.

2. The revelators did not give us the fifth epochal revelation just to provide spiritual inspiration to individuals, nor just to promote advanced approaches to religion.

3. To the contrary, the revelators were also seeking to promote the progressive growth and development of society and civilization on our troubled planet Urantia, pursuant to the broad evolutionary paths that a Mighty Messenger explains in Paper 52, "Planetary Mortal Epochs."

By implication, we must now ask ourselves how human beings living on Urantia can honor the revelators' strenuous recommendations that we set aside long-standing traditions of national sovereignty and establish a world government instead. Yes, the most important issue is how, but that specific inquiry immediately entangles us in a conundrum that is equally intimidating and perhaps even more problematic: when?

I most certainly cannot answer these questions in ways that would be conclusive, definitive, and final, although it seems appropriate and fair to offer you my considered view that no one else currently living on Urantia can do that either. It is important for me



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to emphasize that I entirely agree with the goal that the Midwayer Commission has portrayed, and I am certain that human beings living on Urantia really will establish a world government at some suitable moment during the next one thousand years. On the other hand, we are far from ready to do this now. As a first approximation, I shall offer you my personal view that it will take at least 200 years for any such effort to make sense, but I must hasten to add that the actual interval may be considerably longer.

Obstacles and impediments

From my perspective, a world government is inconceivable as long as a substantial number of countries operate internally in ways that are tyrannical and dictatorial, thereby oppressing their citizens. Given these repulsive realities that tend to pervade quite a few regions of the world, we should seek to stimulate a patient and gradual campaign aimed at increasing the methods, practices, and procedures that enable citizens to influence the activities and decisions of government, and to take part in many of them thoughtfully and effectively.

This worldwide campaign should also endeavor to reinforce and strengthen the rule of law and the independent standing of judges, while promoting and achieving the adoption of safeguards that will effectively prevent arbitrary and abusive acts of government officials—including any measures that may provide inappropriate, disproportionate, and unfair benefits to oneself or to one's political allies and supporters. In part, it will also be crucial to extinguish corruption or at least to curtail it very substantially, while compelling those persons who exert authority in each country to respect the rights and interests of people who are not part of the power structure.

These goals are challenging and exceedingly difficult, but I am convinced that the evolution of government on our troubled planet Urantia must eventually create new realities that respect and reflect them. As a practical matter, we will never be able to move toward world government until all or almost all the countries of the world reflect the will of the people and operate in ways that are fair to everyone—regardless of gender, race, color, emotional affinities, nationality or ethnic origin, social or political opinions, and religious views or other spiritual or philosophic beliefs. In section 9 of Paper 70, a Melchizedek states:

> Society cannot offer equal rights to all, but it can promise to administer the varying rights of each with fairness and equity. It is the business and duty of society to provide the child of nature with a fair and peaceful opportunity to pursue self-maintenance, participate in self-perpetuation, while at the same time enjoying some measure of self-gratification, the sum of all three constituting human happiness. 70:9.17 (794.12)

It took many millennia for governments operating on Urantia to acquire the perspectives that I have highlighted in the last few paragraphs, even if they just amount to options that many governments may decide to pursue and, if possible, carry out. This understanding leads us to another insightful paragraph that we have inherited from the revelators' imaginative efforts to summarize and paraphrase Jesus' teachings at Urmia:

> The difficulty in the evolution of political sovereignty from the family to all mankind, lies in the inertia-resistance exhibited on all intervening levels. Families have, on occasion, defied their clan, while clans and tribes have often been subversive of the sovereignty of the territorial state. Each new and forward evolution of political sovereignty is (and has always been) embarrassed and hampered by the "scaffolding stages" of the previous developments in political organization. And this is true because human loyalties, once mobilized, are hard to change. The same loyalty which makes pos¬sible the evolution of the tribe, makes difficult the evolution of the supertribe—the territorial state. And the same loyalty (patriotism) which makes possible the evolution of the territorial state, vastly complicates the evolutionary development of the government of all mankind. 134:5.8 (1488.6)

The analysis and observations contained in this paragraph are not just reminiscences and reflections about what happened in past ages and centuries. Quite to the contrary, for the final sentence is an explicit commentary on world events and circumstances

that pertain to our world today. For example, the United States is one of the powerful governments that are actively struggling against and contesting any expansion of international authority, especially in circumstances that may seem to be contrary to our interests or wishes, whether material, financial, or conceptual. Further, the principle of "national sovereignty" is deeply embedded in the world as it is, and the habits, practices, and customs that have pervaded diplomacy and international relations for approximately 400 years[2] will not be abolished and abandoned because of conceptual explanations about the merits of a world government—regardless of how persuasive and convincing we and other thoughtful inhabitants of Urantia may consider this wording to be.

Here I shall once again try your patience, in this case by telling you a story about a discussion of mine with a Dutch diplomat in or around the year 2000, while he and I were temporarily serving as delegates of our respective countries to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly.

Because of some conceptual association that I do not remember, my Dutch colleague decided to describe proceedings that had occurred in the Dutch Parliament in 1992, while it was discussing whether or not The Netherlands should ratify the Maastricht Treaty[3]. As you would expect, representatives of the Dutch government appeared before the Parliament in order to explain the treaty, whereupon one member of the Parliament asked the following question:

-How long do we keep our sovereignty?

To which a spokesman for the Dutch government replied:

-As long as you think you have it.

Please note the skillful use of pronouns. When the inquirer said "we," he or she undoubtedly meant the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In contrast, the word "you" in the reply was ambiguous but can plausibly be interpreted as a reference to the members of the Dutch Parliament.

In effect, ratifying the Maastricht Treaty could be and was interpreted as an exercise of national sovereignty—the voluntary decision of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to operate in certain ways in association with other European countries that are much more influential and far more powerful. On the other hand, the question that a member of the Dutch Parliament asked can be interpreted as a bright red line meaning "thus far and no farther." Therefore, it seems quite reasonable for us to conclude that the members of the Dutch Parliament were intent on maintaining and preserving their political authority over the people of The Netherlands in regard to purely internal matters.

Even though this is a relatively minor example, it can serve to symbolize the much more intense opposition among elected and appointed officials of approximately 200 nation-states to the idea of yielding any part of their political power and authority to the operations

2 From political and diplomatic perspectives, the nation-state system that still prevails today is essentially a European invention. Many historians trace it to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), the treaty that concluded the Thirty Years War in Germany and thereby ended the entire period of the wars of religion in Western Europe. This appraisal, however, is relative and partial, for the customs and practices of diplomacy had been evolving for hundreds of years before that, and it would be rea¬sonable to state that the innovations embodied in the Treaty of Westphalia amounted to adapting a general framework that mainly was preserved.

In relation to our own era, it is clear that the Charter of the United Nations (adopted June 26, 1945) modified the nation-state system in ways that are significant and substantial, especially in regard to practices and customs aimed at maintaining international peace and security. On a more general level, we should consider the provisions of paragraph 1 in Article 2 of the Charter, which read as follows: "1. The Organization [i.e., the United Nations] is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members."

Well, the phrase "sovereign equality" may be misleading, at least at first glance, for this does not amount to asserting that all nation-states are equal from any practical perspective — which is obviously not the case. On balance, it seems appropriate for us to interpret "sovereign equality" as a statement that all nation-states are equally entitled to sign and ratify (or otherwise adhere to) treaties and other international agreements, or to withdraw from them. Thus the idea of "sovereign equality" is essentially a matter of legal principles, not a description of the world as it stands today.

3 An extremely important undertaking whereby the Western European countries that had formerly been called the European Community took action to found the European Union. The treaty was signed in 1992 in the Dutch city of Maastricht and became effective in 1993, creating a pathway that eventually made it possible for the members of the European Union to establish the Euro as a common currency. [Reference: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maastricht_Treaty.]

of a world government, especially if it may pertain to authority over war and peace. When we combine all these factors with the intense concerns about tyranny, oppression, and corruption that I described on previous pages of this essay, it is clear that we the people of Urantia are confronted with an extended process of experiment and adaptation, a process that we might even associate with the time-honored phrase "muddling through."

Nonetheless, there appear to be a number of guidelines and principles that will be useful and productive as we proceed along the path. In effect, my main goal during the rest of this essay will be to identify and highlight these guidelines and principles, while drawing on crucial insights about the purposes and functions of government that the revelators have shared with us.

Limiting, channeling, and constraining power

When a Melchizedek summarizes humanity's early experience of war, he implies that these factors were the origin of the long-standing political tradition whereby unlimited power was conferred upon a single person (e.g., an emperor, a king, a prince, or a person called a president who implicitly exercises authority in ways that are arbitrary and unconstrained):

> It has been hard for mankind to learn that neither peace nor war can be run by a debating society. The primitive "palavers" were seldom useful. The race early learned that an army commanded by a group of clan heads had no chance against a strong one-man army. War has always been a kingmaker.
>
> At first the war chiefs were chosen only for military service, and they would relinquish some of their authority during peacetimes, when their duties were of a more social nature. But gradually they began to encroach upon the peace intervals, tending to continue to rule from one war on through to the next. They often saw to it that one war was not too long in following another. These early war lords were not fond of peace. 70:5.5-6 (798.3-4)

Immediately after the section heading entitled, "The Character of Statehood," a Melchizedek tells us:

> The only sacred feature of any human government is the division of statehood into the three domains of executive, legislative, and judicial functions. The universe is administered



l to r: Baron de Montesquieu, John Locke, James Madison, and Alexis de Tocqueville. (Wikipedia Commons)

> in accordance with such a plan of segregation of functions and authority. 71:8.1 (806.14)

On the other hand, procedural steps that simply establish the three branches are not sufficient by themselves. If the three branches do exist, but the executive branch is able to dominate the other two, then you have oppression and tyranny. This highly unfortunate but rather frequent outcome is one of the main reasons why the Melchizedek tells us that the concentration of power has been the great struggle in the evolution of government:

> The great struggle in the evolution of government has concerned the concentration of power. The universe administrators have learned from experience that the evolutionary peoples on the inhabited worlds are best regulated by the representative type of civil government when there is maintained proper balance of power between the well-co-ordinated executive, legislative, and judicial branches. 70:12.1 (797.13)

If we examine the record of previous centuries in order to analyze and explain the evolution of government on Urantia, it is reasonable to note that the writings of the British philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) included ample references to the exercise of executive, legislative, and judicial functions. On the other hand, the concept that these functions can and should be exercised separately is more closely associated with the writings of the French philosopher Montesquieu (1689–1755).

During the 18th century, these ideas of Montesquieu's definitely influenced political developments in the colonial governments of the 13 British colonies located on the Eastern seaboard of North America. Further, it is reasonable to describe them as the philosophic context for the subdivision of political authority and "checks and balances" that were embodied in the Constitution of the United States, as written and adopted during the Constitutional Convention that met in Philadelphia from May 25 to September 17, 1787.

With all due modesty, I am obliged to ask committed readers of *The Urantia Book* who live in other countries and who read this essay not to interpret the details that follow below as proof of my personal bias. To be sure, I was born and raised in the United States, and I have spent over 50 years of my life serving in various branches of my country's federal government. To the contrary, however, I ask you to consider what follows as testimony of my strong conviction that these key features of the U.S. Constitution really do represent a notable and important effort to limit, channel, and constrain political power, pursuant to and in the spirit of the Melchizedek's remarks in Papers 70 and 71 that I cited above.

In the newspaper article called "Federalist No. 51" (February 6, 1788),[4] James Madison explained the underlying principles as follows:[5]

> In order to lay a due foundation for that separate and distinct exercise of the different powers of government, which to a certain extent is admitted on all hands to be essential to the preservation of liberty, it is evident that each department should have a will of its own; and consequently should be so constituted that the members of each should have as little agency as possible in the appointment of the members of the others. ...
>
> But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others. The provision

4 This text comes from to a series of newspaper articles written by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, a series that is commonly called The Federalist or The Federalist Papers. In these articles, the authors sought to explain the provisions of the U.S. Constitution that had emerged from the convention that met in Philadelphia, in order to promote its adoption by the legislatures of at least nine of the original 13 states, as was required in order to bring the Constitution into effect and launch the new national government. (Please permit me to seize this opportunity to offer my own personal conviction that James Madison and Alexander Hamilton were then serving as members of the reserve corps of destiny, at least temporarily. I should explain, however, that this conclusion is predominantly intuitive, for the revelators have not shared any information about the work of the reserve corps of destiny during the last few decades of the 18th Century.)

5 These excerpts from "Federalist No. 51" are reproduced on page 151 of Documents of Revolution (Kindle locations 7342 through 7366). The Amazon website offers this compilation in three formats (hardcover, paperback, and Kindle).

> for defense must in this, as in all other cases, be made commensurate to the danger of attack. Ambition must be made to counteract ambition. The interest of the man must be connected with the constitutional rights of the place. It may be a reflection on human nature, that such devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.

In the classic work Democracy in America (1835), the French thinker Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859) offered his own view of these matters, while emphasizing that the various subdivisions of government authority serve to preserve, protect, and enhance personal freedom:[6]

> There are two means of diminishing the force of authority in a nation.
>
> The first is to weaken power in its very principle by removing from society the right or the ability to defend itself in certain cases: to weaken authority in this manner is in general what in Europe is called founding freedom.
>
> There is a second means of diminishing the action of authority: this does not consist of stripping society of some of its rights, or paralyzing its efforts, but of dividing the use of its forces among several hands; of multiplying officials while allocating to each of them all the power he needs to do what he is destined to execute. … In the United States, therefore, they did not claim that a man in a free country has the right to do everything; on the contrary, they imposed on him more varied social obligations than elsewhere; they did not have the idea of attacking the power of society in its principle and of contesting its rights; they limited themselves to dividing it in its exercise. They wanted in this manner to arrive at the point where authority is great and the official is small, so that society would continue to be well regulated and remain free.

A Melchizedek's practical advice

The Melchizedek who wrote Papers 70 and 71 emphasizes that "Urantia mortals … should select their most competent and worthy fellows as chief executives. For representatives in the legislative branch they should elect only those who are qualified intellectually and morally to fulfill such sacred responsibilities" (70:12.5). In addition, he states:

> The survival of democracy is dependent on successful representative government; and that is conditioned upon the practice of electing to public offices only those individuals who are technically trained, intellectually competent, socially loyal, and morally fit. Only by such provisions can government of the people, by the people, and for the people be preserved. 71:2.19 (802.13)

By calling attention to our own responsibilities, the Melchizedek is making it clear that words on paper, considered by themselves, do not suffice to protect and preserve democratic government as the revelators have counseled and recommended. Instead, that crucial outcome can be achieved only if citizens accept their personal responsibilities and proceed to carry them out conscientiously and courageously. An article that appeared in the British newsmagazine *The Economist* in mid-May implicitly highlighted this conclusion:

6 Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Volume I (1835), Part One, Chapter 5. This excerpt appears on page 67 of the translation by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, as published by the University of Chicago Press in 2000.

> [I]f Americans believe that their constitution alone can safeguard the republic from a Caesar on the Potomac, then they are too sanguine. Preserving democracy depends today, as it always has, on the courage and convictions of countless people all across America—especially those charged with writing and upholding its laws. ...
>
> The lesson is that what sustains the American project, as with any democracy, is not black-letter laws but the values of citizens, judges and public servants.[7]

"...words on paper, considered by themselves, do not suffice to protect and preserve democratic government...."

