

UBIS Newsletter

ubis.urantia.org

Volume 4 > Issue 2

2014 > 3rd Quarter

Dear UBIS Students and All Readers of *The Urantia Book*,

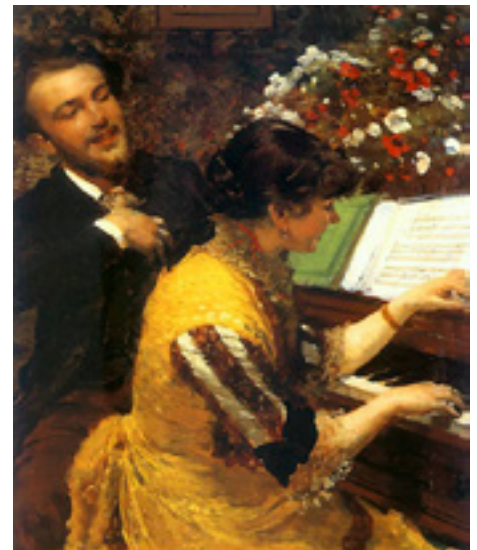
This year, 2014, is the 15th anniversary of the Urantia Book Internet School (UBIS).

Over 1,800 students from more than 50 countries (all six inhabited continents) have taken more than 165 courses since UBIS's inception in 1999.

This online service, offered by Urantia Foundation, was developed and organized by Dorothy Elder, a professional teacher of

twenty-five years, and a dedicated team of volunteers.

Today, sixteen members constitute the board and staff of UBIS. The teacher-facilitators are all former UBIS students and have been trained to give online courses. Twenty-three are English speaking, five are Spanish speaking, and two are French speaking.



Piano Playing by Leon Wyczolkowski Ujrzałem

Online education and learning is becoming increasingly popular within the Urantia Book community. This makes it possible

(continued on page 2, see "Anniversary")

Courses are offered for all levels ranging from beginner to advanced.

In This *Issue*

- 1 15th Anniversary of UBIS**
Representing years of planning and effort.
- 2 Question-and-Answer Method**
Compare the teaching methods of Socrates and of Jesus.
- 5 Things to Know**
September trimester registration and course information.

Urantia Book Internet School (UBIS)

ubis.urantia.org

Questions? 773.525.3319 or
joanne@urantia.org

Preparing a course takes about two months and consists of: 1) choosing a topic, 2) constructing the study using a progressive approach, 3) selecting the right papers and paragraphs in *The Urantia Book*, and 4) coming up with relevant and thought-provoking questions that focus on the main goal of UBIS, which is to provide students with a platform in which to increase their comprehension of *The Urantia Book* and its teachings.

The goal of the English curricula is to offer at least one course from each part of *The Urantia Book* every trimester. In addition, core curriculum and topical courses are also offered for all levels ranging from beginner to advanced. In the near future the Spanish and French courses will follow the same pattern.

UBIS Newsletter

Anniversary (continued from page 1)

for isolated readers and students from all over the world to study the book in small classes, enjoying interpersonal relationships which transcend time and space. According to student feedback, the new Moodle platform, developed by Michael Zehr, is user-friendly and easy to navigate.

We look forward to expanding UBIS into more languages with Portuguese, Russian, and German being the next focus. We have need for volunteers in these languages. Please consider taking a course and becoming involved with the UBIS team.

We hope you enjoy reading the September newsletter.

Georges Michelson-Dupont
Director of UBIS

See page 6 for basic information about using the UBIS site.



Photos courtesy of shutterstock.com



Photos courtesy of istock.com

The Question-and-Answer Method of Teaching

by Polly Friedman, 2009

Within the community of readers of *The Urantia Book*, there is a renewed focus on education and the frequent referral to the “question-and-answer method” of teaching. Such a method was used by Socrates and by Jesus, but Jesus used a much expanded version of Socrates’s question-and-answer method as well as the employment of parables, sermons, dissertations, and examples.

Though Socrates and Jesus both used the question-and-answer method, their reasons for doing so were quite different. Socrates was interested in finding wisdom

and knowledge. He realized that he did not possess full wisdom. He was himself a seeker. In contradistinction, Jesus knew

...used by Socrates and by Jesus, but Jesus used a much expanded version

that he was revealing truth to the seeker. He possessed wisdom, knowledge, and an understanding of men. He personified truth.

The mission of Urantia Foundation is to seed
The Urantia Book and its teachings globally.

