

# A Call for a New Paradigm of Education Within the Urantia Community

By Gard Jameson

*In the schools of the morontia life these teachers engage in individual, group, class, and mass teaching. On the mansion worlds such schools are organized in three general groups of one hundred divisions each: **the schools of thinking, the schools of feeling, and the schools of doing.** When you reach the constellation, there are added **the schools of ethics, the schools of administration, and the schools of social adjustment.** On the universe headquarters worlds you will enter **the schools of philosophy, divinity, and pure spirituality.***

*Those things which you **might have learned on earth, but which you failed to learn,** must be acquired under the tutelage of these faithful and patient teachers. There are **no royal roads, short cuts, or easy paths to Paradise.** Irrespective of the individual variations of the route, you master the lessons of one sphere before you proceed to another; at least this is true after you once leave the world of your nativity.*

*One of the purposes of the morontia career is to effect the permanent eradication from the mortal survivors of such animal vestigial traits as **procrastination, equivocation, insincerity, problem avoidance, unfairness and ease seeking.** The mansonia life early teaches the young morontia pupils that **postponement is in no sense avoidance.** After the life in the flesh, time is no longer available as a technique of **dodging situations or of circumventing disagreeable obligations.** (48:5.6-8)*

These passages from the Paper entitled *The Morontia Life* are revelatory. In this presentation, I would like to recommend the value of bringing this model of teaching into our approach to *The Urantia Book*. We often joke about how intellectual the book is and how our approach to study is so often overly intellectual; the fact is that it is true! This presentation is not meant to demean the intellectual component of study; it is to suggest, as the *morontia* curriculum suggests, that there might be a thoughtful integration between our intellectual awareness, our emotional awareness and our moral awareness. Could a study group and other educational venues begin to promote such awareness?

Our inner work is primary and informs our capacity to do the outer work, the Father's will. We are told that our daily worship and prayer and service are capacity enlarging when it comes to enhancing our appreciation of revelation. If we are not willing to engage the work of inner transformation, we can expect little in our educational endeavors. *The Urantia Book* notes that the highest levels of self realization are attained through worship and service, inner work leading to effective outer work, the outgoing movement of the heart prompted by compassion. This message becomes clearer and clearer as I age. The possibility of outward success is entirely dependent upon inward transformation, self mastery and character. Our most precious gift from the Universal Father is our *personality*. Inherent in that gift is the universal respect accorded to our ability to choose a value-oriented direction. Such choice is educated not only by the head, but by the heart and the hands as well.

Now let's consider "one of the purposes of the morontia career:"

(T)o effect the permanent eradication from the mortal survivors of such animal vestigial traits as *procrastination, equivocation, insincerity, problem avoidance, unfairness and ease seeking*. The mansonia life early teaches the young morontia pupils that *postponement* is in no sense avoidance. After the life in the flesh, time is no longer available as a technique of *dodging situations* or of *circumventing disagreeable obligations*. (48:5.8)

Hmmm? Seems to be a common theme here at the outset of our eternal career. Would you agree? It seems to suggest that these qualities are imported from this earthly existence. Imagine if we started to do something about this prior to our *morontia* life, as is recommended!

Jesus puts the question to us this way: "Are you fearful, soft, and ease-seeking?" (155:5.13)

George Herbert Palmer, Harvard philosophy professor and one of the human sources, tells of a boy who was being called by his mother very late in the morning. "Aren't you ashamed to be lying here so late?" the mother inquired. "Yes, mother," the boy answers, "I am ashamed, but I had rather be ashamed than get up!"

The proactive drive toward a worthwhile goal appears to be very low in this young man. The enchantment and thrill of *The Fifth Epochal Revelation* seems, oftentimes, to evoke a similar lukewarm response, even amongst long-time readers.

How best to energize and motivate the *ease-seeking, fear-affected soul*, that is the question?