In fairness, it is important for us to bear in mind that the United States is certainly not the only democratic republic in which it is crucial for citizens to take an active interest in public affairs and to reflect thoughtfully and thoroughly when they cast their votes to elect government officials. Further, the need to improve the overall patterns and practices of government is far from the only serious defect in society and civilization that afflicts our troubled planet. In section 3 of Paper 52, a Mighty Messenger tells us that Urantia is "a full dispensation and more behind the average planetary schedule":

> On an average world the post-Adamic dispensation is an age of great invention, energy control, and mechanical development.... Much of the material progress of a world occurs during this time of the inauguration of the development of the physical sciences, just such an epoch as Urantia is now experiencing. Your world is a full dispensation and more behind the average planetary schedule.52:3.6 (593.5)

We have now reached the end of my essay, and I hope I have highlighted interesting and perhaps intriguing factors that you will wish to consider seriously. Since I have already tried your patience more than once, I see no harm in repeating two principles that I consider extremely important:

Religion is not enough.

"Human wisdom must evolve." [A Melchizedek of Nebadon, 101:4.2 (1109.3)]



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7 "Is America dictator-proof?" *The Economist*, article dated May 16, 2024, published in the May 18 print edition.



Render unto the Supreme

How you and I build civilization

Claire Thurston, USA

Peril everywhere. At this moment of upheaval, in which our politics, culture, and environment approach an existential threat, *The Urantia Book* offers crucial perspectives on how we may proceed. Nevertheless, the revelation does not sugar-coat our current dilemma:

> Occidental civilization of the twentieth century groans wearily under the tremendous overload of luxury and the inordinate multiplication of human desires and longings. Modern society is enduring the strain of one of its most dangerous phases of far-flung inter association and highly complicated interdependence. 68:2.5 (765.2)

We start by zooming out to the big picture context, locating where we are in the planetary ages. Then we explore the revelation's guidance on civilization; how to best leverage our understanding and target our efforts to advance our beloved planet's progression. We can glean guidance from the "Government on a Neighboring Planet" and the "Garden" papers, especially on how to uplift our children's education and home life. We conclude with how our inner work and outer service contribute to the evolution of the Supreme.

Planetary Evolution

It was strangely reassuring to me when I read about the succession of ages on the road to light and life in the "Planetary Princes" paper, and realized that we are largely in the third one, the material-comfort era. This is the age of luxury, which is characterized by "tyranny, intolerance, gluttony and drunkenness." (50:5.3) We learn that we are in a phase and that these characteristics form a pattern of evolution that other planets have overcome. Our experimental planet includes many people who are still in the first, the nutrition epoch, focused on the food quest and the second, the security age, the quest for self-preservation. (50:5.3). With these disparities in levels of civilizational development and the dangers of our current era, we are so fortunate that Jesus gave himself as the Spirit of Truth to guide us from within.

Urantia has the Spiritual Foundation for Progress—Jesus' Gift to the Planet

> The pouring out of the Spirit of Truth provides the spiritual foundation for the realization of great achievements in the interests of the human race of the bestowal world. Urantia is therefore far better prepared for the more immediate realization of a planetary government with its laws, mechanism, symbols, conventions, and language—all of which could contribute so mightily to the establishment of world-wide peace under law and could lead to the sometime drawings of a real age of spiritual striving; and such an age is the planetary threshold to the utopian ages of light and life. 72:12.5 (820.3)

We are doubly gifted: with the Spirit of Truth from Michael and with the awareness of this bestowal from

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the revelation. Therefore, we can consciously cultivate and mobilize wisdom by individually attempting to listen to the Spirit of Truth within:

> The weaker elements of the races incline towards excesses and brutality. Gradually these pleasure-seeking weaklings are subjugated by the more strong and truth-loving elements of the advancing civilization." 50:5.3 (577.1)

Rarely does *The Urantia Book* give instructions, but I read instructions in those words. As truth-lovers, we do all we can to fortify and support each other in our relationships, our teams, and our efforts to uplift society so we may tip the balance away from the brutality of the material-comfort era towards the blossoming of the next era, the quest for knowledge and wisdom.

> The quest for knowledge and wisdom where food, security and material comfort still dominate society, but many are hungering for knowledge and thirsting for wisdom." 50:5.3 (577.2)

Through the Spirit of Truth, we can exchange our faith for the faith of Jesus in order to focus on addressing the problems we face.

> The all-consuming and indomitable spiritual faith of Jesus never became fanatical for it never attempted to run away with his well-balanced intellectual judgments concerning the proportional values of practical and commonplace social, economic, and moral life situations. 196:0.7 (2088.2)

How Your Inner Work Impacts Civilization

> Only in the higher levels of the superconscious mind as it impinges upon the spirit realm of human experience can you find those higher concepts in association with effective master patterns which will contribute to the building of a better and more enduring civilization. Personality is inherently creative, but it thus functions only in the inner life of the individual. 111:4.5 (1220.4)

If your God-given personality is inherently creative within your inner life, you have the capacity to stretch your mind to reach for those higher concepts that align with a pattern for building a better and more enduring civilization. In Africa, the concept of ubuntu, *I am because we are*, defined as, "values and practices that people of Africa or of African origin view as making people authentic human beings…(to be) part of a larger and more significant relational, communal, societal, environmental and spiritual world,"[1] has launched a network of institutions such as hospitals, schools, and group homes for refugee children.[2] In the ecosystem of spirit values, the spiritual growth of each person accrues to the benefit of all and the spiritual decline in each person redounds to everyone's loss. There is no escaping this fundamental aspect of the spiritual ecosystem. We are interdependent as a culture of the whole. The good news is that even though we cannot control others, any work that we do on our own spiritual development will enhance not only our own lives, but the lives of all. Have confidence in the many contributors who stand side by side with you. Envision the spiritual force that you are helping to build, through every decision and action, however small. Feel part of the circulation of giving and receiving spirit values.

Civilization and You

The Urantia Book defines civilization as the evolution of *mores*. Through this lens, we can support those that we believe will elevate society. Mores are social norms that are widely observed within a particular society or culture and determine what is considered acceptable or unacceptable; the conventions that embody the fundamental values of a group. Mores and morals have similar meanings—mores are the customs and conventions of a group or of society itself. They are not necessarily based on written law, and they can change. The mores of the Victorian era prescribed that women

1 Mugumbate, Jacob Rugare; Chereni, Admire (23 April 2020). "Editorial: Now, the theory of Ubuntu has its space in social work". African Journal of Social Work. 10 (1). ISSN 2409-5605.

2 *The Spirit of Ubuntu* directed by Kudzai Tanago (2024; Los Angeles: Distribution by Pato Banton).



Adobe Stock

remain in the private sphere of the home. A Victorian traveling to our time would probably be shocked by current mores that allow women to work.

Today, in the broader culture, the idea of civilization has become tarnished, associated with Western cultural imperialists, despoilers of native peoples. Materialistic ideals have fueled countless conflicts. For example, in our recent history, Hitler usurped Nietzsche's ideal of the superman to support his genocidal acts. Many would argue that, as a species, humanity has not advanced because economic, class, and ethnic territorial competition has fragmented modern civic life, yet few would want to return to a pre-industrial age with its limited resources. Civilization is a big concept… what does it have to do with you and I? Everything. Government doesn't dictate civilization. The word root, "civil," simply means citizen, and is defined as "relating to ordinary citizens and their concerns, as distinct from military or ecclesiastical matters." This speaks to our relationships with each other, especially how we impact society through our involvement in groups and how we contribute to the mores of those groups. Even though there is a great need for society to address economic problems, civilizational poverty is not economic, it is spiritual. Jesus was not shy about overtly decrying unseemly mores as they pertained to the spiritual life of his people, such as animal sacrifice and the presence of money changers on the temple grounds (193:1.7).

> The survival of a society depends chiefly on the progressive evolution of its mores. The process of custom evolution grows out of the desire for experimentation; new ideas are put forward—competition ensues. A progressing civilization embraces the progressive idea and endures; time and circumstance finally select the fitter group for survival. But this does not mean that each separate and isolated change in the composition of human society has been for the better. No! indeed no! for there have been many, many retrogressions in the long forward struggle of Urantia civilization. 68:4.7 (76.7)

As material creatures who have a limited number of days on the planet, it is natural for us to want to see, hear, or touch the direct results of our efforts in our lifetimes. But with the vision provided by *The Urantia Book*, if we are committed to our values, we must persist in our communities with an evolutionary mindset and adjust our expectations to a longer view exceeding our short time on Earth:

> But these customs are not an unmitigated evil; their evolution should continue. It is nearly fatal to the continuance of civilization to undertake their (customs) wholesale modification by radical revolution. Custom has been the thread of continuity which has held civilization together. The path of human history is strewn

> with the remnants of discarded customs and obsolete social practices; but no civilization has endured which abandoned its mores except for the adoption of better and more fit customs. 68:4.6 (767.6)

From "Government on a Neighboring Planet" (Paper 72), we learn how competition is evolving to improve society. The revelation visualizes some possibilities of how new norms about notions of success could emerge in our own culture:

> Competition is keen on this continent, but much of it has been transferred from industry to play, skill, scientific achievement, and intellectual attainment. It is most active in social service and governmental loyalty. 72:5.7 (813.8)

From fifteen years with governmental leadership development institutions, I've had the opportunity to witness glimpses for an evolved future society. I was fortunate enough to represent the United States at an international governmental conference in Taiwan, which had funded visiting professionals from thirteen different countries with the goal of exchanging best practices from a variety of cultural perspectives—a lesson in unity without uniformity. Two aspects were especially noteworthy. First, the value the country places on government service: only the very top percentage of students are accepted into civilian service. Secondly, the effort the host country put into our diverse group experience. They brought us together, shared their personal lives, delivered quality presentations, and after the work portion of the conference, provided dinners and excursions to see Taipei. They even taught us songs in their native language.

In the United States, another example that evokes a vision of our planet's evolution is the Olympic training center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The extensive campus with state-of-the-art training facilities inspires ideals with sculptures; a gigantic metal globe as you enter the grounds, and statues of athletes from each sport in peak form throughout the landscape's winding paths. Motivational quotes from leaders and philosophers line the interior of every building. The dining hall features every kind of tasty cuisine, labelled with their nutritional value so the trainees could consume the best for their performance. Aspiration and encouragement resonate throughout the Center.

> The greatest twentieth-century influences contributing to the furtherance of civilization and the advancement of culture are the marked increase in world travel and the unparalleled improvements in methods of communication. But the improvement in education has not kept pace with the expanding social structure; neither has the modern appreciation of ethics developed in correspondence with growth along more purely intellectual and scientific lines. And modern civilization is at a standstill in spiritual development and the safeguarding of the home institution. 81:6.25 (909.6)

These then are our mandates: to advance education, ethics, spiritual development, and the home. This is a tall order, but fortunately, these areas are so interdependent that any improvement in one will likely uplift the others, especially the home and education.



Carol Grotnes Belk Sculpture Garden, U.S. Olympic Training Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Photograph by Carol M. Highsmith. Wikimedia Commons

Education's Role

What does the revelation suggest in order to uplift our culture in the realms of education and home life?

> Education recently passed from the control of the clergy to that of lawyers and businessmen. Eventually it must be given over to the philosophers and the scientists. Teachers must be free beings, real leaders, to the end that

> philosophy, the search for wisdom, may become the chief educational pursuit. 71.7.3 (806.4)

What does the revelation mean when it says that "Teachers must be free beings, real leaders"? Does it mean that teachers must be free from any ideological stance that could inhibit their performance for the greater good? Does it mean that they must have faced and overcome obstacles to their own personal development, so that they are free from self-preoccupation and therefore able to give? With *The Urantia Book's* focus on the sanctity of freewill choice, does it mean that teachers need to have a developed inner spiritual life, so their choices reflect the authentic originality of their God given personality? Looking at Jesus as an ideal teacher/leader, he exemplifies all these qualities. He is free from all human negative traits, altogether sincere and genuine. He is not beholden to anyone but God, so is free from human dogma or institutional influence and becomes the way for all others to discover truth, beauty, and goodness within. His message focuses on the primacy of the individual's relationship to God. He proclaims the value of true liberty and admonishes his followers to free the spiritual captives.

Part of the evolution of our mores includes our attitude towards education: the importance of the teaching profession, the value of philosophy (the search for wisdom), and the character of teachers. When I first joined the leadership development arm of the United States government, I did not realize that there was an entire educational system apart from an academic one. This adult educational training and development track, which is based on a person's functional role within a larger institution, centers on relationships with others; progressing from team lead, to supervisor, to manager, to executive. From the perspective set forth in Paper 195, "After Pentecost," this parallel system may have emerged because character, values, and relationship skills have not yet been the focus of academic curriculum.

> The purpose of all education should be to foster and further the supreme purpose of life, the development of a majestic and well-balanced personality. There is great need for the teaching of moral discipline in the place of so much self-gratification. Upon such a foundation religion may contribute its spiritual incentive to the enlargement and enrichment of mortal life, even to the security and enhancement of life eternal. 195:10.16 (206.3)

The Urantia Book also includes instructive guidance when it describes the curriculum from the schools of the Garden of Eden. In many school systems today, recess is deemed necessary to allow children to blow off steam so that they can better concentrate on their studies, with a side benefit of learning to get along in groups. However, in the Garden, socialization itself, takes center stage.

> The entire purpose of the western school system of the Garden was *socialization*. The forenoon periods of recess were devoted to practical horticulture and agriculture, the afternoon periods to competitive play. The evenings were employed in social intercourse and the cultivation of personal friendships. Religious and sexual training are regarded as the province of the home, the duty of parents.
>
> The teaching in these schools included instruction regarding:
>
> 1. Health and care of the body.
>
> 2. The golden rule, the standard of social intercourse.
>
> 3. The relation of individual rights to group rights and community obligations
>
> 4. History and culture of the various earth races
>
> 5. Methods of advancing and improving world trade.
>
> 6. Co-ordination of conflicting duties and emotions
>
> 7. The cultivation of play, humor, and competitive substitutes for physical fighting. 74:7.2-10 (835.5-13)

Imagine, for example, that the understanding of the golden rule was a core part of every child's development. When the revelation uses the imperative "should," we need to listen. Our culture has designated unique individuals as *visionaries*, such as Steve Jobs or Mahatma Gandhi, but in the following quote, the book urges all people to find a vision. With the extent

of urgent crises in the world, it is difficult to avert our eyes from immediate problems and search for an enlightened view of the whole, but that is exactly what we are instructed to do.

> Urantians should get a vision of a new and higher cultural society. Education will jump to new levels of value with the passing of the purely profit-motivated system of economics. Education has too long been localist, militaristic, ego exalting, and success seeking; it must eventually become world-wide, idealistic, self-realizing, and cosmic grasping. 71:7.3 (806.3)

The contrast between "ego exalting" and "self-realizing" highlights a key message of the revelation. "Ego exalting" is dependent on a human audience to applaud, or whatever a particular culture decides are external markers of success: our academic degrees, how much money we make, and so forth. "Self-realizing," means that your self is becoming more real, more aligned with cosmic values and potentially more integrated with the Thought Adjuster's blueprint for your ideal personality manifestation. Institutional education may have a long way to go before it evolves to focus on the self-realization of its students. But within the purview of the home, parental influence can help to nourish children's values and guide them to attune to God within.

Home Life

The "Government on a Neighboring Planet" paper seems designed for us to compare and contrast our current culture: this nearby place has constructed a society that we might emulate. Many of the social categories, such as taxation, old age insurance, or industrial organization, would require wholesale change on our planet, but the sections on home life contain lessons that could be applied more readily today and in the near future.