THE STYLE OF SOCRATES

Socrates was born in Athens, Greece, in 470 B.C. He lived simply and was poor his entire life. He left no writings, and almost all of the information we have about him comes from his pupil Plato who described his mentor's life and philosophy in *The Dialogues*. Plato explained that Socrates had a strong belief in God as a ruler of the world. Socrates also believed that man has a soul that is immortal. His prayer to God was, "Give me what is good."

Through questioning, Socrates tried to find reason. He was concerned with ethics and used inductive argument to attempt to find logic. He looked for definitions for ethical character and conduct. He believed man's goal was to make one's soul as good as possible because he believed the soul is "the seat of character and intelligence." The soul, he believed, is the essence of man. Socrates knew that he was not an authority; he used conversation as a means to explore ethical questions.

Technically the term "Socratic questioning" is used to describe a questioning process in which the original question assumes the form of a hypothesis. It is a statement of fact in the form of a question. The definition of a hypothesis from Webster's II is: "A theory that explains a set of facts and can be treated as an investigation." It goes like this. The questioner asks a question that assumes a fact. After the response, the questioner reformulates a new question in light of the nature of the discourse. Thus the discourse leads to a dialogue in an attempt to reach logic. This has also become a technique of lawyers to develop what seems a logical conclusion.

An interesting life parallel is that both Jesus and Socrates were not only great and innovative teachers who influenced the entire world, but both were put to death for their beliefs and did not protest their arrests. They did not leave writings

or records, yet they have inspired men to this day.

To quote from *The Urantia Book*, "Socrates and his successors, Plato and Aristotle, taught that virtue is knowledge, goodness, health of the soul; that it is better to suffer injustice than to be guilty of it, that it is wrong to return evil for evil, and that the gods are wise and good. Their cardinal virtues were: wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice."

Jesus' approach was varied and diverse. He always built on what the individual already understood; expanding his vision, never tearing down a belief.

"In Greece, believing was subordinated to thinking; in Palestine thinking was held subject to believing. Much of the strength of Christianity is due to its having borrowed heavily from both Hebrew morality and Greek thought." (1079.3-5) 98:2.6-8

THE STYLE OF JESUS

The questions of Jesus were different from Socrates. Although his questions—his approach—involved thinking and reason, they first appealed to the heart and soul of the individual. Although there are similarities of exploring and probing, Jesus did not use a method as such. I

want to emphasize the word "approach" because it is bigger than method. Jesus was genuine in his concern; he was caring and wanted to lift the individual to have a new and transformative experience

Jesus' approach was varied and diverse, depending on his audience. He always built on what the individual already understood; expanding his vision, never tearing down a belief. He corrected at times but neither debated nor got caught up in semantics. The purpose of his questions was to open the mind in order to allow spirit influence to bring the light of truth. He was dealing with revelation, change, and the new dynamics of his time.

It is fascinating to study the questions of Jesus because they were often a response to a question or remark that was addressed to him. The return question put the focus on the person who was asking, and perhaps the "why" was as important as the literal question. An example from *The Urantia Book* would be helpful here:

Jesus entered the home of Flavius whose house was adorned with art treasures that Jesus appeared interested in. Flavius took him on a tour and was amazed that Jesus did not rebuke him about his art collection. Jesus saw that Flavius was bewildered and asked,

"Because you appreciate the beauty of things created by my Father and fashioned by the artistic hands of man, why should you expect to be rebuked? Because Moses one time sought to combat idolatry and the worship of false gods, why should all men frown upon the reproduction of grace and beauty?" (1600.3) 142:4.2

Jesus' approach was also to ask personal questions that showed his sincere interest in reaching an inner place that the listener could identify with in his or her life struggles. Jesus gently guided seekers to new vistas that stimulated and stretched

UBIS was created and exists as a means to help students from all over the world study *The Urantia Book* together free from the constraints of distance, timetables, and physical presence.

their souls as well as their minds. He subtly made suggestions so that the student could experience his or her own personal delight of delicious discovery. Jesus led people to gems of truth for further exploration; he did not deal with supposition or conjecture. A good shepherd takes his sheep to a pastoral table and then frees them to feast on the rewards. With Jesus there is no “right” answer, but there is a change in the way we look at reality and the universe.

A good shepherd takes his sheep to a pastoral table and then frees them to feast on the rewards.