*The Urantia Book* talks a lot about values. The ability to subordinate our unconscious impulses and animal urges to the lure of divine values is the essence of the God-directed person. In other words, are we truly motivated by truth, beauty and goodness, energized by the desire to love and to serve? Or, are we allowing unconscious impulses and urges to drive most of our responses to life?

The educational regimen of the Mansion Worlds is directed toward that of maturing a cosmic citizen, a person capable of embracing the exciting challenges associated with becoming more like God. For anyone who has adopted such a program of growth, the inevitable challenges are an ever-present reality. See the statement below on the inevitabilities, and the associated challenges.

*The uncertainties of life and the vicissitudes of existence do not in any manner*

contradict the concept of the universal sovereignty of God. All evolutionary creature life is beset by certain *inevabilities*. Consider the following:

1. Is **courage** — strength of character — desirable? Then must man be reared in an environment which necessitates grappling with hardships and reacting to disappointments.

2. Is **altruism** — service of one's fellows — desirable? Then must life experience provide for encountering situations of social inequality.

3. Is **hope** — the grandeur of trust — desirable? Then human existence must constantly be confronted with insecurities and recurrent uncertainties.

4. Is **faith** — the supreme assertion of human thought — desirable? Then must the mind of man find itself in that troublesome predicament where it ever knows less than it can believe.

5. Is the **love of truth** and the willingness to go wherever it leads, desirable? Then must man grow up in a world where error is present and falsehood always possible.

6. Is **idealism** — the approaching concept of the divine — desirable? Then must man struggle in an environment of relative goodness and beauty, surroundings stimulative of the irrepressible reach for better things.

7. Is **loyalty** — devotion to highest duty — desirable? Then must man carry on amid the possibilities of betrayal and desertion. The valor of devotion to duty consists in the implied danger of default.

8. Is **unselfishness** — the spirit of self-forgetfulness — desirable? Then must mortal man live face to face with **the incessant clamoring of an inescapable self for recognition and honor**. Man could not dynamically choose the divine life **if there were no self-life to forsake**. Man could never lay saving hold on righteousness if there were no potential evil to exalt and differentiate the good by contrast. (3:5.5)

The *morontia* curriculum, the mortal curriculum that incorporates the expansion of emotional intelligence as well as active engagement would help a person to navigate toward more **courage, altruism, hope, faith, truth, idealism, loyalty and unselfishness** in one's character. It must be that, even on the Mansion Worlds, qualities of hardship, disappointment, and uncertainty still persist. The incessant clamor of the ego must still be sounding off, and, the possibility of betrayal still a possibility. The Mansion World teachers must have a full plate trying to educate these embryonic finaliters, especially with those ascending rascals from Urantia!

Rodan states that:

*Social maturity is equivalent to the degree to which man is willing to surrender the gratification of mere transient and present desires for the entertainment of those superior longings the striving for whose attainment affords the more abundant satisfactions of progressive advancement toward permanent goals. But the true badge of social maturity is the willingness of a people to surrender the right to live peaceably and contentedly under **the ease-promoting standards** of the lure of established beliefs and conventional ideas for the disquieting and energy-requiring lure of the pursuit of the unexplored possibilities of the attainment of undiscovered goals of idealistic spiritual realities. (160:1.4)*

The insight of The Urantia Book is that “*the ease-promoting standards of the lure of established beliefs and conventional ideas*” are to be increasingly displaced by the divine lure, an awareness not a belief, of becoming more like God, with its associated uncertainties and vicissitudes. We learn that while union with God is not a simple goal, it is the supreme and most satisfying of all goals.