> These people regard the home as the basic institution of their civilization. It is expected that the most valuable part of a child's education and character training will be secured from his parents and at home, and fathers devote almost as much attention to child culture as do mothers. 72:3.4 (811.4)

An increasing number of fvathers are taking an active role in their children's lives, far beyond the traditional parental division of labor from less than a century ago, where it was assumed that the breadwinner role belonged only to them and that only mothers were crucial to nourishing the family. Psychology has now begun to collect and analyze data that shows how fathers impact child development. There are strong research results that show how fathers have a key role in their children's autonomy and empathy development.[3] Autonomy is important for spiritual growth because a child with a healthy sense of self feels centered and comfortable with connecting internally. Part of that inner access includes the exercise of the will, in psychological terms, referred to as "locus of control," feeling safe to connect to the power of choice without being overly influenced by others.

> Will is that manifestation of the human mind which enables the subjective consciousness to express itself objectively and to experience the phenomenon of aspiring to be Godlike. And it is in this same sense that every reflective and spiritually minded human being can become creative." 130:2.10 (1431.5)

We know from *The Urantia Book* that we aspire to loving our neighbor as ourself. Another way to think about the Golden Rule is empathy in action. A more empathetic child grows to be a more empathetic adult who could contribute to making a culture that could help tip our civilization towards a more service-oriented society. Although today there is great volatility in the mores around marriage and family life, in the long view evolution of our society, marriage and family life are growing positively in the direction of reinforcement.

3 Hoffman, M.L. *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Koestner, R., Franz, C., & Weinberger, J. "The family origins of empathic concern: A 26-year longitudinal study." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 58 (1990): 709-717.

Pruett, Kyle D. *Fatherneed*. New York: Broadway Books, 2000.

> Nature demands survival, but the arts of civilization continue to increase the pleasures of marriage and the satisfactions of family life. 68:2.9 (765.6)

With the clear imperative to place supreme value on home life and to value both mothers and fathers, we can support our own families and those norms within our communities.



Earthrise, first color image of Earth, photographed December 24, 1968 by Apollo 8 astronaut William Anders. Original cropping. NASA

It's been less than a century since we have been able to see an image of our planet from space. What a comfort in its replete shape, no spikes jutting out in awkward angles. A shining sphere swathed in white wisps above depths of blue. From here, it is easy to imagine a spiritual city. Each person's web of light, the internal communication lines that pulse through decision nodes on the way towards intersection. Intersections in relationship as the webs of two cities join in value and manifest as action. This would be an architecture seen from above. Above the chaos of sectarian war and ever-shifting cultural norms. Each individual's efforts towards truth, beauty and goodness would be shafts of light piercing through barbarity and banality to form the infrastructure for true progress.

> Intelligence may control the mechanism of civilization, wisdom may direct it, but spiritual idealism is the energy which really uplifts and advances human culture from one level of attainment to another. 81:6.27 (909.8)

We naturally inhabit our gravity situation of walking on the earth, and do not normally think of the larger cosmos as a consequence environment. We have seen scientific images of how one electron impacts another; the dazzling display of infinite interactions and living consequences tantalizes our imaginations. The microscope gives us entry into an otherwise invisible world. Now we need a macroscope, to see the spiritual consequences of every human thought and action within the living and evolving Grand Consequence of the Supreme.

It may be easier to conceptualize having a relationship both within our individual selves and in the community than it is to think about an aspect of the divine that is evolving through our thoughts and deeds—that God actually needs us. In our day-to-day life, it is easy to overlook that in every attempt to do the right thing, every action taken in good faith, that each of us is soul-forming while creating an invisible infrastructure that contributes to the repleteness of divine wisdom. Within the ecosystem of one generation following another, the unique gifts of every person build a living spiritual legacy. Each of our spiritual gifts is received, real gifts to real-izing our experiential contribution to the Supreme's evolution.

Despite the violent lurches of political and cultural history, progressing and retrogressing, the impact of every good thought and deed endures and continues apace.



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The Upside Scenario

The Urmia Lectures on the Imperative of World Federation

Byron Belitsos, USA

It's hard to face.

Horrific conventional wars and even genocides continue to blight our world, as does the threat of nuclear war among the great powers. As I write in 2024, humankind is far from abolishing the practice of war-making to settle political conflicts within or among nations. But those with faith in the future are called upon by the revelators, as we will see below, to envision something better. In 1966, Gene Rodenberry, thought to have been a student of the revelation, launched the TV series *Star Trek* that depicted an "Earth Federation" in our far future—a high-functioning world civilization ruled by a democratic global government. But today's science-fiction authors and screenwriters too often resort to the *flipside* scenario, some gloomy version of a nightmarish future dystopia in which humankind has failed to solve its manifold challenges. These current writers along with today's fashionable "doomers," indulge in a faithless extension of our current planetary disorder into the far future. What portrayal will win out? And which scenario is consistent with the merciful plans of our Master Sovereign for his planet of nativity?

Decades ago, the Urantia revelation offered the *upside* scenario: a practical plan for creating a governed world—that is, a sustainable planet thriving under enforceable global law. This achievement of what it calls "mankind government" is depicted as a crucial phase of world transformation preparatory for our entry into the early stages of the Era of Light and Life. The Urmia vision for world federation is provided with such compelling logic and inspiring confidence that many assume this teaching remains valid today and into the future. But rather than act as an advocate for this vision, I only attempt here to briefly summarize its moral imperatives and built-in features as found in Paper 134, as well as offer a broader context that includes *The Urantia Book's* teachings about universe-wide law and governance; a brief look at a possible human source for the Urmia lectures; and a glance at the world federalist golden age of the late 1940s.

In these passages, the revelators share what they believe to be the solvent for war, that greatest of political afflictions. Remarkably, this solution is derived from lectures Jesus delivered just prior to his public ministry. I'll analyze below the assertive political discourse that can be found at 134:5 and 135:6. These statements convey the necessity of creating a world government, and we are told they "depict the import" of the lectures presented by Jesus in A.D. 24, according to the Midwayer authors. These unseen writers were given prior approval to associate this adaptation with the person of Jesus by the Melchizedek chairman of the revelatory commission, an approach that led to a dispute between the seraphim of the churches and the seraphim of progress. We are also told that the chairperson "appointed a commission of three of our number to prepare our view of the Master's Urmia teachings as adapted to twentieth-century religious and political conditions on Urantia....We now present these statements as they stand after having been edited by the Melchizedek chairman of the revelatory commission." (134:3.8) Notably, we're not directly told here that this interpretation of Jesus' lectures also applies to *twentieth-first-century* religious and political conditions on our world.

Lake Urmia, Iran. Adobe Stock

Some Background on the Urmia Lectures

Heretofore unknown in history, the Urmia lectures took place on an island within Lake Urmia, a large body of saltwater located adjacent to the old Persian city of Urmia. You will recall that Jesus passed through this region as the conductor of a year-long commercial caravan to and from a delivery point on the southern Caspian Sea. He embarked on this trip at age thirty during the transition period between his journey to Rome (with Gonod and Ganid) and his later return to Palestine to prepare for his public ministry. On his return from the southern Caspian region, Jesus gave up direction of the caravan and remained for two weeks at Urmia, having been commissioned by Cymboyton, the academy's founder and patron, to give "twenty-four lectures on 'The Brotherhood of Men,' and to conduct twelve evening sessions of questions, discussions, and debates on his lectures in particular and on the brotherhood of men in general."

We are further told that:

> This was the most systematic and formal of all the Master's teaching on Urantia. Never before or after did he say so much on one subject as was contained in these lectures and discussions on the brotherhood of men. In reality these lectures were on the 'Kingdom of God' and the 'Kingdoms of Men." 134:3.5 (1485.7)

Here I only cover Jesus's discussion of the Kingdoms of Men (or *kingdom of humankind* in today's parlance). It is noteworthy that his lectures at Urmia concerning the Kingdom of God, "Sovereignty—Divine and Human," presented at 134:4, has inspired many Urantia Book students to engage with the worldwide interfaith movement, mounting for example elaborate booths at global conferences of the World Parliament of Religions. But I only know of a few readers who utilize the political teachings at 134:5–6 to help them engage with today's geopolitical dilemmas as activists, diplomats, or politicians.



Location of present-day Lake Urmia. NASA

Foundational Teachings on Political Sovereignty

In the first section of our study, entitled "Political Sovereignty," the authors begin by laying down the core premise for their overall argument, bluntly declaring that *only two forms of political sovereignty* are valid on a mortal world.

> War on Urantia will never end so long as nations cling to the illusive notions of unlimited national sovereignty. There are only two levels of relative sovereignty on an inhabited world: the spiritual free will of the individual mortal and the collective sovereignty of mankind as a whole. Between the level of the individual human being and the level of the total of mankind, all groupings and associations are relative, transitory, and of value only in so far as they enhance the welfare, well-being, and progress of the individual and the planetary grand total—man and mankind. 134:5.2 (1487.9)

This passage allows for only two functional levels of sovereignty: the free will of the individual—i.e., the innate right to autonomy of the ordinary "world citizen"—and the level of humankind's intrinsic right to rulership over the political affairs of its home planet. The passage makes clear that these two levels are *irreducible*, each providing a kind of book-end on one side or the other of the general concept of sovereignty.

These simple assumptions go the distance in the Urmia lectures. The midwayer authors build on them almost exclusively to argue that only a democratic world government, teamed with a global bill of individual rights, can protect humanity from the ravages of war and other global maladies. But we may legitimately ask: Is this method of approach applicable in today's advanced nuclear age and the approaching era of artificial intelligence? In any case, I am aware of very few political actors on the world stage today who abide by these premises.



Eleanor Roosevelt holding poster of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Lake Success, New York. November 1949. Wikimedia Commons

Not so, however, for the post-World War II activists and maverick politicians led in large part by fervent world-government advocate Albert Einstein and other prominent atomic scientists in the late 1940s. In my study of this period, I discovered that the foundational ideas recommended by the revelators were already viscerally understood by activists in the years just after the Holocaust and Hiroshima.[1] These leaders of a hopeful new worldwide sentiment against war, a large number of them war veterans, became the "first-wave" world federalists during the highest point of this movement. They had just fought in a great world

1 The definitive history of this period can be found in the two-volume study by scholar Joseph Baratta in *The Politics of World Federation: From World Federalism to Global Governance* (Praeger, 2004).

war that led to over 53 million deaths, including 38 million civilians, so they were now suddenly thrust into a *global* perspective on politics in order to explain these horrific events. No wonder these activists intuitively regarded the *peoples of the world* as the true stewards of this planet, rather than the nation-states and great powers who had engineered this vast toll of war atrocities. As a corollary, they argued that individual rights must be universally recognized in law, not just the "rights" of states and empires. They also insisted on the concepts of universal suffrage—the voting rights of world citizens—as well as individual accountability before world law, not just unenforceable treaty laws applied only to nation-states. Many of these same leaders produced the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, which acknowledges in detail that a long list of basic human rights are innate with the world's people.

Unfortunately, the most powerful politicians of that period largely ignored these ideas. These men were, of course, the heads of great surviving powers, the five major victors of WWII. They bequeathed to that war-traumatized generation the United Nations Charter, a weak confederation of sovereign nations that proved unable to prevent the Cold War arms race and the dozens of conventional wars since that time. These leaders even reserved for their nations a veto power on the UN's new Security Council that may fairly be regarded as a *de facto* veto on the sovereignty of humankind. And rather than enfranchise the world's citizens as voters for representatives to a global legislature that can pass laws applied both to individuals and states, the founders of the UN created the General Assembly whose delegates are appointed by member nations and whose decisions are non-binding.

"Sovereignty Is Power and It Grows by Organization"

The next two paragraphs at 134:5 remind us that "the Most High" Fathers on Edentia, the Vorondadek overcontrollers of political evolution, "rule in the kingdoms of men"—an allusion to Daniel 4:17 in the Bible. Then the authors pick up with these crucial statements about the evolution of sovereignty:

> Sovereignty is power and it grows by organization. This growth of the organization of political power is good and proper, for it tends to encompass ever-widening segments of the total of mankind. But this same growth of political organizations creates a problem at every intervening stage between the initial and natural organization of political power—the family—and the final consummation of political growth—the government of all mankind, by all mankind, and for all mankind. 134:5.5 (1488.3)
>
> Starting out with parental power in the family group, political sovereignty evolves by organization as families overlap into consanguineous clans which become united, for various reasons, into tribal units—superconsanguineous political groupings. And then, by trade, commerce, and conquest, tribes become unified as a nation, while nations themselves sometimes become unified by empire. 134:5.6 (1488.4)

What are some modern implications of this passage regarding the evolution of sovereignty? Beginning in the sixteenth century in Europe, leading Enlightenment thinkers reasoned that the source of sovereignty is the *people* over whom kings had once ruled, rather than being a set of rights conferred upon them *by* their kings, whose power often derived from tribal confederations built by military conquest. Later theorists held that sovereignty is inalienable in individual persons and naturally re-appears in the family or tribes, but cannot as such be transferred to governments. They argued that people must *grant* "powers of governing" to successive levels of political power beyond the family or tribe, eventually leading to the evolution of the modern democratic nation-state, and from there to imperial super-powers. For their part, the revelators explain that this steady evolution of sovereignty to ever-greater spans of the world's people is inexorable, thereby reducing the number of small wars but tragically setting the stage for an era of major world wars:

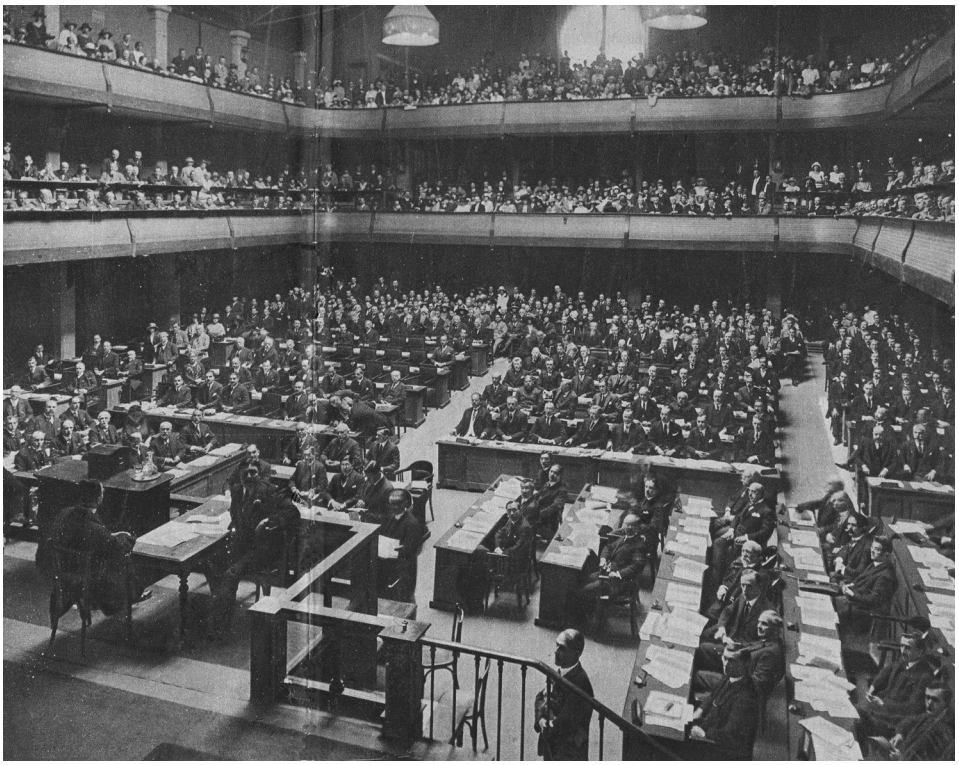
> As sovereignty passes from smaller groups to larger groups, wars are lessened. That is, minor wars between smaller nations are lessened, but the potential for greater wars is increased as the

