

## THE NEW MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

The Forum was the group that met and studied the Urantia Papers before their publication. Not only did the members of this group receive and react to the revelatory material, they were intimately connected with its inception. They had much to do with giving shape to the Urantia Papers, because these papers and individual portions of papers came in response to the questions and discussion of Forum members. The end result you know as The Urantia Book, a work intended to be seen and studied by millions in the coming centuries.

Some of the dialogue with the superhumans was not intended for publication and formal presentation to the world. There were probably many different reasons. Much of it seems to have been scaffolding. Some written material from the superhuman revelators had to do with directions for initial publication of The Urantia Book and the formation of organizations. In its time, this material was very meaningful, but once its purpose is served, its usefulness is gone. Some material satisfied curiosity but was intended for a relatively few people as it was quite informal or personal in nature. Some material was sensitive, classified as it were.

Most of this writing is now gone. Most was directed to be destroyed by the superhumans. Some fragments still exist. And memories of others persist.

The writing which is the subject of this paper existed at least as late as the 1970's and therefore I trust it was not extra-sensitive in nature or it would have been destroyed earlier. I would consider it to be in the realm of writing limited in the extent of interest and somewhat timebound as well. Therefore, while it does not belong in The Urantia Book, it is likely to be of some interest to many current day students of the book.

I recall hearing this paper read and it was to my memory written by Midwayers. It was perhaps 2000-3000 words in length and it obviously

had appeared in response to a question by Forumites. And the paper answered a question of approximately this meaning and wording:

“Now we know that Jesus was born on August 21<sup>st</sup> and not December 25<sup>th</sup>, what should we do about celebrating Christmas.”

The answer imprinted strongly in my mind. However, I do not have a photographic memory and regret that the following paraphrase is not hardly so eloquent as what I heard. But at least I recall the essence of the answer and it is as follows:

It is true that you know December 25<sup>th</sup> not to have been the birthday of your Creator Son. You will no doubt develop many new traditions around a celebration on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Even so, you have evolved many worthy customs, traditions and meanings associated with the celebration of Christmas. You should act in a slow and careful manner in altering these practices. Do not dispose of them in a precipitous manner. That would serve to take something out of your lives that contains much truth, beauty and goodness. Rather than eliminate this holiday celebration and all that is associated therewith, we would like to see you transmute Christmas into something new, to elevate it to new and higher meanings and values.

We would propose that you let the day stand as a celebration not only of the gift of Jesus, his life and teachings, but also as a time to honor and remember the lives and teachings of all the many religious leaders and teachers of truth down through the ages on Urantia. You have no current holy day which honors them. Christmas, which already combines traditions deriving from Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity as well as various primitive cults would be well-suited to serving as a reminder of the gift of truth from the many mortal and immortal sources down through the ages. And because you honor all these teachers of truth from all faith, Christmas also serves as a day of celebration of the Brotherhood of man. Already

your Christmas traditions carry many themes relating to brotherhood, “Peace on earth and good will among men”. If you form the practice of honoring the religious leaders of all faith, it would be a powerful unifying force and you would attract many others to follow your lead. In this way, you can take a day which you may initially have thought to have lost some meaning for you and give it new meaning, even more meaning than it had before.

The Many mortal and superhuman teachers of truth mentioned in the Urantia Book include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Onagar;
2. Mansant;
3. Fantad
4. Porshunta
5. Orlandof
6. Singlangton
7. Onamonalonton
8. Orvonon
9. The Caligastia One Hundred and their one hundred human assistants – I include all of them because all served faithfully for 300,000 years and it would appear that those who joined the rebellion were sincere in following their leader;
10. Van;
11. Amadon;
12. The Vanites;
13. The Amadonites;
14. The Nodites;
15. Adam and Eve;
16. The Adamites;
17. The Sethites / Amosad;
18. Enoch;

19. The Andites;
20. Machiventa Melchizedek and his missionaries;
21. Amenemope;
22. Ikhnaton;
23. Abraham;
24. Isaac;
25. Moses;
26. Joshua;
27. Elihu;
28. Samuel;
29. Elisha;
30. Amis;
31. Hosea;
32. Firth Isaiah;
33. Jeremiah;
34. Second Isaiah;
35. Ezekial;
36. Ezra;
37. Daniel;
38. Haggai;
39. Malachi;
40. Gautama Siddhartha;
41. Confucius;
42. Lao Tse;
43. Mo Ti;
44. Zoroaster;
45. Jainist teachers;
46. Pindar;
47. Xenophanes;
48. Anaxagoras;
49. Socrates;
50. Plato;

51. Aristotle;
52. John the Baptist;
53. Jesus of Nazareth;
54. The twelve apostles;
55. Abner and the apostle John;
56. The women's corps;
57. The seventy evangelists;
58. Rodan of Alexandria;
59. Stephen;
60. Pail of Tarsus;
61. Philo of Alexandria;
62. Barnabas;
63. James, brother of Jesus;
64. Anthanasius;
65. Pantaenus;
66. Clement;
67. Mohammed;
68. Martin Luther;
69. Guru Nanak;
70. The many unknown or now barely known teachers of truth of all ages.



William S. Sadler, jr., a member of the Contact Commission, made comments related to this theme at a session that was taped at Berkeley Elliott's home in Oklahoma City in 1962. The text of his statement is as follows:

"When I first learned August 21<sup>st</sup>, not December 25<sup>th</sup>, was Jesus' birthday, was Christmas, I felt a void, like something had been taken away. I analyzed the origin of Christmas, did my homework and put together as best as I could: What is Christmas?"

December 25<sup>th</sup> was a high and holy day in the Roman Empire before Jesus was born. December 25<sup>th</sup> was a holy day in Mithraism, which is an offshoot of Zoroastrianism, a masculine religion for men only, very popular with the Roman Legions.

Christmas also incorporates something of the Roman blowout at the end of the year, the so-called Saturnalia, when everybody had a reversal of roles-bosses waited on the employees and masters waited on the slaves. It was a time of lavishness.

Christmas incorporated the Teutonic legend of the hero who needs help in his mission, perhaps the slaying of a dragon, the liberation of a princess, the going on a crusade, and something impels him to go out in the forest and there under this lofty fir tree lays the magical gift, the sword which he needs to accomplish his mission.

These traditions com together in our Christmas and I summed this little essay up by saying: Christmas, December 25<sup>th</sup>, is no longer Jesus' birthday, but Christmas symbolizes to me the upreach of evolutionary religion seeking for the downreach of revelatory religion that man has made and is looking for help to improve. Christmas is still a holy day to me, but it is not Jesus' birthday. It stands for all of man's strivings, his superstitions, but also for his hunger for God. Christmas is man asking questions; august 21<sup>st</sup> is the answer!



Attaching the new meaning to Christmas provides an explosion of possibilities for new traditions that can be both fun and meaningful. I have no doubt that a great many new practices can evolve which will return more

of religious meaning to Christmas and moderate the material aspects of this holiday.

It was due to the message regarding Christmas that several celebrations were held by First Urantia Society in Chicago in the 1980's attempting to incorporate these ideas. I know that this same concept was also employed in a few Wisconsin study groups. A number of different services have been tried as well as decorations relating to the idea. One of the Urantia Papers that seems well-suited to being used in conjunction with the new meaning of Christmas is Paper 92. However, it is not my intent to discuss or explore specific practices. I am simply interested in passing along the concept that Christmas could be a time to celebrate the religions of the world, the races of man, and the religious teachers who contributed to our planetary heritage.