Rodan goes on to state that:

*When men dare to forsake a life of natural craving for one of adventurous art and uncertain logic, they must expect to suffer the consequent hazards of emotional casualties—conflicts, unhappiness, and uncertainties—at least until the time of their attainment of some degree of **intellectual and emotional maturity**. Discouragement, worry, and **indolence** are positive evidence of **moral immaturity**. Human society is confronted with two problems: attainment of the maturity of the individual and attainment of the maturity of the race. The mature human being soon begins **to look upon all other mortals with feelings of tenderness** and with emotions of tolerance. **Mature men view immature folks with the love and consideration that parents bear their children.** (160:1.6)*

We learn here that our educational aspirations should have at least three aims: 1) intellectual maturity, 2) emotional maturity, and 3) moral maturity. Such maturity is the result of a growing intimacy in our relationship with God. With the advent of such maturity comes the capacity “*to look upon all other mortals with feelings of tenderness.*” Isn’t it truly our goal that we should treat “*immature folks with the love and consideration that parents bear their children.*” “*Jesus sought to reveal this new concept of fatherly love.*” (140:5.3) His whole life was dedicated to teaching his followers the power and the grace of such love.

*Successful living is nothing more or less than the art of the mastery of dependable techniques for solving common problems. The first step in the solution of any problem is to locate the difficulty, to isolate the problem, and frankly to recognize its nature and gravity. **The great mistake** is that, when **life problems** excite our profound fears, we **refuse to recognize them**. Likewise, when the acknowledgment of our difficulties entails*

*the reduction of our long-cherished conceit, the admission of envy, or the abandonment of deep-seated prejudices, the average person prefers to cling to the old illusions of safety and to the long-cherished false feelings of security. Only a brave person is willing honestly to admit, and fearlessly to face, what a sincere and logical mind discovers. (160:1.7)*

The educational regime of the Mansion Worlds, that perhaps we could begin even here, is to recognize what stands between us and our divine goals, *“honestly to admit, and fearlessly to face, what a sincere and logical mind discovers.”* Carl Jung, the great psychiatrist, repeated constantly that there is a “shadow” dimension within ourselves, fear, sloth, anger, anxiety, which separates us from the real growth of our soul. The Mansion Worlds illustrate clearly that we have a well organized educational program ahead that will address with our proclivity to **indolence, procrastination, and ease seeking**. Why not commence that program in earnest, here and now? And thereby assist human society with its *“two problems: attainment of the maturity of the individual and attainment of the maturity of the race,”* the maturity of the individual involving an improved intellectual, emotional, and moral awareness. (160:1.6)

How many times have we read those passages and nodded our intellectual agreement? An effective program of feeling and of doing would actually translate our theoretical assent into the wings of true character and soul growth. Without such translation, the revelation remains a fine set of words without much effective transformation, in effect a limiting belief. So, along with our efforts to develop in-depth study, we should be considering what does a curriculum in a school of feeling look like; what does a curriculum in a school of doing look like? Why don't you take a little time to consider what that curriculum might look like? And, perhaps how a study group might provide a container for such a curriculum? How else could such a curriculum be implemented?

We learn that *“in the schools of the morontia life these teachers engage in individual, group, class, and mass teachings.”* The individual level is probably something akin to what we call spiritual direction. The group level might be closer to what we know as a study group. The class might encompass a larger collection of individuals that have a more structured curriculum similar to our classes at a university, like UBIS or Urantia University. And, the mass teaching is probably akin to our plenary gatherings at a conference.

### **An Added Element in our Study of *The Urantia Book***

I would suggest with the recent advances in neuro-science around left and right brain development, around the evolutionary development of the brain, there is an argument to made that most of our educational endeavors cater, at best, to only one side of our capacity for growth. Jesus' words to Ganid in Alexandria summarize this appreciation:

*A one-eyed person can never hope to visualize depth of perspective. Neither can single-eyed material scientists nor single-eyed spiritual mystics and allegorists correctly visualize and adequately comprehend the true depths of universe reality. All true values of creature experience are **concealed in depth of recognition**. (130:4.4)*

How to facilitate “*depth of recognition*” through feeling, doing, and thinking? As much as we might like to think that we could do so, we cannot blissfully meditate our way to Paradise, neither can we neglect the spiritual communion of our soul by engaging in over-much thinking or even dynamic activity. Both worship, inner work, and service, outer work, are required. Additionally, *The Urantia Book* suggests a vital linkage between thinking and doing in the school of feeling, cultivating a compassionate heart.