> nations wielding sovereignty become larger and larger. Presently, when all the world has been explored and occupied, when nations are few, strong, and powerful, when these great and supposedly sovereign nations come to touch borders, when only oceans separate them, then will the stage be set for major wars, world-wide conflicts. So-called sovereign nations cannot rub elbows without generating conflicts and eventuating wars. 134:5.7 (1488.5)

As *The Urantia Book* states and as history records, the definition of true sovereignty has for centuries broadened to encompass ever-larger concepts of human community—ever-more inclusive definitions of who "the people" are. Each such expansion—where limited by constitutional, democratic government—has brought genuine peace and real advances in human rights to more and more people. This process ultimately leads to the global era in which the few largest powers, dangerously intoxicated with what the revelators call "the delusional virus of national sovereignty," now face off in a hi-tech militarized struggle for world hegemony. Here the authors energetically warn that half-measures, such as confederations, cannot work at this final stage:

> Urantia will not enjoy lasting peace until the so-called sovereign nations intelligently and fully surrender their sovereign powers into the hands of the brotherhood of men—mankind government. Internationalism—Leagues of Nations—can never bring permanent peace to mankind. World-wide confederations of nations will effectively prevent minor wars and acceptably control the smaller nations, but they will not prevent world wars nor control the three, four, or five most powerful governments. In the face of real conflicts, one of these world powers will withdraw from the League and declare war. You cannot prevent nations going to war as long as they remain infected with the delusional virus of national sovereignty. Internationalism is a step in the right direction. An international police force will prevent many minor wars, but it will not be effective in preventing major wars, conflicts between the great military governments of earth.134:5.10

The tragic dilemma described above sounds almost as familiar today as it must have when the midwayers first wrote these words. Our current version of a League of Nations, the United Nations, has signally failed to prevent many calamitous wars or scale back most of the devastating environmental conditions since its founding in 1945, chiefly because it enshrines the prerogatives of national sovereignty in its Charter. The revelators continue:



The official opening of the fourth Assembly of the League of Nations, Geneva 1923. Wikimedia Commons

> As the number of truly sovereign nations (great powers) decreases, so do both opportunity and need for mankind government increase. When there are only a few really sovereign (great) powers, either they must embark on the life and death struggle for national (imperial) supremacy, or else, by voluntary surrender of certain prerogatives

> of sovereignty, they must create the essential nucleus of supernational power which will serve as the beginning of the real sovereignty of all mankind.134:5.11

Will the great powers create such an "essential nucleus" in our time? Ninety years later, does this energetic call for the voluntary surrender of sovereignty by the great powers still stand as valid? If the answer is yes, it would logically follow that ordinary world citizens must insist on the creation of a "supernational power" that expresses what the revelators call their "real sovereignty."

The crown of the midwayers' argument comes a few sentences later: "Political sovereignty is innate with the peoples of the world. When all the peoples of Urantia create a world government, they have the right and the power to make such a government SOVEREIGN." 134:5.12 Upper-case words are rare in the Urantia text, so it is difficult not be struck by the weightiness of this pronouncement. Notice how this passage ends without a trace of ambiguity: "When such a representative or democratic world power controls the world's land, air, and naval forces, peace on earth and good will among men can prevail—but not until then."

Global Government Reflects the Principles of Universe Governance

In my view, the Urmia lectures offer a *realist* political argument. They encourage us to avoid naive utopianism. Imperfect humans simply can't survive without the rule of laws of some kind at each stage of their evolution. In effect, the authors are telling us that peace on Urantia can never be achieved in the future without the establishment of an elected world legislature in combination with worldwide juridical institutions that interpret and apply law according to the statutes of a global constitution; and it follows that world courts are almost useless without global enforcement mechanisms. According to our midwayers, those who aspire for world peace and genuine freedom on Urantia have no choice but to work for the achievement of enforceable global law—as the Urmia lectures also make clear in the next section at 134.6, "Law, Liberty, and Sovereignty."

> If one man craves freedom—liberty—he must remember that *all* other men long for the same freedom. Groups of such liberty-loving mortals cannot live together in peace without becoming subservient to such laws, rules, and regulations as will grant each person the same degree of freedom while at the same time safeguarding an equal degree of freedom for all of his fellow mortals. If one man is to be absolutely free, then another must become an absolute slave. And the relative nature of freedom is true socially, economically, and politically. Freedom is the gift of civilization made possible by the enforcement of LAW. 134:6.1 (1490.4)

Once again we encounter an upper-case word. Our trio of midwayer cousins are being emphatic for a second time. They conclude:

> Religion makes it spiritually possible to realize the brotherhood of men, but it will require mankind government to regulate the social, economic, and political problems associated with such a goal of human happiness and efficiency. There shall be wars and rumors of wars—nation will rise against nation—just as long as the world's political sovereignty is divided up and unjustly held by a group of nation-states. . . . Another world war will teach the so-called sovereign nations to form some sort of federation, thus creating the machinery for preventing small wars, wars between the lesser nations. But global wars will go on until the government of mankind is created. Global sovereignty will prevent global wars—nothing else can. 134:6.2–4 (1490.5–7)

Does the revelators' oft-repeated requirement that we create a lawful world federation seem burdensome? Does it seem unnecessary, overstated, and well-nigh impossible to achieve? Consider the fact that e*ven angelic nature requires governance*. *The Urantia Book* makes abundantly clear that structured governance is pervasive on high and operates through duly constituted courts, executives, and legislatures—even extending to governance mechanisms supplied by "the supreme board of the supercontrol for the affairs

of all seven superuniverses." (24:5:2) Says the Chief of Archangels of Nebadon, "You are living in a well-ordered universe." (33:7.8)

That the heavenly realms are ruled by law is a lesson learned the hard way by our local system; it's the sobering conclusion one must draw from the lawlessness of Lucifer's rebellion, now being adjudicated in the case, *Gabriel vs. Lucifer*. We await the rulings of the superuniverse tribunal on Uversa, soon to be followed by the enforcement of its decisions by the sentinels of the Ancients of Days. Indeed, angels and celestials high and low, and ascendant mortals in the afterlife, continue to operate under some form of "heavenly" government, first beginning on our lowly material planet and extending all the way up to Uversa. In Nebadon, the juridical mechanism of the local universe is supervised by Gabriel. We are told that there are seventy divisions of these universe courts on Salvington (the capitol of the local universe of millions of inhabited planets), but we learn that that all the *legislation* regarding Nebadon affairs takes place on each Constellation of 100,000 inhabited worlds—that is, closer to the action on individual worlds. The three universal functions of government are spread out across a local universe in the following manner:

> On Salvington, the headquarters of Nebadon, there are no true legislative bodies. The universe headquarters worlds are concerned largely with adjudication. The legislative assemblies of the local universe are located on the headquarters of the one hundred constellations. The systems are chiefly concerned with the executive and administrative work of the local creations. The System Sovereigns and their associates enforce the legislative mandates of the constellation rulers and execute the judicial decrees of the high courts of the universe. 33:8.1 (373.3)

Human Sources for the Idea of World Federation

As pointed out above, the Midwayers' robust advocacy for world federation in the Urmia lectures did not take place in a vacuum. Part IV of the book was "indited" in 1935. But many of us believe particular "human sources," certain brilliant political thinkers who were active toward the end of World War II, influenced the final drafts of the Urmia lectures. The most prominent of these possible sources was renowned journalist Emery Reves, whose book *The Anatomy of Peace* (Harper & Brothers, January 1945) sold over 800,000 copies in thirty languages. The ideas in Reves' work (and in many other books, manifestos, and pamphlets) powered the numerous post-WWII initiatives for creating a world government; as also noted above, few are aware today that a vibrant and widespread democratic world federalist movement took shape in this period. Its varied efforts on behalf of "one world" burst on the political scene in the US (and Europe) in the second half of the 1940s, only tapering off into pessimism after the Korean War in the early 1950s and the steady acceleration of the nuclear arms race between the U.S. and the Soviets.

It is notable that *The Urantia Book*, with its rather overt backing for world federation, appears only a few years later in 1955, brandishing language and concepts seemingly derived in part from Reves' work.[2] Here are just a half dozen of the many parallels to Reves' *The Anatomy of Peace* discovered by veteran researcher Matthew Block. Please note that passages from Reves appear first, followed by the parallel passage from *The Urantia Book* highlighted in bold. Many of these passages are very close in meaning to statements in Reves, allowing us to infer that they were likely utilized by the revelators:

2 During that forgotten era, an activist group called the Student Federalists was considered the most progressive. The largest organization, the United World Federalists, formed in 1947 by the merger of five groups, once had over 50,000 members, with affiliates in almost every state and on scores of campuses, and over 700 chapters. Declining after the disillusionment of the Korean War, the UWF went through several changes until it emerged as the World Federalist Association (WFA) in the 1960's under the leadership of *Saturday Evening Post* editor Norman Cousins. Based for decades in Washington D.C., the WFA recently changed its name to Citizens for Global Solutions (CGS), leaving behind several important splinters more loyal to the original vision, most notably the Democratic World Federalists, based today in San Francisco. Also important in this equation has been the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA), founded in 1958, whose *Constitution for the Federation of Earth* was completed in 1991 and is respected worldwide.

1.

In absolute form, freedom of one man means the serfdom of the other.

If one man is to be absolutely free, then another must become an absolute slave. 134:6.1

2.

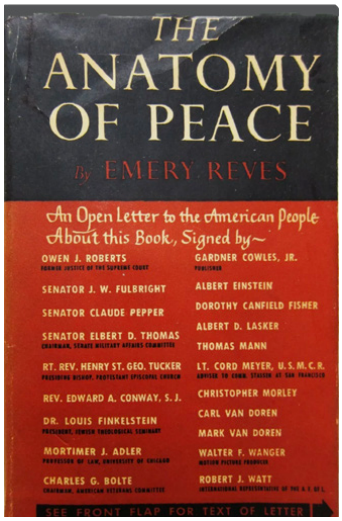
The futility [of] debates about armament and disarmament must be apparent to all.

It is not a question of armaments or disarmament. 134:6.6

3.

War is never the disease itself. War is a reaction to a disease of society, the symptom of disease.

War is not man's great and terrible disease; war is a symptom, a result. 134:6.7



Sixth edition cover

4.

[Nations] cannot protect their peoples against the devastation of international war.

[Nations] never have had a sovereignty which could protect them from the ravages and devastations of world wars. 134:6.8

5.

The problem is not negative and does not involve giving up something we already have. The nations are not giving up sovereignty. The problem is positive—creating something we lack, something we have never had, but that we imperatively need.

The nations are not giving up sovereignty so much as they are actually creating a real, bona fide, and lasting world sovereignty which will henceforth be fully able to protect them from all war. 134:6.8

6.

Democratic sovereignty of the people can be correctly expressed and effectively instituted only if local affairs are handled by local government, national affairs by national government, and international, world affairs, by international, world government.

[Under a] lasting world sovereignty . . . . Local affairs will be handled by local governments; national affairs, by national governments; international affairs will be administered by global government.[3] 134:6.8

Nonpartisanship: An Essential Stance in Creating a Governed World

What, then, is the takeaway for those who feel the Urmia lectures still apply? What should be regarded as the current and optimal version of the upside scenario? If nothing else, it would seem that advocates for a governed world must be strictly non-partisan, given our highly diverse world with its increasingly vocal minorities.

The revelators call for a "representative mankind government." To be fully representative of human sovereignty, those who stand for constitutional world democracy must be accomodating to every non-violent political position. Accordingly, they should maintain awareness of the unique needs of every gender, race, nation, or class—whether left, centrist, populist, or

3 To view the entire series of parallels, which runs for 17 pages, download the PDF of Paper 134 here: https://urantiabooksources.com/part-iv/. At this site, researcher Matthew Block also provides parallels the so-called "Midwayer Messages of 1943." This document is reproduced in Vol. 3 of *The Urantia Diaries of Harold and Martha Sherman* (2018). The diarists record that these messages were shared by Dr. Sadler during a picnic for Forum members in 1943. See: https://urantiabooksources.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/1943midwayermessages.pdf

right-wing. After all, universal inclusiveness is a core concept of any genuine democracy, and this principle must also apply to the future world parliament if such a body is to maintain legitimacy.

As I understand it, then, a key objective for Urantia Book students who follow the adapted political teachings of Jesus as presented in the Urmia lectures is the creation of such a representative world parliament that will one day abolish war, represent the inherent sovereignty of humankind, and elevate the innate sovereignty of each world citizen. The key to success will be tolerance, universal brotherhood, and unity-in-diversity.

May the wisdom and the realism of the mighty Urmia lectures light the way.



BYRON BELITSOS *found* The Urantia Book *in 1974 and became an activist for world federation in 1985. In 1989 he wrote, directed, and produced the film "Toward a Governed World." Later he published and was principal author of One World Democracy: A Progressive Vision for Enforceable Global Law (Origin Press, 2005). Belitsos worked for Citizens for Global Solutions and is currently a senior staffer with the Earth Constitution Institute. He holds a B.A. in intellectual history from the University of Chicago and most recently earned an M.A. in systematic theology from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He can be reached at byron@originpress.com.*



Two people confer at Lake Urmia. Adobe Stock Photo



Jesus: Government and Politics

Richard Jernigan, USA

The Urantia Book is a twentieth century text and as such, government, politics, and social issues play a significant role in the book's overall presentation, including its 800-page narrative of the life and teachings of Jesus. We find frequent commentary attributed to Jesus on the role of government in society, and how a dedicated religionist should and should not encounter the political arena. Further, the very teachings of Jesus can inspire political action, and while Jesus personally avoided the political realm for reasons addressed below, there are values central to his teachings that can inform our government and politics.

Jesus' Pre-existence

The Urantia Book reveals Jesus of Nazareth as Michael of Nebadon, our Creator Son of an unfinished local universe that currently consists of nearly four million inhabited worlds similar to ours. This fact is central to understanding his behavior and mission while on earth, particularly in his relationship with earthly politics and government.

Michael has assigned to him a Paradise brother, Immanuel, who advises him as he creates and administers his local universe. Prior to leaving the heavenly realm to incarnate as the infant of his earthly parents, Joseph and Mary, he received several admonitions from this elder brother, including:

> 3. In your relations to the social order we advise that you confine your efforts largely to spiritual regeneration and intellectual emancipation. Avoid all entanglements with the economic structure and the political commitments of your day. More especially devote yourself to living the ideal religious life on Urantia.
>
> 4. Under no circumstances and not even in the least detail, should you interfere with the normal and orderly progressive evolution of the Urantia races. But this prohibition must not be interpreted as limiting your efforts to leave behind you on Urantia an enduring and improved system of positive religious ethics. As a dispensational Son you are granted certain privileges pertaining to the advancement of the spiritual and religious status of the world peoples. 120:3.4-5 (1329.5-6)

Even without this admonition, Jesus would have likely followed these directives. He enters our history and avoids clearcut political stances because our opinions shift as our mores evolve. A stance regarded as progressive and liberating in one generation may be stifling and oppressive in a later one, as he says to his apostles:

> I have not come to legislate but to enlighten. I have come not to reform the kingdoms of this world but rather to establish the kingdom of heaven. It is not the will of the Father that I should yield to the temptation to teach you rules of government, trade, or social behavior, which, while they might be good for today, would be far from suitable for the society of another age. I am on earth solely to comfort the minds, liberate the spirits, and save the souls of men. 140:6.6 (1576.6)

But this did not prevent Jesus from speaking clearly to economic and social inequities, nor behaving as a principled citizen of his community, nation, world, and universe.