From this new change in perception and belief, faith and commitment follows. This is not rhetoric; this is healing! Socrates laid a foundation for exploration of truth. He appealed to the mind of reason, whereas Jesus appealed to the heart through the mind and led the mortal to find his own truth. Greek thought joined with revelatory truth to bring man closer to God than ever before.

In our world today we are far richer in knowledge and awareness than at any time in history. We have the advantage of a revelation and the technical means to reach millions of souls. This latest good news is right before us, and we have the ability to go to it again and again for study, inspiration, and reality check. If we don't understand a particular passage or line, we can go back to reread, ponder, and even memorize. Together, in small and large groups, we can analyze,

synthesize, and summarize. The teacher-facilitator does not need to give answers or interpretations.

This is truly a new way of learning. We are the opposite of theological pedagogy, which lectures endless information. Using Jesus' approach to teaching, the teacher encourages self-discovery and discussion that are intended to lead the student to spiritual experiences and to the application of truth that he or she shares with others. This will take hold and grow and influence not only the student but also the teacher, for each of us ideally becomes both students and teachers as we pass by!

Note: Polly serves as a teacher-facilitator for UBIS and is a member of the Board of Directors. She is a firm believer in the philosophy and purpose of UBIS, which uses the Jesusonian approach and continues to define and refine that philosophy through its presentation and discussion of teachings found in The Urantia Book.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bass, Diana Butler. *A People's History of Christianity*. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.
- Harrington, Norris Archer. "What Is the Socratic Method?" *Classical Homeschooling Magazine*, Summer 2000. Great Books Academy. Web. July 2009.
- Reese, W.L. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980.
- "Socrates". *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Web. July 2009.
- "Socratic Method" Wikipedia Encyclopedia. Web. July 2009.
- The Urantia Book*. Chicago: Urantia Foundation, 2nd ed., 1995.



We are neither a church nor an organized religion...

UBIS, a part of Urantia Foundation, is a non-profit, educational association. We are neither a church nor an organized religion, nor is that our intent.

UBIS refrains from expressing opinions or taking positions on political, social or economic issues. We welcome people of all faiths, races, and nationalities seeking spiritual fellowship. We view true religion as the personal spiritual experience of each individual. This internet-based school is a group endeavor of people inspired by the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. We wish to cooperate with all religionists to pursue the spiritual, social, and moral advancement of our world.



Photo courtesy of shutterstock.com

While people's beliefs may differ, our faith and destiny are the same, for we are all children of God. Our quest transcends mere religious uniformity, we strive for *spiritual unity*.

Please join us!

Things to Know*

*All dates and times are subject to change. Please check our website for the latest: [Registration Information](#)

Click Here
for more information
about UBIS.

September, 2014 Trimester

1-14 September trimester registration.

15 September 10-week trimester begins and continues until November 23.



Following are the courses and Teacher-Facilitators (T-Fs) for the September session. For the most recent information, visit ubis.urantia.org



Spanish and French Classes

To see the Spanish and French courses available this trimester, please visit the Spanish and French websites:

<http://www.urantia.org/es/>

<http://www.urantia.org/fr/>



Teacher/Facilitator Training

The annual 2015 Teacher Training Class dates are yet to be determined. If you are interested, please contact UBIS: joanne@urantia.org



1. Course Title: The Origin and Evolution of Life on Urantia

Course Level: All Readers

Course Description: In this course we shall study how life was initiated on our planet and shall follow its progression from a pre-life stage to a stage where life evolved into a creature capable of making free-will decisions. We shall gain a perspective on both the biological and geological progression of our planet's history.

Papers: 36 (section 5), 57 (section 8), and 58, 59, 60, 61, and 62.

Teacher-Facilitator: Larry Leskovic
Larry is retired and lives in western Pennsylvania. He is married and has three children and three grandchildren. He has been a reader of *The Urantia Book* since 1991 and has been a student in several UBIS courses.

2. Course Title: Living a Religious Philosophy

Course Level: Intermediate-Advanced Readers

Course Description: Wisdom is essential to become and to be a good thinker in order to use our mind properly to develop our soul in our inner life. Higher thinking is essential to living religiously and to living our lives in relation to God and to his divine presence within each of us. This course explores the great challenge of integrating philosophy and religion in our life. In this way we can truly experience God and attain the higher realms of unexplored ideas and undiscovered ideals by transforming our basic human urges and desires into higher spiritual longings.

Papers: 161, 196, and selected sections from 160, 39, 48, 100, 101, 102, and 103.