As best as I am able to discern, such a school of feeling would begin to teach the basics associated with the curriculum that Jesus, himself, established in his remarkable “Ordination Sermon,” which are “*the four transcendent and supreme reactions of fatherly love...*” (1573) How can we cultivate such reactions? Or responses to life events? Much of the recent work being done on emotional intelligence provides an approach. I would suggest that the first two of these reactions entails significant feeling or emotional components, emotional intelligence.

*“Happy are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” So-called common sense or the best of logic would never suggest that happiness could be derived from mourning. But Jesus did not refer to outward or ostentatious mourning. He alluded to **an emotional attitude of tenderheartedness**. It is a great error to teach boys and young men that it is unmanly to show tenderness or otherwise to give evidence of **emotional feeling** or physical suffering. Sympathy is a worthy attribute of the male as well as the female. It is not necessary to be calloused in order to be manly. This is the wrong way to create courageous men. The world’s great men have not been afraid to mourn. Moses, the mourner, was a greater man than either Samson or Goliath. Moses was a superb leader, but he was also a man of meekness. **Being sensitive and responsive to human need creates genuine and lasting happiness**, while such kindly attitudes safeguard the soul from **the destructive influences of anger, hate, and suspicion**. (140:5.16)*

How might we cultivate the capacity to mourn? One important way, perhaps, is that we could teach each other the import of *listening to understand*, as even more important than *listening to be understood*. Do you find in study group that you can almost predict what someone is going to say, due to their fascination with their own perspective. Listening as a skill is not taught and, if we were honest, we would admit that we are all quite bad at it. If we truly listened to understand we might hear the depth of perspective that others possess, as well the pain and suffering so many of us experience, leading to “*tender-heartedness*.” Such a genuine and sincere attitude gives rise to the expression of mercy. There is a reason why Jesus spoke first of the capacity to mourn, then of mercy. Mercy is the second “*transcendent and supreme reaction*” of real faith.

*"Happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Mercy here denotes the height and depth and breadth of the truest friendship —loving-kindness. Mercy sometimes may be passive, but here it is active and dynamic—supreme fatherliness. A loving parent experiences little difficulty in forgiving his child, even many times. And in an unspoiled child the urge to relieve suffering is natural. Children are normally kind and sympathetic when old enough to appreciate actual conditions. (140:3.9)*

How to transform a heart that is "sensitive and responsive to human needs," an attitude of mourning, into the "active and dynamic" attitude of mercy is the next step in the curriculum. This is true "lovingkindness" that is not "passive" but that actively engages in the "urge to relieve suffering." This is true friendship, both with God and with our brothers and sisters.

*You should realize that there is a great reward of personal satisfaction in being first just, next fair, then patient, then kind. And then, on that foundation, if you choose and have it in your heart, you can take the next step and really show mercy; but you cannot exhibit mercy in and of itself. These steps must be traversed; otherwise there can be no genuine mercy. There may be patronage, condescension, or charity—even pity—but not mercy. True mercy comes only as the beautiful climax to these preceding adjuncts to group understanding, mutual appreciation, fraternal fellowship, spiritual communion, and divine harmony. (28:6.8)*

What does this passage add to the consideration of possible curriculum?

The third and fourth of these reactions entails a wider field of proactive action and compassionate engagement on behalf of others.

*"Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Jesus' hearers were longing for military deliverance, not for peacemakers. But Jesus' peace is not of the pacific and negative kind. In the face of trials and persecutions he said, "My peace I leave with you." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." This is the peace that prevents ruinous conflicts. Personal peace integrates personality. Social peace prevents fear, greed, and anger. Political peace prevents race antagonisms, national suspicions, and war. Peacemaking is the cure of distrust and suspicion. (140:3.10)*

Can there be social peace without the sincere cultivation of personal peace? Can there be political peace without real social peace? Peacemakers cultivate trust.