Depiction of Jesus with Roman Forum and European Union headquarters, Adobe Stock

Non-violence

Throughout the book's narrative of his life, Jesus is unequivocally non-violent, beginning with this description of him as a nine-year-old:

> Perhaps his most unusual and outstanding trait was his unwillingness to fight for his rights. Since he was such a well-developed lad for his age, it seemed strange to his playfellows that he was disinclined to defend himself even from injustice or when subjected to personal abuse. As it happened, he did not suffer much on account of this trait because of the friendship of Jacob, a neighbor boy, who… made it his business to see that no one was permitted to impose upon Jesus because of his aversion to physical combat. Several times older and uncouth youths attacked Jesus…but they always suffered swift and certain retribution at the hands of his self-appointed champion and ever-ready defender, Jacob the stone mason's son. 124:2.4 (1368.6)

The book describes an extensive two-year journey Jesus undertook in his late twenties, accompanied by an Indian merchant, Gonod, and his son, Ganid. After an incident in which Jesus restrained a bullying youth from brutally attacking a younger victim, Jesus stopped Ganid from punitively thrashing the bully. A conversation about Jesus' stance on non-violence ensued, particularly why Jesus intervened when Ganid sought to punish the bully:

> Jesus said:
>
> Mercy ministry is always the work of the individual, but justice punishment is the function of the social, governmental, or universe administrative groups. As an individual I am beholden to show mercy; I must go to the rescue of the assaulted lad, and in all consistency I may employ sufficient force to restrain the aggressor. And that is just what I did. I achieved the deliverance of the assaulted lad; that was the end of mercy ministry. Then I forcibly detained the aggressor a sufficient length of time to enable the weaker party to the dispute to make his escape, after which I withdrew from the affair. 133:1.2 (1469.1)

Jesus then goes on to cite the public, not private role in exacting punishment:

> Ganid, mercy may be lavish, but justice is precise. Cannot you discern that no two persons are likely to agree as to the punishment which would satisfy the demands of justice? One would impose forty lashes, another twenty, while still another would advise solitary confinement as a just punishment. Can you not see that on this world such responsibilities had better rest upon the group or be administered by chosen representatives of the group? 133:1.2 (1469.1)

This concept of justice being a group function, not an individual one is stressed repeatedly throughout *The Urantia Book*.

The apex of Jesus' non-violent stance is vividly framed in his arrest and crucifixion, and certainly makes a striking impression on practically anyone observing his behavior in those final hours of his earth life, even to his vast local universe:

> On millions of inhabited worlds, tens of trillions of evolving creatures who may have been tempted to give up the moral struggle and abandon the good fight of faith, have taken one more look at Jesus on the cross and then have forged on ahead, inspired by the sight of God's laying down his incarnate life in devotion to the unselfish service of man. 188:5.5 (2018.4)

But Jesus' non-violence was a personal stance, and curiously, he did not impose this upon his followers. Before the crucifixion, Simon Zelotes and Simon Peter had more than one hundred swords delivered to their camp. Jesus was aware of this, and made this statement in an effort to enlighten them:

> Jesus called Andrew and said:
>
> Awaken your brethren! I have something to say to them." Jesus knew about the swords and which of his apostles had received and were wearing these weapons, but he never disclosed to them that he knew such things…. Jesus said: "I have taught you much that is needful for this time, but I would now warn you not to put your trust in the uncertainties of the flesh nor in the frailties of man's defense against the

> trials and testing which lie ahead of us. I have called you apart here by yourselves that I may once more plainly tell you that we are going up to Jerusalem, where you know the Son of Man has already been condemned to death. 171:4.2 (1871.4)

Other than this admonishment, Jesus did not intervene in the apostles' keeping of weapons. His only statement in *The Urantia Book* explicitly related to arms occurs when Peter draws his weapon during Jesus' arrest, and Jesus states specifically to Peter, "he who lives by the sword will die by the sword." But his refusal to forbid his apostles to have arms was not a tacit approval of violence, but rather his complete respect of each apostle's individual will, even to make a bad decision. However, he did make it clear that the kingdom of heaven would not be taken by violent force:

> ...neither should you employ the physical forces of earthly governments, whose rulers may sometime become believers, in the work of furthering the mission of the spiritual kingdom. 178:1.3 (1929.4)

Despite this admonition, Jesus did make it clear that the civil government must sometimes employ force "for the maintenance of social order and in the execution of justice":

> Jesus had great difficulty in getting them to understand his personal practice of nonresistance. He absolutely refused to defend himself, and it appeared to the apostles that he would be pleased if they would pursue the same policy. He taught them not to resist evil, not to combat injustice or injury, but he did not teach passive tolerance of wrongdoing. And he made it plain on this afternoon that he approved of the social punishment of evildoers and criminals, and that the civil government must sometimes employ force for the maintenance of social order and in the execution of justice. 140:8.4 (1579.6)

This stance on civil order is further illustrated in the book's commentary on the episode of the "cleansing of the temple." Jesus' part in the episode was non-violent. When he began to teach in the temple on the Monday morning before the crucifixion, the noisy commerce, a violent argument between a money changer and a customer, and the ridiculing of a simple Galilean all "combined to produce one of those strange



Street art attributed to Banksy. Bethlehem, 2009. Photograph by author

and periodic uprisings of indignant emotion in the soul of Jesus." Jesus stepped down from the teaching platform, drove a herd of bullocks from the temple and opened pens holding animals, which "electrified the assembled pilgrims" who overturned the tables of the money-changers and in "less than five minutes all commerce had been swept from the temple." But the commentary on this episode is emphatic about Jesus' attitude on taking action when necessary:

> This cleansing of the temple discloses the Master's attitude toward commercializing the practices of religion as well as his detestation of all forms of unfairness and profiteering at the expense of the poor and the unlearned. This episode also demonstrates that Jesus did not look with approval upon the refusal to employ force to protect the majority of any given human group against the unfair and enslaving practices of unjust minorities who may be able to entrench themselves behind political, financial, or ecclesiastical power. Shrewd, wicked, and designing men are not to be permitted to organize themselves for the exploitation and oppression of those who, because of their idealism, are not disposed to resort to force for self-protection or for the furtherance of their laudable life projects. 173:1.11 (1891.1)

This last statement is especially pointed in that there are times in which it is appropriate to use force. But *The Urantia Book* makes a clear distinction between force used by civil government for maintaining social order and using violence to force change:

> And here is the great test of idealism: Can an advanced society maintain that military preparedness which renders it secure from all attack by its war-loving neighbors without yielding to the temptation to employ this military strength in offensive operations against other peoples for purposes of selfish gain or national aggrandizement? National survival demands preparedness, and religious idealism alone can prevent the prostitution of preparedness into aggression. Only love, brotherhood, can prevent the strong from oppressing the weak. 71:4.17 (804.17)

Wealth and the Profit Motive

In *The Urantia Book* Jesus' sympathy for the "common people" and the poor is clear. Many familiar accounts from the biblical gospels are retold and affirmed, such as the observation of the widow who offers two mites to the treasury, and Jesus' admonitions to the Sanhedrin about their abuses. But the text also makes a distinction about people regardless of economic position:

> Jesus blessed the poor because they were usually sincere and pious; he condemned the rich because they were usually wanton and irreligious. He would equally condemn the irreligious pauper and commend the consecrated and worshipful man of wealth. 196:2.8 (2093.2)

Jesus involuntarily experienced poverty. Taking on the role of family leadership with his mother Mary after the death of Joseph, Jesus learned both empathy for the poor and a sense of personal responsibility which carried into his ministry. He always sought to empower people to improve their own condition (e.g. "The Young Man Who Was Afraid" 130:6.1), but was at the same time mindful of societal inequities:

> 4. Economic attitude. Jesus worked, lived, and traded in the world as he found it. He was not an economic reformer, although he did frequently call attention to the injustice of the unequal distribution of wealth. But he did not offer any suggestions by way of remedy. He made it plain to the three [Peter, James, and John] that, while his apostles were not to hold property, he was not preaching against wealth and property, merely its unequal and unfair distribution. He recognized the need for social justice and industrial fairness, but he offered no rules for their attainment. 140:8.15 (1581.2)

One instance in which we gain detailed insight into Jesus' thoughts on wealth is in his advice to the wealthy man (Counseling the Rich Man 132:5). Jesus makes it clear to the man that this is *personal* advice in response to the wealthy man's request to know how he should view his own wealth, not everyone's money. But its inclusion in the text distinctly offers Jesus' view of the ethics of wealth. It includes Jesus' attitude toward earned and unearned wealth, inherited



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wealth, extorted wealth, restitution, wealth from natural resources, wealth from personal labor, and equity. Item by item, fairness to self and others and responsibility to one's community and world are constantly in balance, as well as offering restitution in the instance of extorted, or unfairly gained wealth.

The question becomes: how do we, as a society, make decisions about the redistribution of wealth? In all matters, Jesus left moral decisions up to each individual, but he also stated certain decisions should be made by the group. He respected both. So where's the dividing line?

Part III of *The Urantia Book* makes clear statements about capitalism and profit-motivated economics, not espousing any economic system over another, but advocating the positive injunction of service motivation:

> Present-day profit-motivated economics is doomed unless profit motives can be augmented by service motives. Ruthless competition based on narrow-minded self-interest is ultimately destructive of even those things which it seeks to maintain. Exclusive and self-serving profit motivation is incompatible with Christian ideals—much more incompatible with the teachings of Jesus. 71:6.1 (805.5)

The text further equates the exclusive profit motive with fear in religion, but also places profit-motivated capitalism as a part of the evolution of civilization:

> In economics, profit motivation is to service motivation what fear is to love in religion. But the profit motive must not be suddenly destroyed or removed; it keeps many otherwise slothful mortals hard at work. It is not necessary, however, that this social energy arouser be forever selfish in its objectives. 71:6.2 (805.6)

Perhaps the book's most succinct statement on capitalism and evolution occurs in the paper "Primitive Human Institutions:"

> Though capital has tended to liberate man, it has greatly complicated his social and industrial organization. The abuse of capital by unfair capitalists does not destroy the fact that it is the basis of modern industrial society. Through capital and invention the present generation enjoys a higher degree of freedom than any that ever preceded it on earth. This is placed on record as a fact and not in justification of the many misuses of capital by thoughtless and selfish custodians. 69:5.15 (777.3)

This is echoed in the paper "The Development of the State," that profit-motivated economics is not an ideal, and must eventually give way to a higher order of service orientation:

> The profit motive of economic activities is altogether base and wholly unworthy of an advanced order of society; nevertheless, it is an indispensable factor throughout the earlier phases of civilization. Profit motivation must not be taken away from men until they have firmly possessed themselves of superior types of nonprofit motives for economic striving and social serving—the transcendent urges of superlative wisdom, intriguing brotherhood, and excellency of spiritual attainment. 71:6.3 (805.7)

This brings us to another key component of understanding government in *The Urantia Book*. The text continually places much of human behavior in the context of evolution. War, slavery, animal sacrifice, and other human behaviors and conditions, while repugnant and eventually unworthy of a civilized society, are shown as progressions, even improvements on previous modes of being. Capitalism is no exception. It may be a bridge to a higher order of civilization, but

to quote from another instance in which Jesus referred to a bridge, "you may pass over it, but you should not think to build a dwelling place upon it" (156:2.1).

Sex Equality and Gender

Jesus was conscious of, and disturbed by, the sex discrimination he observed in his youth and challenged this social injustice as an adult. As a pre-teen traveling for his first Jerusalem Passover, an unusually large group of Nazareth women joined the pilgrimage after Jesus insisted his mother accompany him (he "virtually refused to go unless his mother accompanied him"). When the women separated from the men at the temple, the women going up to the women's gallery, he was "thoroughly indignant" at the "unjust discrimination" (125:1.1). As a young adult he stood up to abuse suffered by women and was particularly sympathetic to women who had entered prostitution, as seen in his treatment of the two women he encountered with Ganid in Rome and more famously, in his deep friendship with Mary Magdalene.

Jesus' most specific act to advance the equality of men and women was his establishment of the women's evangelistic corps, authorizing them "to effect their own organization:"

> It was most astounding in that day, when women were not even allowed on the main floor of the synagogue (being confined to the women's gallery), to behold them being recognized as authorized teachers of the new gospel of the kingdom. The charge which Jesus gave these ten women as he set them apart for gospel teaching and ministry was the emancipation proclamation which set free all women and for all time; no more was man to look upon woman as his spiritual inferior. 150:1.3 (1679.2)

Gender equality is core to *The Urantia Book* and occurs repeatedly:

> Sex equality prevails on all advanced worlds; male and female are equal in mind endowment and spiritual status. We do not regard a planet as having emerged from barbarism so long as one sex seeks to tyrannize over the other. 49:4.1 (564.6)



Democracy

There are several instances in which Jesus made unilateral decisions for the apostles, such as where and when they traveled, his creation of the women's corps of apostles just referenced, and certainly his authoritative statements on spirituality. But relinquishing control was intrinsic to his management of the apostles, most likely to ensure their future self-management after he was gone.

Jesus personally chose four apostles, Andrew, Peter, James, and John. The four of them encouraged Philip and Nathaniel to join, and those two received the well-known directive from Jesus, "Follow me." Once he had assembled these first six apostles, he directed each one to go choose at their personal discretion six other apostles. In this manner, Andrew, Philip, James Zebedee, John Zebedee, Peter, and Nathaniel respectively selected Matthew, Thomas, James Alpheus, Judas Alpheus, Simon Zelotes, and Judas Iscariot. Jesus accepted each one unconditionally, although to Thomas and Judas Iscariot he said:

> "Thomas, you lack faith; nevertheless, I receive you. Follow me." To Judas Iscariot the Master said: "Judas, we are all of one flesh, and as I receive you into our midst, I pray that you will always be loyal to your Galilean brethren. Follow me." 138:5.1 (1542.2)

Jesus continually encouraged each of his followers to develop his or her own personal relationship with God. But how they organized themselves as religionists was a group matter. Jesus stressed a democratic path to



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consensus, and in matters of group organization Jesus left them to their own deliberations.

In one instance, the twenty-four apostles of Jesus and John the Baptist (who at this point had been executed) met together to determine their co-existence: how their ministries would overlap, agreeing on a form of prayer, baptism of new believers, instruction of new believers, and other concerns.

> Jesus approved of their coming together, but "steadfastly refused to participate in their discussions." In fact, he withdrew for two weeks. The men were confused as to how to proceed. But during those two weeks this mixed assembly of determined individuals "learned to differ, to debate, to contend, to pray, and to compromise, and throughout it all to remain sympathetic with the other person's viewpoint, and to maintain at least some degree of tolerance for honest opinions." Upon returning Jesus simply said, "These then are your conclusions, and I shall help you each to carry out the spirit of your united decisions." (144:6, 1624-1625)

It's significant that Jesus in this and many other instances relinquished power and control to the group, encouraging debate, compromise, and consensus—a reflection of his divine management style and an overall affirmation of the democratic process:

> I am the representative of the Father to the individual, not to the group. If you are in personal difficulty in your relations with God, come to me, and I will hear you and counsel you in the solution of your problem. But when you enter upon the co-ordination of divergent human interpretations of religious questions and upon the socialization of religion, you are destined to solve all such problems by your own decisions. Albeit, I am ever sympathetic and always interested, and when you arrive at your conclusions touching these matters of nonspiritual import, provided you are all agreed, then I pledge in advance my full approval and hearty co-operation. 144:6.3 (1624.14)

In other words, issues of politics and government devolve to human groups. Justice is clearly demarcated in *The Urantia Book* as a group function, never an individual decision. This notion is carried out throughout the universe, that "no one of the Paradise Deities fosters the administration of justice. Justice is never a personal attitude; it is always a plural function" (10:6.2).