Teacher-Facilitator: Guy Perron
Guy has been studying the teachings of *The Urantia Book* since 2000 and has been focusing on putting in practice these incomparable teachings through service to our brothers and sisters.

3. Course Title: Time and Space

Course Level: All Readers

Course Description: This course discusses the following: 1) two different types of space, 2) space respiration, 3) curved space paths, 4) Paradise gravity, 5) the four absolute-gravity circuits, 5) motion in space, 6) some limitations of time-space creatures, 7) some concepts involved in transcending time and space, 8) how the time-space viewpoint differs from the eternity viewpoint, and 9) why Jesus was never in a hurry.

Papers: 11, 12, 118, 106, and 130 (section 7).

Teacher-Facilitator: Stacey Jackson
Stacey completed a Bachelor of Science in space studies in 2013 and a Masters of Ministry in Christian counseling in 1999. She is married, lives in Tennessee, and has been reading *The Urantia Book* since 1998.

4. Course Title: The Evolution and Administration of the Local Universe

Course Level: All Readers

Course Description: Evolution and administration are constantly working together and growing the local universes. These essential, dynamic forces are active at the spiritual, mindal, and material levels. We shall explore the divine purpose of these forces as well as the creative plan that began at the dawn of our local universe-the creative plan of our Creator Son in liaison with the local universe Mother Spirit and several orders of divine Sons. Even our own destiny includes some form of administration in the universe.

Things to Know*

*All dates and times are subject to change. Please check our website for the latest: [Registration Information](#)

Click Here
for more information
about UBIS.

Papers: 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36.

Teacher-Facilitator: Bruce Johnson
Bruce was introduced to *The Urantia Book* at age 21 in Colorado, and it quickly became a personal revelation to him. After years as a solitary reader, Bruce is now active in a wonderful study group and enjoys involvement with UBIS. He is a retired psychiatric registered nurse and lives in Ithaca, New York.

5. Course Title: Personality: A Unique Gift from God

Course Level: Advanced

Course Description: This course is an in-depth study of what personality is by defining its attributes, how it functions, where it originates, and its destiny. It is a fascinating probe into the realities of eternal individuality. Participation requires a devotion and perseverance towards newly revealed concepts. A good knowledge of *The Urantia Book* is helpful.

Papers: 1, 56, 112, and sections from the Foreword and Papers 12 and 16.

Teacher-Facilitator: Ray Gardini
Formerly a small business entrepreneur, Ray is retired and lives in Akron, Ohio. He attended Borromeo Seminary, graduated from John Carroll University, and studied at the L'Universite de Montpellier. Ray is a Vietnam veteran and has been a reader of *The Urantia Book* since 1986.

UBIS Needs TEACHERS!

UBIS needs experienced *readers* to serve as Teacher-Facilitators (T-Fs).

Enrich your life and the lives of fellow truth seekers worldwide by facilitating a broader and deeper understanding of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. What you learn as a teacher will be well worth the effort. Treat yourself!

Those interested must first complete two or more courses as a student, read *The Urantia Book* in its entirety, and be recommended by their T-Fs. The final and most advanced requirement is to successfully complete the Teacher Training Program (TTP), a four to five week intensive training course, offered annually, covering, the Jesusonian teaching approach, course development, skillful questioning techniques and classroom management.

For more information, please call or write: 773.525.3319

joanne@urantia.org

If you cannot teach at this time but would like to help in some other way...

UBIS needs loyal readers to serve in many other capacities. Please let us know how you might be willing to help.



Using the UBIS Site

URL of the UBIS Moodle website:
ubis.urantia.org

To register for a course on the UBIS homepage for the first time, click "Create new account." Save your user name and password for current and future trimesters. When Registration opens, you may log in to request enrollment in the course of your choice. Please contact us about any questions at the following email address: joanne@urantia.org

Moodle is an online, multilingual e-learning platform developed under an open-source license. More than 80,000 universities around the world are using it daily. Our UBIS team wishes you a pleasant and fruitful experience!

UBIS Board of Directors

Georges Michelson-Dupont, Director
Dorothy Elder (Director Emeritus)

Polly Friedman
Pam Maunakea
Olga López
Betty Zehr
Ralph Zehr
Judy Cosky
Susan Flacks

Staff:

Marta Elders
Joanne Strobel
David Elders
Ginger Heller
Dennis Sword
Guy Perron

What Students Write...

"The organization of this school program has been well thought out. Also, the teachers are well versed in their subject matter."