*Children can easily be taught to function as peacemakers. They enjoy team activities; they like to play together. Said the Master at another time: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life shall find it." (140:3.11)*

Peacemakers cultivate teamwork, respect for team members, the unity of the team, selfless service and authenticity and transparency. Being a peacemaker requires a dynamic engagement with others, and the realization that such engagement will entail misunderstanding and social tension. An emotionally mature individual is capable of navigating the eddies of such

misunderstanding and tension, not being sucked in, guiding the raft down the main current of peaceful resolution. An emotionally mature person bears spiritual fruit. He or she is an ambassador of “*abounding love, unfailing forgiveness, and matchless goodwill.*”

*“Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.” (140:3.11)*

*So often persecution does follow peace. But young people and brave adults never shun difficulty or danger. “Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends.” And a fatherly love can freely do all these things—things which brotherly love can hardly encompass. And progress has always been the final harvest of persecution. (140:3.12)*

*Children always respond to the challenge of courage. Youth is ever willing to “take a dare.” And every child should early learn to sacrifice. (140:3.13)*

The forces of “*fear, greed and anger*” are everywhere and great on our planet. They undergird the texture of our thoughts, our emotions, and our culture. When an emotionally mature person is met with suspicion and antagonism then does prejudice, bias and bigotry raise their ugly heads. Through deep inner work, the response can be a compassionate recognition of ignorance allied with the invitation to transformation, or repentance, changing the direction in which one is looking for happiness. Jesus did just that with the leaders of the Sanhedrin, converting a number of individuals, once they recognized his real motivation and intentions. Jesus was persecuted and ultimately murdered, but on the night before his death he could speak of and exhibit a divine quality of joy, demonstrating that in midst of severe persecution there can be joy.

## **Consider One Element That Might Be Added to Our Study Group Program**

Consider if we encouraged adding just one piece to our study groups: the development of our capacity for *empathic listening*. Consider the levels at which we listen to one another. At the first level, we may be *pretending to listen*... without really hearing anything at all. Second, we sometimes engage in *selective listening*, filtering carefully what is being spoken to fit our own perspective. Most of the time, however there is some quality of *attentive listening*, where we more or less focus on the words being spoken, intellectually but not emotionally. *Attentive listening* facilitates a response, but not a response involving any “*depth of recognition.*” Attentive listening is usually focused more on our prepared response and its articulation than what is being

spoken. We are poorly trained in our capacity to listen. Jesus could hear people so well, because he cared so much about them as individuals. Such compassion was directly related to his unbroken communion with God and his genuine regard for every person.

The most sophisticated level of listening is *empathic listening*, evoking a quality of deep compassion for the speaker. *Empathic listening* is not *attentive listening* or “reflective” listening, which is a technique for hearing the words and being able to reflect those words back. *Empathic listening* involves a high degree of emotional intelligence and draws upon our capacity both to “mourn” and to be “merciful.” *Empathic listening* involves a deep emotional connection between the speaker and listener at the level of the heart. Francis de Sales says: “only the heart can hear another heart.”

*Empathic listening* enables the listener to get inside the other person’s frame of reference both at the level of the intellect and at the level of the heart. You literally connect at a feeling level with the speaker. Jesus was a master of such listening, as was Mary of Bethany, who sat at Jesus’ feet drinking in every word of divine wisdom. “Empathy” was not in the Webster’s dictionary at the time of the revelation; but, “sympathy” was. In an interesting passage, it says that Jesus “*taught pure sympathy, compassion.*” (140:8.11) Pure sympathy might be a good definition for empathy. We have now differentiated between empathy and sympathy to get to a deeper appreciation of the level of connection that is possible between people.

Sympathy usually involves a form of judgment. Empathy does not; it is non-judgmental. Sympathy usually implies some level of condescension in the judgment. Empathy carries no such meaning. Sympathy is sometimes appropriate, for instance, with a child. The essence of empathy is that you seek to understand the other, without judgment. Empathy does not necessarily lead to agreement; it does lead to deep, full-hearted understanding, emotionally as well as intellectually.