In this spirit it follows that the text comes out specifically against dictatorships, that societies must prevent "control by ambitious and would-be dictators" (70:12.11).

Simultaneously, the book cautions against the "dangers of democracy" (71:2).:

1. Glorification of mediocrity.
2. Choice of base and ignorant rulers.
3. Failure to recognize the basic facts of social evolution.
4. Danger of universal suffrage in the hands of uneducated and indolent majorities.
5. Slavery to public opinion; the majority is not always right.

Key to these pitfalls is ignorance. Uneducated, indifferent people electing base, ignorant and probably poorly-educated but power-hungry individuals, will compromise the noble aims of self-government, democracy.

Democracy is favored throughout *The Urantia Book* as an ideal, but not an absolute ideal, that "popular elections may not always decide things rightly, but they represent the right way even to do a wrong thing" (71:2.8).

Government

Paper 134, "The Transition Years," describes that a few years prior to his public ministry, Jesus visited a region in present-day Iran and spent time at an island on Lake Urmia where there "was located a large building—a lecture amphitheater—dedicated to the 'spirit of religion.'" Here Jesus engaged in discussions and lectures on religion and the real-world application of religious teachings. The writers of this narrative inform us that these speeches at Urmia have been revised to be more applicable to the twentieth century mind, to "present day world conditions." Three secondary midwayers restated Jesus' pronouncements and "were edited by the Melchizedek chairman of the revelatory commission" (134:3.8). Assuming this is truly the spirit of Jesus' teachings at Lake Urmia, here is perhaps his most central ideal of government:

> The rule of the Most Highs, the overcontrollers of political evolution, is a rule designed to foster the greatest good to the greatest number of all men and for the greatest length of time. 134:5.4 (1488.2)

This is a political ideal of prodigious inclusion and long-term sustainability. It crosses borders and transcends sectarianism. The central ideas from the Urmia statements—that are likely indicative of Jesus' teachings on government—include (134:4-6):

- "The brotherhood of man is founded on the fatherhood of God."
- "God the Father divinely loves his children, all of them."
- The family is the initial political unit, followed by clans, tribes, and nations.
- The "final consummation of political growth" is "the government of all mankind, by all mankind, and for all mankind.
- Local and national governments are essential for governing local and national affairs, but nationalism is a barrier to world peace.
- "There is no such thing as a 'chosen people'."
- Lasting peace and liberty for all people is only possible through "the political sovereignty of representative mankind government"—world government.

Certainly, the idea of world government is a long-term goal, sobered by a thought stated earlier in *The Urantia Book* that our current "social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium" (99:1.1). But it is the revelators' stated goal for our world, one to be taken seriously, and which should inform our political outlook. Effecting and expanding international relationships and governments, rather than limiting them, is a key ideal throughout the book.

A final incident in which Jesus spoke directly with his followers regarding government and politics was on the Thursday morning before his arrest. This topic was the sole focus of this last discussion. Here Jesus specifically drew the distinction between worldly government and the spiritual kingdom. He first made clear that the kingdoms of this world "may often find it necessary to employ physical force in the execution of their laws and for the maintenance of order," but that "in the kingdom of heaven true believers will not resort to the employment of physical force." He did add the caveat that this "does not nullify the right of social groups of believers to maintain order in their ranks and administer discipline upon unruly and unworthy members." Further, he specifically stated that there "is nothing incompatible between sonship in the spiritual kingdom and citizenship in the secular or civil government," that there cannot be any disagreement between these two requirements "unless it should develop that a Caesar presumes to usurp the prerogatives of God and demand that spiritual homage and supreme worship be rendered to him." In that circumstance he added that in "such a case you shall worship only God while you seek to enlighten such misguided earthly rulers and in this way lead them also to the recognition of the Father in heaven." He then reiterated that "You shall not render spiritual worship to earthly rulers; neither should you employ the physical forces of earthly governments, whose rulers may sometime become believers, in the work of furthering the mission of the spiritual kingdom" 178:1.3 (1929) emphasis added.

Jesus continued by saying that one's sonship in the kingdom "should assist you in becoming the ideal citizens of the kingdoms of this world since

brotherhood and service are the cornerstones of the gospel of the kingdom." He added that, in fact, involvement in civil society is critical, because "these material-minded sons in darkness will never know of your spiritual light of truth unless you draw very near them with that unselfish social service which is the natural outgrowth of the bearing of the fruits of the spirit in the life experience of each individual believer."

> As mortal and material men, you are indeed citizens of the earthly kingdoms, and you should be good citizens, all the better for having become reborn spirit sons of the heavenly kingdom. As faith-enlightened and spirit-liberated sons of the kingdom of heaven, you face a double responsibility of duty to man and duty to God while you voluntarily assume a third and sacred obligation: service to the brotherhood of God-knowing believers. 178:1.5 (1930.2)

Jesus' Transcendence of Politics

In essence, Jesus looked at every individual he encountered as his own child. In this regard, one can say nationality, religion, race and social status mattered little to him. This explains his sympathetic interaction with the Roman captain who had an ailing servant, and his ministry in Samaria to the very descendants of people who had taken the homes and property of the Jews and enslaved them centuries earlier in Babylon. Political tension must have been acute even among his apostles: Matthew had been a customs collector for the Romans, and Simon Zelotes had advocated violent overthrow of the Romans.

As much as each of us want Jesus to be in our individual "political camps," we can assume from his behavior here 2000 years ago that he would likely not take political stances any more today than he did then:

> And if Jesus were on earth today, living his life in the flesh, he would be a great disappointment to the majority of good men and women for the simple reason that he would not take sides in present-day political, social, or economic disputes. He would remain grandly aloof while teaching you how to perfect your inner spiritual life so as to render you manyfold more competent to attack the solution of your purely human problems. 140:8.17 (1581.4)

The key operative statement here is "render you manyfold more competent to attack the solution of your purely human problems."

We are not meant to be "grandly aloof." That's his position, for reasons stated throughout this article.

As Urantia Book students, we must be politically involved. We must be on top of the multiple issues confronting us and be actively involved in choosing intelligent, competent leaders (or even being those elected leaders) to ensure we effect "the greatest good to the greatest number of all [people] and for the greatest length of time." (134:5.4)

The planetary goal in *The Urantia Book* is light and life, a time in which our human accomplishments are "blended, associated, and co-ordinated in cosmic unity and unselfish service" (50:5.10). This will be the result of a deep spiritual transformation within each individual. But it will also be the result of our intelligent development of societal structures that result from our political engagement and the governments we develop.

In other words, light and life will come through one transformed soul at a time—and one informed vote at a time.



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Utopia as Certainty

Olga Lopez, Spain

For centuries, many have imagined a better world. Thomas More (16th century English jurist, philosopher and theologian) coined the term *utopia* (meaning, etymologically, "nowhere") to speak of an ideal society, back in 1516. Since then, there have been many attempts to imagine perfect societies where peace and harmony reign, and where human beings develop their full potential.

And it is here that *The Urantia Book* fills us with hope as the revelators affirm that utopia is not only something unattainable but is part of our planetary destiny, and a certain goal in the planetary epochs of mortals. Further, it offers brilliant reflections on the state, democracy, and other human institutions, as well as recommendations for their improvement that are feasible if there is the will to implement them.

To review how we can approach "utopia" in light of Urantia Book teachings, I structure this essay in three parts:

1. Politics "down here": What do the revelators observe about our current conditions?

2. Government on a neighboring planet: closer to utopia. Here the revelators describe the government system of an advanced nation on another planet, which surpasses the Urantian government systems in many respects.

3. Utopia come true: mortal planetary epochs unfold until the final goal is reached—the ages of light and life.

Politics "down here"

In Paper 70, a Melchizedek of Nebadon states :

> Mankind's struggle to perfect government on Urantia has to do with perfecting channels of administration, with adapting them to ever-changing current needs, with improving power distribution within government, and then with selecting such administrative leaders as are truly wise. **While there is a divine and ideal form of government, such cannot be revealed but must be slowly and laboriously discovered by the men and women of each planet throughout the universes of time and space**. 70:12.20 (799.1) emphasis added

The form of government we must slowly and painstakingly discover is one with better administrative systems adapted to current needs, improved distribution of power, and truly wise administrative leadership. It also has much to develop from our current level of progress. Today, material prosperity and the accumulation of wealth often eclipse the intrinsic spiritual value of each human being. Attachment to materialistic values hinders individual progress and in turn, that of the community.

True leadership has been an ongoing concern on our planet, certainly compromised by the rebellion of Lucifer and the later default of Adam and Eve. In Paper 114 we read about the "angels of nation life" who are "the directors of the political performances of Urantia national life." (114:6.8) These seraphim very likely encourage good and true leaders, individuals free of selfishness and corruption, and whose motivations

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are altruistic—leaders willing to serve and not "be served."

We are currently witnessing the re-emergence of authoritarian leaders who seem determined to circumvent democratic processes. It is worth bearing in mind that democracy, although a good system, has limitations in certain circumstances. Paper 71 (Development of the State) offers enlightening reflections on democracy, specifying its "dangers":

1. Glorification of mediocrity.

2. Choice of base and ignorant rulers.

3. Failure to recognize the basic facts of social evolution.

4. Danger of universal suffrage in the hands of uneducated and indolent majorities.

5. Slavery to public opinion; the majority is not always right. (71:2.2-6)

Democracy requires preparation and training on the part of the people, which is why education is so vital. Only an educated, well-informed populace will have wise criteria to elect the best rulers in a representative democracy, where the best are elected by the people for their abilities, and not for their social position or wealth.

In Paper 71, the revelators discuss in greater depth the institution of the state, on which world civilization is currently based, explaining its origin and the elements which hold it together, and leading us to visualize the ideal state.

The end of section 3 of Paper 71 "The Ideals of Statehood" asserts that in advanced states political service is considered the highest commitment of citizens. Certainly, we can think of examples of individuals in our individual communities and nations who have sought positions in government to serve the greater good. But too often ego, selfish economic interests and "cronyism" have been an ongoing motive for political power.

All political positions should be obtained through a specific vetting of candidates in which their honesty, integrity, intellectual and social qualities are tested. It is curious that for almost all career positions, all



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kinds of psycho-technical tests are required, profiles are reviewed, and metrics are scrutinized, and yet it seems anyone can become a politician. Is it not absurd that the most responsible and privileged positions do not require any preparation whatsoever? Undoubtedly, this is one more consequence of our confused world.

The desire to serve others must go beyond any personal or political interest; it is the only way for those who rule to be equitable, honest and transparent. Systems are corrupt when the desire to serve others does not exist. We can see it in multiple seats of government: even if an idea is excellent for a whole nation or community, its implementation is blocked because the idea has come from the rival party.

When the leaders of governments become philosophers and scientists as well as businesspeople and lawyers, it is possible that the focus of commerce and economics will be shifted to the human being and his or her integral development, and then the service they perform will be of the highest value to people. The government would be a government of "wise men," as Plato proposed in his work, The Laws, in the 6th century B.C.; or as the revelators describe government on a neighboring planet. Unfortunately, this is far from being the case today.

In section 7 of Paper 71 (Education), we are told about the importance of education to achieve the ideal state:

> In the ideal state, education continues throughout life, and philosophy sometime becomes the chief pursuit of its citizens. The citizens of such a commonwealth pursue wisdom as an enhancement of insight into the significance of human relations, the meanings of reality, the nobility of values, the goals of living, and the glories of cosmic destiny. 71:7.2 (806.2)

Meanwhile on Urantia, the acquisition of knowledge and material values is ongoing, and competition and the profit motive are encouraged in the hands of businesspeople. Education is short-sighted and oriented to the attainment of material goals. We are very far from wisdom, because we are not educated enough to make an intelligent application of acquired knowledge, we are not oriented towards the improvement of humanity but towards the promotion of material society. Very few people can achieve personal fulfillment by following the values transmitted by today's education.

> Urantians should get a vision of a new and higher cultural society. Education will jump to new levels of value with the passing of the purely profit-motivated system of economics. Education has too long been localistic, militaristic, ego exalting, and success seeking; it must eventually become world-wide, idealistic, self-realizing, and cosmic grasping. 71:7.3 (806.3)

Good education is fundamental to achieve the ideal state, but social and economic differences make it difficult to ensure that a good education will be available to everyone in an equitable manner. Education should be the main concern of those in power, since it is the key to ensuring that citizens have well-formed opinions and can contribute to the harmonious development of society.

In Paper 71, twelve prerequisites for achieving an ideal state are listed, and we are told that "Urantia is far from realizing these high ideals" (71:8.15).

> 1. The creation of a threefold government of executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
>
> 2. The freedom of social, political, and religious activities.
>
> 3. The abolition of all forms of slavery and human bondage.
>
> 4. The ability of the citizenry to control the levying of taxes.
>
> 5. The establishment of universal education — learning extended from the cradle to the grave.
>
> 6. The proper adjustment between local and national governments.
>
> 7.The fostering of science and the conquest of disease.
>
> 8. The due recognition of sex equality…
>
> 9. The elimination of toiling slavery by machine invention and the subsequent mastery of the machine age.
>
> 10. The conquest of dialects — the triumph of a universal language.

11. The ending of war…

12. The world-wide vogue of the pursuit of wisdom — the exaltation of philosophy. The evolution of a world religion… (71:8).

Which characteristics of this list would we need to work on more? I leave it to your reflection.

Government on a Neighboring Planet: Closer to Utopia

An intriguing inclusion in *The Urantia Book* is Paper 72 "Government on a Neighboring Planet." This neighboring planet is not in the age of light and life (and far from being so), but has a system of government that may serve as a reference to bringing us closer to the ideal state.

This nation is a federation of independent states. On Urantia, we have some examples of countries organized in this way. Perhaps the first one that comes to mind is the United States, but in Europe there are other examples, such as Germany and Switzerland, which are composed of smaller states enjoying a great deal of autonomy. The European Union is a step in that direction as well.

What are the advantages of federal republics? Being composed of smaller independent units, local governments are closer to the citizens and their problems than over-centralized governments. And by having a certain degree of autonomy from the central government, they can react more quickly and accurately to problems and situations that arise in their constituency, without having to wait for the more distant central government to make the decision.

Additionally, being part of a larger unit (the confederation) gives these small states a strength that they would not have separately, which saves resources and expenses that would otherwise be multiplied (e.g., defense, energy, etc.).

All states in this continental nation seem to follow the same system of government and election of representatives. Their governors and legislators have a ten-year term of office and cannot be re-elected. This single term limit has the following main advantages:

1. This is a sufficiently long period of time to allow long-term actions to be carried out.

2. Those in power do not conduct their administration with the sole objective of getting elected again, so their decisions are not purely for electioneering purposes.

3. It is a short enough period to prevent rulers from clinging to power and making politics their modus vivendi at all costs.

This advanced nation has separate executive, legislative and judicial branches. The chief executive is elected by universal suffrage for a six-year term and cannot be reelected except in special cases: "upon the petition of at least seventy-five state legislatures concurred in by the respective state governors, and then but for one term" (72:2.3). But an enormously positive feature of this government is the federal head is advised by a cabinet composed of all the previous chief executives.