Empathy involves so much more than registering, reflecting and intellectual understanding. Importantly, with *empathic listening* one learns to listen with the heart. We have learned through studies in neuroscience, that the heart is much more than merely a blood pumping organ. With over 40,000 neurons, neurotransmitters, a magnetic field far greater than the brain, and a direct connection to the brain, the vagus nerve, the heart is an organ of intelligence.

As we are gaining understanding and an appreciation into the nature of this organ of intelligence, we begin to appreciate Jesus’ request that we love God, not only with our mind, but also with our heart, and our body, and our soul. Each level is distinct, yet connected to the other areas.

Could our educational program within the Urantia Community seek to encompass more than just the understanding of the intellect and attentive listening, but also empathetic listening? This is the question before us. I think we can, with some imagination and some understanding of the breakthroughs that are happening in the field of emotional intelligence and the arena of cognitive behavioral psychology.

## Longer Term Consideration

*The divine spirit makes contact with mortal man, not by feelings or emotions, but in the realm of the **highest and most spiritualized thinking**. It is your thoughts, not your feelings, that lead you Godward. The divine nature may be perceived only with the eyes of the mind. But the mind that really discerns God, hears the indwelling Adjuster, is the pure mind. "Without holiness no man may see the Lord." All such inner and spiritual communion is termed spiritual insight. Such religious experiences result from the impress made upon the mind of man by the combined operations of the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth as they function amid and upon the ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings of the evolving sons of God. (101:1.3)*

This passage is incredibly important, for it expresses the appreciation of *spiritualized thoughts*, not just "thoughts" as is often quoted. Many Study Groups already have a component of worship in their program, some at the beginning, some at the end, some both. It my personal observation that the quality of the conversation is greatly enhanced when a study group takes advantage of such spiritual communion.

We know that the great gift of personality carries at least three significant attributes: 1) the capacity for self- conscious reflection, 2) the capacity for self-direction, and 3) the unique identity of that person. Recognizing the first of these attributes as the thinking processes, we might ask how we might more thoroughly prepare the mind for "*the impress made upon the mind of man by the combined operations of the Adjuster and Spirit of Truth as the function amid and upon the ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings of the evolving sons of God.*" (101:1.3)

We are provided with some habits that might be cultivated. A good habit requires *skill, knowledge* and *desire*, and the Cuisinart of time. With these elements, much can be achieved. *The Urantia Book* provides a clue as to those habits which lead to a divine impress upon our minds.

*Religious habits of thinking and acting are contributory to the economy of spiritual growth. One can develop religious predispositions toward favorable reaction to spiritual stimuli, a sort of conditioned spiritual reflex. Habits which favor religious growth embrace cultivated sensitivity to divine values, recognition of religious living in others, reflective meditation on cosmic meanings, worshipful problem solving, sharing one's spiritual life with one's fellows, avoidance of selfishness, refusal to presume on divine mercy, living as in the presence of God. (100.1.8)*

In agreement with the approach of *Cognitive Therapy*, a revelation is intended to help us think straight. I recall a god daughter whose grandparents tried to convince her that her parents administered corporal punishment because they loved her. She replied: "Grandpa, Grandma, you are not thinking straight."

The religious habits noted above are “*contributory to the economy of spiritual growth.*” We might ask ourselves: 1) what intentional habits do we incorporate to cultivate “*sensitivity to divine values*”? 2) what is our response when we recognize “*religious living in others*”? 3) is our study group a “*reflective meditation on cosmic meanings*”? are there other ways to engage in such “*reflective meditation*”? 4) what does “*worshipful problem solving*” mean to us individually? Reflect upon the last time you engaged in such “*problem solving*”? 5) do we share our “*spiritual life with one’s fellows*” in study group, outside of study group? 6) what does “*avoidance of selfishness*” mean? How do we do this? 7) what does “*refusal to presume on divine mercy*” mean? How have we done this? 8) what practices do we engage to live “*as in the presence of God*”? discuss how these practices operate for you?