In this way, the chief executive can count on the experience and wisdom of previous office-holders.

For the legislative branch, this nation has three chambers, whose representatives are not elected universally, but are organized according to professional, social, political and philosophical groups, a division not found in our world's legislative bodies.

Between the one hundred states and the federal state, there seems to be an intermediate organization consisting of ten states, which would form a sub-federation or region. The federal head appoints the ten heads of these regions for a term of office exactly equal to his own (six years). Nor can they be re-elected, but again, the outgoing executive becomes an advisor to the successor.

This nation has an unusual system of allocating votes. Instead of the Urantian "one person, one vote" system, those "who have rendered great service to society" can have additional votes, with a maximum of ten (72:9.3). Additional votes are also available to heavy taxpayers. The right to vote is removed for certain individuals, including those "sentenced to compulsory labor in the mines and government servants supported by tax funds."



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Interestingly, in Paper 45 the concept of weighted votes is described on our system capitol, Jerusem:

> Suffrage is universal on Jerusem among these three groups of citizenship [referring to the Material Sons, seraphim and midwayers, and ascending mortals], but the vote is differentially cast in accordance with the recognized and duly registered personal possession of mota—morontia wisdom. The vote cast at a Jerusem election by any one personality has a value ranging from one up to one thousand. Jerusem citizens are thus classified in accordance with their mota achievement. 45:7.6 (518.2)

Another feature of voting on the neighboring planet is that voters are not bound to territorial constituencies but to professional constituencies: citizens vote according to the industrial, social or professional group to which they belong. There is only one exception to this system, and that is when it comes to electing the chief executive, in which there is a national ballot and each citizen has only one vote (72:9.6).

This distribution has benefits, as it strengthens each profession and area of society without detracting from the rest. Each component is like a well-oiled gear that makes the machine of which it is a part function optimally.

Precisely in dealing with this subject, the revelators transmit to us part of the wisdom of this alien nation in some reflections that should give us food for thought about what is happening in Urantia societies:

> These people recognize that, when fifty per cent of a nation is inferior or defective and possesses the ballot, such a nation is doomed. They believe the dominance of mediocrity spells the downfall of any nation... 72:9.8 (818.3)

Utopia Come True

In the last sentence of Paper 72 its author, a Melchizedek of Nebadon, designates the ages of light and life as "utopian." At the beginning of Paper 55, a Mighty Messenger defines the ages of light and life as "the final evolutionary attainment of a world of time and space" (55:0.1).

A striking dynamic throughout *The Urantia Book* is that individual progress and perfection is occurring alongside planetary progress and perfection. Just as we have the promise of eternity when we recognize the Father and seek to do His will, so do inhabited planets have their eternal survival assured when they are settled in light and life (55:0.3).

Through long planetary epochs, humanity is advancing from the most primitive stages to the peak of material development. The road may be more or less long, but the destiny is certain. A destiny in which, among many other things:

Antisocial elements have been virtually obliterated; life span approaches 500 years; population growth is controlled; they go from representative government to individual self-control. 52:7.5 (599.1)

The workday is one hour per day (52:7.6).

In Paper 55, a Mighty Messenger tells us that a world in the early stages of light and life is "progressing under the momentum of one language, one religion, and, on normal spheres, one race" (55:3.1). He further describes his recent visit to a sphere in the early stages of light and life, noting these government features.

> Every adult worker pays 10% of his income to the public treasury according to the following apportionment:
>
> 3% to promote truth (science, education, and philosophy); 3% for beauty (play, social leisure, and art); 3% for goodness (social service, altruism, and religion); and 1% to cover accidents, diseases, or unpreventable disasters (55:3.2-6).
>
> Natural resources are public property (55:3.7).
>
> Planetary social service is one of the highest honors a citizen can receive (55:3.8).
>
> Male-female parity in social, administrative, educational, and judicial positions (55:3.9).

Later in this paper, the Mighty Messenger describes "the physical perfection, the intellectual attainment, and the spiritual development which characterize these advanced epochs of evolution on a sinless sphere" (55:5.1). There will come a day when "poverty and social inequality have all but vanished," when there is virtually no crime or mental illness; a day when science, art, and industry flourish; a day when economic life becomes ethical; a day when there are no wars, armies, or police; a day when everything drives us to achieve true happiness.

> The planetary realization of this era of light and life far more than equals the fondest expectations of Urantia mortals who have entertained no more farseeing concepts of the future life than those embraced within religious beliefs which depict heaven as the immediate destiny and final dwelling place of surviving mortals. 52:7.16 (600.5)

Regardless of our world's current state of affairs, no matter how unsolvable our problems seem, we can trust that the "Most Highs rule in the kingdoms of men" (a statement appearing multiple times in the book), and that the "acme of material development" is attainable for us. Light and life awaits us at the end of the road. But it will not come by itself. Each and every one of us must be beacons of change.



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Map of Utopia Island from Thomas More's *Utopia*, 1518 edition. Copy of book from Folger Shakespeare Library. Wikimedia Commons



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Seven Key Concepts of Political Leadership

Anton Miroshnichenko, Ukraine

Leadership today is often political and governmental leadership.

> …until man evolves to higher levels, civilization will continue to be dependent on wise and vigorous leadership. 81:6.37 (911.2)

While considering how *The Urantia Book* defines and frames leadership, I discovered an interesting text that has been used for decades in schools in the *United Kingdom: Understanding Political Ideas and Movements* by Kevin Harrison and Tony Boyd (2003).

The seven headings in this article are the first seven chapters of their textbook, which provides a structure for delineating key ideas from *The Urantia Book* about political leadership and how political discourse is organized.

As Urantia Book believers, we look to a time when political leaders will be deeply inspired by the ideas and ideals of *The Urantia Book*. By focusing on the basic concepts around which political discourse is structured, I compare current ideas of political leadership with concepts from the book.

The State

Harrison and Boyd write:

"Real states function as political associations that establish sovereign power within a defined territorial area and possess a monopoly of legitimate violence, having the following features:

- the control of an identifiable population
- the control of an identifiable geographical territory
- high degrees of longevity compared to other social institutions
- a structure of law in society
- characterized by sovereignty"[1]

In our current world, statehood is shared with citizens based on nationality or loyalty to the state, while in the ideal states of the future, people will acknowledge and share human brotherhood.

The ideal state functions under the impulse of three mighty and co-ordinated drives 71:3.3 (803.3):

1. Love loyalty derived from the realization of human brotherhood.
2. Intelligent patriotism based on wise ideals.
3. Cosmic insight interpreted in terms of planetary facts, needs, and goals.

The idea of human brotherhood is associated with an open world, global citizenship, worldwide peace, limitless travel, work, and life opportunities. The realization of human brotherhood will include many more positive changes.

Unfortunately, the political discourse of many nations is still significantly focused on isolationism and competition rather than cooperation, integration, and the concept of a free and united world—not to mention human brotherhood. On the other hand, such progressive ideas are embedded in the agendas of many global and local religious and social institutions and organizations. With varying degrees of progress, the

1 Kevin Harrison and Tony Boyd, Understanding political ideas and movements. Manchester University Press, 2003, p.23

world is already moving to-wards global governance in environmental and climate issues, trade and economics, health, peace, security, conflict resolution, science, education, information, communications, and culture.

It's the human brotherhood's turn to appear as a uniting ideal in the political agendas of courageous and wise political leaders.

Sovereignty

> Today, sovereignty is the distinguishing characteristic of the state. It entails the right to absolute and unlimited power, either legal or political, within the territory of a state. Modern political leadership is based on national sovereignty.[2]

In many cases, national sovereignty, as "absolute and unlimited power," opposes the progressive needs of humanity as a whole. As humanity, we progress towards exercising human rights and freedoms, respecting them as fundamental values, meaning they should be respected everywhere. But simultaneously, political structure enables the right of the state to be sovereign, having "absolute and unlimited power," even to the extent of ignoring human rights. We certainly hope for an eventual resolution of this but, in his Urmia lectures, Jesus said that the only possible way to resolve this is to create a global government which exclusively holds that right of "absolute and unlimited power".

> War on Urantia will never end so long as nations cling to the illusive notions of unlimited national sovereignty. 134:5.2 (1487.9)

It seems logical that we should have central sovereign governance, since we live on one world, one planet, breathing air from a common atmosphere, sharing a global ocean, enjoying the same sun, and even sharing common responsibility for global climate change. We now share an interconnected global economy—not to mention the same Spirit of Truth.

The concept of the major and primary sovereignty of one worldwide association, organization, union, or government is a long-awaited ideal that needs to be embedded into the political discourse of the near future. The time has come for humanity to set goals and declare the start of the movement towards such a progressive and unifying objective.

The Nation

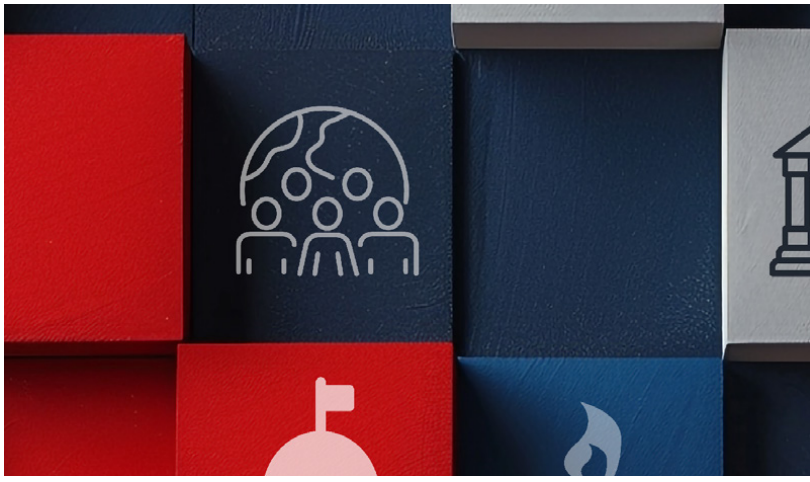
Harrison and Boyd observe:

> Perhaps the most powerful of all political concepts to motivate human beings is that of the 'nation'. But the concept is an elusive one.... Important elements in national identity include language, religion, government and common historical and cultural ties. There are enormous differences, however, in the significance of these factors from nation to nation. Perhaps the most useful way of defining a nation is a subjective one. A nation is what its members feel it is, and they are identified by their deep loyalty to it.[3]

Among other things, *The Urantia Book* states about the nation:

> There is a spiritual cohesiveness among the spiritual and spiritized personalities of any world, race, nation, or believing group of individuals. 7:1.6 (82.5)

Even in light and life, there is no indication that nations will disappear. National heritage is like the "salt of humanity," and thus in my opinion, nations



2 Ibid, p.17
3 Ibid. p.56

deserve to be saved. As stated in Paper 52, "Planetary Mortal Epochs":

> There are many nations, mostly determined by land distribution, but only one race, one language, and one religion. 52:5.10 (597.1)

Unfortunately, "nationalism" is frequently used negatively due to historical precedence. Nations have engaged in dangerous "winner take all" antagonisms resulting in such shameful outcomes as totalitarian regimes. But the "national problem" is rooted not in a phenomenon of the nation itself, which is even spiritually uniting for a people, but in an exclusive national sovereignty which results in military dominance. A nation becomes a threat to other nations when its national objective is hostile to global brotherhood; when the idea of the primacy of national sovereignty prevails over the real sovereignty of humanity as a whole.

But the "national problem" is rooted not in a phenomenon of the nation itself, which can be spiritually uniting for the people. Even today, nations that have developed strong respect towards human rights (the evolutionary precursor of the spiritual brotherhood of all people) and which have transferred part of their sovereignty to the level of a higher associated structure (e.g., states associated in the European Union), have demonstrated greater chances for steady, certain progress, in part because of the mutual protection obtained in exchange for the transferred sovereignty.



What could make the difference in political national and global discourse today, while we still struggle with current worldwide and local challenges, is to proclaim the ultimate political goal—a united world of associated nations. This core structure would not only offer exclusive and sovereign rights for "the government of the sovereignty of all [people]" but also has an obligation to protect every nation based on the idea of true human brotherhood (or the declaration of human rights and global discourse we see today).

Nationalism is based on patriotism. One drive of the ideal state is:

> Intelligent patriotism based on wise ideals. 71:3.3 (803.3)

Wise, intelligent concepts of patriotism and nationhood, separated from regressive concepts of national superiority and dominance, will facilitate a more globally oriented society.

The idea of a united world where large and small nations are similarly protected by an overarching sovereignty is powerful enough to overcome outdated ideas of national dominance, where each nation is fighting for geopolitical spheres of influence. The idea of national "inferiority" belongs to a declining epoch. The equality of nations will help save the world from a painful competition for resources.

> Wise statesmen will sometime work for the welfare of humanity even while they strive to promote the interest of their national or racial groups. Selfish political sagacity is ultimately suicidal—destructive of all those enduring quali-ties which insure planetary group survival. 52:6.6 (598.1)

The consequences and destructive influence of "selfish political sagacity" are familiar to me.

Writing this in 2024, my countrymen in Ukraine are suffering from a foreign power's "special military operation"—namely a war undertaken because of uncontrolled and destructive selfish desires. "Selfish political sagacity" can and does result in terrible consequences. It must become a thing of the past.

Democracy

> It is on such worlds as Uversa that the beings representative of the autocracy of perfection and the democracy of evolution meet face to face. 15:11:1 (179.11)

Democracy, being an evolutional achievement, still represents the better way of political governance. Only perfect beings by their nature may benevolently rule

in an "autocratic" way. We humans make mistakes, so any kind of human autocracy by nature will make mistakes in decision-making and management, while democracy enables governance structures which reduces personal imperfection.

Democracy, representative government, should and can evolve to the levels compatible with the perfection of the heavenly autocracy. But for this level of human democracy to occur, the authors of *The Urantia Book* remind us:

> Mankind's struggle to perfect government on Urantia has to do with perfecting channels of administration, with adapting them to ever-changing current needs, with improving power distribution within government, and then with selecting such administrative leaders as are truly wise. 70:12.20 (799.1)

Political leadership depends on selecting wise and well-prepared leaders. But training leaders is something lacking in our world's governments, particularly as a prerequisite to leadership. From the "Government on a Neighboring Planet" paper:

> *Statesmanship schools.* These schools are of three classes: national, regional, and state. The public offices of the nation are grouped in four divisions. The first division of public trust pertains principally to the national administration, and all officeholders of this group must be graduates of both regional and national schools of statesmanship. 72:8.2 (816.7)

Is it possible for our nations to have similar requirements for individuals seeking political, elective, or appointive office? Could the successful completion of the specialized "school of statesmanship" be made mandatory? Consider how such a requirement might affect this concern:

> Men have also made a fetish of democracy, the exaltation and adoration of the common man's ideas when collectively called "public opinion." One man's opinion, when taken by itself, is not regarded as worth much, but when many men are collectively functioning as a democracy, this same mediocre judgment is held to be the arbiter of justice and the standard of righteousness. 88:3.4 (970.5)

The recital of the affairs of a neighboring planet was made available to us with the intent of advancing civilization and augmenting governmental evolution on Urantia. It is a worthy example for our current political leadership to consider.

I believe that a high dependence on public opinion and a compromised democracy are closely related. Public opinion on our planet manifests in two extremes: 1) allow public opinion to control the political agenda in democratic societies or 2) ignore the peoples' voices in autocracies. We see a mix of these two extremes in every democracy. Somewhere between these two extremes rests the truth.