*Cognitive Therapy* suggests that we are deeply affected by our thoughts, our feelings or emotions, and by our actions. It suggests that each of these elements can help lead to straighter thinking. It suggests that we can change the way in which we think about our existence, that ***thinking is the gateway to feelings***, and that ***our feelings are the gateway to our actions***. So, in order to bring about improvement in the growth of our soul, we need to take direct charge of and responsibility for our thoughts.

*The Urantia Book* suggests that this is best accomplished when we consent to allow the Thought Adjuster to do its work within our souls.

*On the evolutionary worlds, will creatures traverse three general developmental stages of being: From the arrival of the Adjuster to comparative full growth, about twenty years of age on Urantia, the Monitors are sometimes designated Thought Changers. From this time to the attainment of the age of discretion, about forty years, the Mystery Monitors are called Thought Adjusters. From the attainment of discretion to deliverance from the flesh, they are often referred to as Thought Controllers. These three phases of mortal life have no connection with the three stages of Adjuster progress in mind duplication and soul evolution. (107:0.7)*

It is profoundly significant that the Adjuster is not called a Feeling Adjuster nor an Action Adjuster, but a Thought Adjuster, “*spiritualized thoughts.*” The primary issue in our lives is our willingness during our waking hours to consent to the Thought Adjuster’s presence and action. John of the Cross suggested that only one thing keep us from the realization of divinity: the thought that God is separate from us. The realization of Presence is primary. Second, our full consent leads to God’s action, within which is both a quality of healing, delivering the embryonic soul from those qualities of thought, feeling and behavior that keep us from God realization, as well as a quality of transformation, which increasing makes us like the being who is worshiped. (ref)

*In Palestine, human thought was so **priest-controlled** and **scripture-directed** that philosophy and aesthetics were entirely submerged in religion and morality. In Greece, the almost complete absence of priests and "sacred scripture" left the human mind free and unfettered, resulting in a startling development in depth of thought. But **religion as a personal experience failed to keep pace with the intellectual probings into the nature and reality of the cosmos.** (98:2.7)*

*In Palestine, religious **dogma became so crystallized** as to jeopardize further growth; in Greece, **human thought became so abstract** that the concept of God resolved itself into a misty vapor of pantheistic speculation not at all unlike the impersonal Infinity of the Brahman philosophers. (98:2.9)*

We can see then that our thoughts can be diverted by dogmatic creedal paradigms, such as occurred in ancient Palestine, or in many more contemporary religions. This might be one of the reasons that so many youth are fleeing religious institutions. As well, we can see how our thoughts can move to such abstraction as to lose all sense of the personal, loving presence of Divinity. *It is our consent to the presence and action of that personal, loving presence of God that leads to a unity of divine will, an appreciation of the diversity of human personality, a quality of faith which empowers us to "mourn" for the suffering of others, to have real "mercy" for those who are afflicted, to actively seek "peace" wherever there is conflict and tension, and to rise above those recriminations that would invite us to return to more primitive ways of thought, feeling and behavior.*

It is time for a new approach to education within our Urantia Community. When future generations begin to sense that we have learned the ways of "mourning," the ways of "mercy," the ways of "peacemaking," they will be thrilled to sign for such a life of divine communion and unselfish service. In this manner the Fifth Epochal Revelation will begin to have an effect upon planetary culture. The time for this new approach is now.

Now, imagine if we began to master the lessons of thinking, feeling, and doing! We might then be so bold as to venture into conversations around philosophy, divinity, and pure spirituality!

*The contemplation of the immature and inactive human intellect should lead only to reactions of humility. (9:5.7)*

Jesus in his final instructions encourages us with these inspiring words:

***"Life in the Father's eternal creation is not an endless rest of idleness and selfish ease but rather a ceaseless progression in grace, truth, and glory."*** (181:1.2)