"Government on a Neighboring Planet" describes a voting system with voices for the citizens according to their "economic function" as well as their political, philosophic, and social inclinations, with additional votes for those individuals who "have rendered great service to society, or who have demonstrated extraordinary wisdom in government service" (72:9.3). Could a voting system like that be possible in our nations?

The problem of overdependence on public opinion could partially be improved by providing more specific training for political leadership. But an increase in wise leadership could also be stimulated by improved election procedures.

For example, in "Government on a Neighboring Planet" office holders are elected for only one long term. This prevents spending time and effort focused on campaigning for re-election and more time concentrated on tasks of governing.

But no improvement to democratic processes will allow us to reach perfect governance except that of true brotherhood:

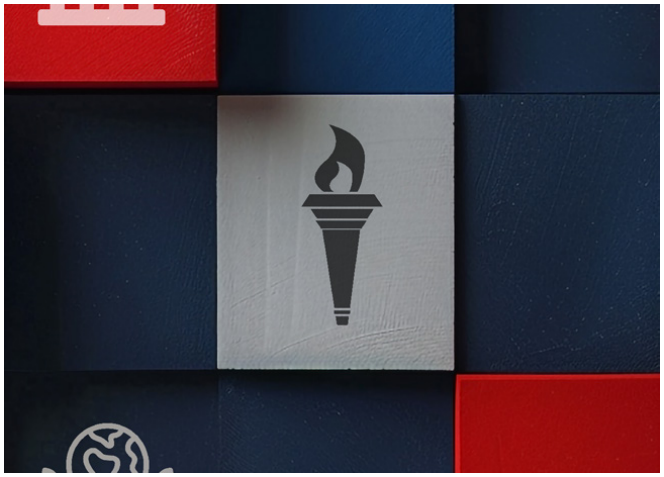
> Neither democracy nor any other political panacea will take the place of spiritual progress. 195:6.10 (2077.6)

Perfect governance and final democratic improvements imply public recognition not only of our human leadership, but the proclamation of a higher, superhuman government:

> 4. The angels of nation life. These are the "angels of the trumpets," directors of the

> political performances of Urantia national life. The group now functioning in the overcontrol of international relations is the fourth corps to serve on the planet. It is particularly through the ministry of this seraphic division that "the Most Highs rule in the kingdoms of men." 114:6.8 (1255.7)

Public recognition of the rule of the "Most Highs" would be a significant improvement in political discourse and a huge shift in principle of implementation of sovereignty, but that could only come about by each individual's personal recognition of this rule—or perhaps by the real and visible presence of the representatives of superhuman administration on our planet.



Freedom and Liberty

Let's return to Harrison and Boyd:

> There are many ways in which the concept of freedom is expressed in political dis-course. A useful starting point in our exploration of the idea is to introduce a number of these elements:
>
> • individual freedom
>
> • freedom of opinion and expression
>
> • freedom under the law
>
> • economic freedom
>
> • property and freedom
>
> • national freedom[4]

The fight for human freedom is ongoing. Progressive states are making steps towards the aforementioned freedoms, as well as towards true liberty as paraphrased from "Problems of the Lucifer Rebellion," specifically, the section "True and False Liberty" (54:1):

- Enduring liberty is predicated on the reality of justice—intelligence, maturity, fraternity, and equity.
- True liberty is progressively related to reality and is ever regardful of social equity, cosmic fairness, universe fraternity, and divine obligations.
- True liberty is the associate of genuine self-respect; false liberty is the consort of self-admiration.
- True liberty is the fruit of self-control; false liberty, the assumption of self-assertion.

The watchword of the universe is progress, but progress in such things as education, arts, industry, sports, and public service requires freedom. Opportunity is essential. Without opportunity, we do not have the freedom of self-determination. Many societies and leaders endeavor to provide personal freedom, progressive societies encourage freedom of self-expression, and of course, no form of freedom of expression should harm others:

> How dare the self-willed creature encroach upon the rights of his fellows in the name of personal liberty when the Supreme Rulers of the universe stand back in merciful respect for these prerogatives of will and potentials of personality! No being, in the exercise of his supposed personal liberty, has a right to deprive any other being of those privileges of existence conferred by the Creators and duly respected by all their loyal associates, subordinates, and subjects. 54:1.9 (614.4)

An unfortunate downside to liberty is the freedom to reject our very own ethical nature, which may result in art that confuses, media that depraves, a culture that degrades, and science that misleads. Political discourse may evoke a golden rule to protect the ethical limits of true freedom. Keeping freedom inside reasonable

4 Ibid. p. 85

limits determined by our ethical nature is important at all levels of society—from the personal to the global.

Probably even during the epochs of light and life we will still have to adapt to the limits of personal freedom. But new freedom and extended growth opportunities will become available to us during our morontia career:

> ...those things which you so earnestly longed to do on earth and which circumstances so persistently denied you, if, after acquiring true mota insight in the morontia career, you still desire to do, then will you most certainly be granted every opportunity fully to satisfy your long-cherished desires. 44:8.4 (508.2)

Terrorism is a much more controversial political tactic for achieving freedom. Almost daily we see organizations and even nations willing to use fear and terror in the name of obtaining freedom. But it has no place in "a normal advancing civilization":

> War is the heritage of early evolutionary man, but in worlds of normal advancing civilization physical combat as a technique of adjusting racial misunderstandings has long since fallen into disrepute 54:1.10 (614.5).

How do we establish opportunities for oppressed individuals and groups to protect their freedoms in a proper, democratic way, and in the spirit of human brotherhood?

> Liberty is suicidal when divorced from material justice, intellectual fairness, social forbearance, moral duty, and spiritual values. 54:1.4 (613.6)

Simply put, freedom without these qualities is destructive. These qualities provide the moral discipline to prevent a free, prosperous, powerful nation from the "temptation" described in "Government on a Neighboring Planet":

> They have become civilized to that point where they can vigorously defend civilization without yielding to the temptation to utilize their war powers in aggression. 72:11.4 (819.3)

During the current war in my country, the two above quotes from *The Urantia Book* have taken on a visceral meaning for me.

The fight for liberty, freedom, independence, and democracy is strong medicine. I do believe that it will ultimately result in more good for humanity as we strive to unite detached nation states into one strong associated world government, based on the principle of true brotherhood.

Equality

Most people support equality of opportunity, which in reality is compromised by differences in age, health, physical strength, qualities of the mind and soul, and numerous social factors.

This is a nation's challenge—equitably addressing such factors of inequality. And a good starting point is mindfulness of the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Despite the statement in the Paper "Planetary Mortal Epochs" that "It becomes possible to put the golden rule into practical operation" only during the postbestowal Son age (52:5.8), our current political discourse can certainly promote the golden rule as an instrument of progress towards equality. We don't have to wait for that distant epoch.

Balancing unequal wealth distribution with basic property rights, the basis of society, is an ongoing concern and challenge of progressive nations:

> The right to property is not absolute; it is purely social. But all government, law, order, civil rights, social liberties, conventions, peace, and happiness, as they are enjoyed by modern peoples, have grown up around the private ownership of property. 69:9.17 (782.4)

Only fair and balanced policies must be used to compensate for this uneven distribution. Our political discourse should address that, again relying on the principle of the golden rule.

Paper 55 describes social equality on a world in the early stages of light and life, where "every adult worker pays ten percent to the public treasury for the promotion of truth, beauty, and goodness", "natural resources administered as social possessions, community property", and the "majority of social and administrative posts were held jointly by men and

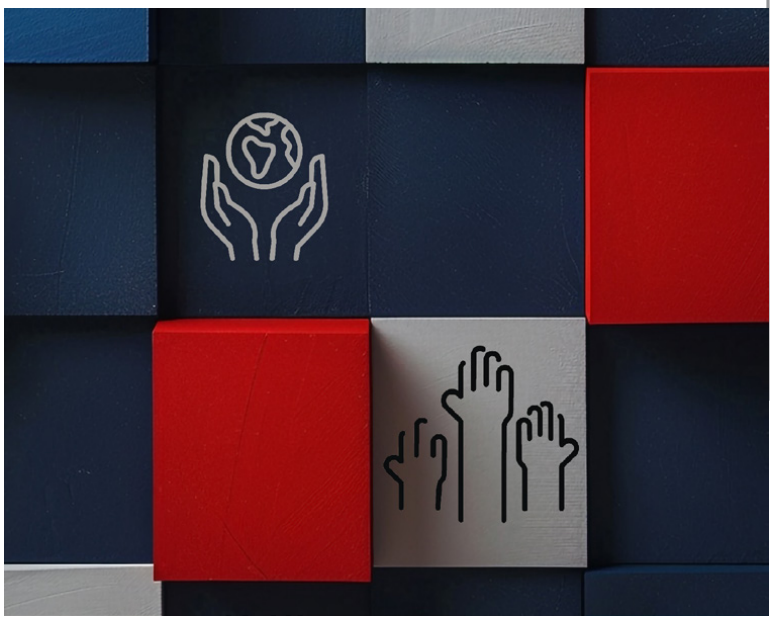
women" (55:3.2-9).

Another dimension of equality is equal voting rights and participation in political institutions. Although that right is considered the basis for the equality of man, in many cases allowing all to vote is not fair and even dangerous. Should people who cannot bear responsibility in society have the right to vote? Is it fair that the most educated and responsible people have the same weight in voting as the uneducated and least responsible people? Possible improvements in voting procedures should be discussed by the political leadership.

Equality before the law is also a base principle, which is not, however, well-balanced in many cases through social inequality. The political accent on a positive law principle might help much:

> Law is always at first negative and prohibitive; in advancing civilizations it becomes increasingly positive and directive. 70:11.2 (796.8)

Inequalities in different countries play a key role in migration processes. Even the countries advanced in immigration adaptation processes have many related problems, still many inequalities are present between the immigrants and the "natives." The human brotherhood idea and its political promotion, the Golden Rule, and the positive law principle can continually inform how to overcome the difficulties of immigrant adaptation.



The following quote could be a real inspiration for political visionaries of the future in truly ministry- and equality-rooted societies:

> Throughout this epoch there is a gradual lessening of governmental supervision. True self-government is beginning to function; fewer and fewer restrictive laws are necessary. The military branches of national resistance are passing away; the era of international harmony is really arriving. There are many nations, mostly determined by land distribution, but only one race, one language, and one religion. 52:5.10 (597.1)

Rights, Obligations, and Citizenship

Broad political discussion about human rights is centered on the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, officially adopted by the United Nations seven years before the publication of *The Urantia Book*. *The Urantia Book* appeared during times of new hope after terrible wars, when "the worst of the materialistic age [was] over" (195:6.4). In the words of Harrison and Boyd:

> The atrocities of the German Nazism period forced conservative thinkers to accept that there were real human rights. The experience of Soviet-style communism led the left, even the far left, to a reluctant acquiescence in rec-ognizing the importance of upholding individual rights as a defense against the might of totalitarian regimes. Thus the post-WW2 period was notable for a plethora of proclamations of "rights". Human rights were espoused by the Vatican and adopted by the United Nations.[5]

Perhaps the end of World War II, the establishment of the global-oriented structures of the UN and adopting the Declaration of Human Rights was something that the Revelatory Commission was waiting for before publishing *The Urantia Book*.

5 Ibid. p.123

The Declaration in Article 1 starts first with the phrase "All human beings should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood,"[6] followed by the rights explanation. "Spirit of brotherhood" is exactly what the golden rule teaches us. This idea is present in virtually all religions. It was and is core to Jesus' teachings and is reiterated throughout *The Urantia Book*.

Political agendas today are often based on human rights. Maybe it's time to focus on the starting point of the Declaration—the spirit of brotherhood. Rights are evolutionary achievements, while the spiritual brotherhood of man is a real fact based on our human essence, based on our common sonship.

The universal rights we have as citizens of our countries, which we call natural and human rights, legal rights, civil rights, and welfare rights—all result from the progress of our civilization.

When talking about rights, political discourse should also talk about obligations. Both rights and obligations make sense only within a group of individuals who share an ethical nature. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is also based on the same moral duty of the individual.

Even the penultimate Article 29 of the Declaration set the limitations of human rights based on the golden rule and thus on moral or ethical human nature:

> In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.[7]

But there's one more astonishing right each of us already have—the right to accept eternal life and an ascending career in the grand universe. This is the right to join the universal plan of mortal ascension and step on the path starting with physical death. This is the right to obtain true education of the universe on the seven mansion worlds, during the morontia life, and further.

> To each of you and to all of us, God is approachable, the Father is attainable, the way is open; the forces of divine love and the ways and means of divine administration are all interlocked in an effort to facilitate the advancement of every worthy intelligence of every universe to the Paradise presence of the Universal Father. 5:1.8 (63.6)

There are many things in mortal life that distract us from that exciting path. Is it possible that one day the right to follow the ascending career will be protected in the same way that basic human rights are protected now, and everything that deprives a person of this right and path will also be strongly condemned not only by religious institutions but at the official state level? That is a challenge for wise and brave political leadership.

Initiatives such as this special edition of the Urantia Association's Journal dedicated to government and politics build bridges between ideals and reality, between future epochs of light and life and our current epoch of confusion and disorder. Urantia Book believers should not be afraid to be active in political affairs. Pointing out the worthwhile perspectives of political discourse from *The Urantia Book* is one of the sure ways to advance wise and vigorous worldwide political leadership.



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6 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, United Nations, 2016.
7 Ibid.



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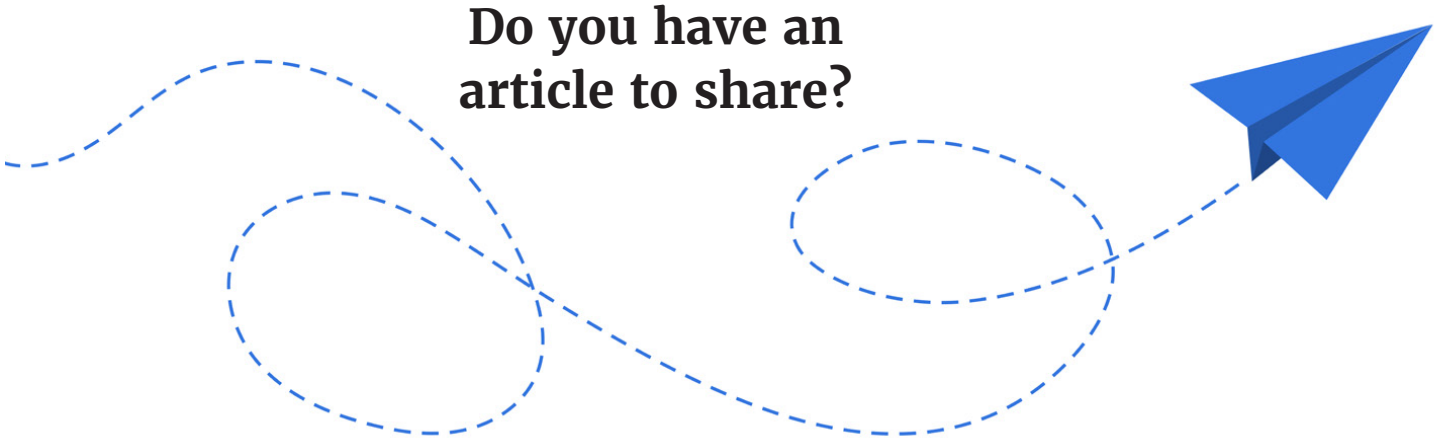
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The Urantia Book 71:4.17 (804.17)

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