

Who Am I?

by: David C. Graves

Have you ever found yourself just wondering?

While I was serving in the latter stages of my naval career, my family was posted to Halifax in the Canadian Maritimes. We moved into a lovely bungalow on Albany Drive in the rural neighborhood of Enfield, Nova Scotia. There we very quickly became part of a rather vibrant community, making friendships that last to this day. Through that community we were introduced to 'the bucket'. I guess I should tell you something about 'the bucket'.

The bucket is a five gallon paint can that is set up on week-end evenings in a neighbourhood driveway. The evening's host lays a fire in the bucket and that bonfire lights up the evening sky calling the neighborhood to gather together in simple enjoyment each other's company. Marshmallows and hot-dogs are roasted and a guitar or two usually appears; voices in chorus can be heard singing folksy sort of songs. I can almost **hear**¹ one now ...

Out on the Mira on soft summer nights,
Bonfires blaze to the children's delight.
They dance round the flames singing songs with their friends,
And I wish I was with them again.

Can you imagine a piece of the universe,
More fit for princes and kings?
I'll give you ten of your cities ...
For Marion Bridge and the pleasure it brings

On one such evening, I found myself gazing up into the starry sky asking this question, "I wonder how many people up there are sitting around a bucket, looking up into the heavens and asking, 'I wonder how many people up there are sitting around a bucket looking up into the heavens and asking ...?'"

This sense of wonder is something many of us have shared from time to time while, with curious eyes, we scan the twinkling stars that fill the night skies and ponder upon such imponderables as: who am I? am I alone in the universe? why am I here? where am I going? I have it on good authority that Deepak Chopra's grand-daughter once said, "We have eyes so that the stars can see themselves."

Before continuing, let me tell you how I came to be here. It happened this way. During the Second World War my dad-to-be was stationed at Sydney Air Force Station on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. When it came time for him to be posted, two posting instructions arrived. In those days these instructions did not select personnel by name.

¹ You can 'hear' it too at ... http://members.tripod.com/sk_am2/AnneMurray_SongForTheMira.wav .

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Instead, the next airman in line was posted. In my father's case, he was either first or second on the list when the postings arrived. To settle who would be posted where, the top two airmen tossed a coin. So, on the flip of a coin, my dad-to-be came to be posted to Kamloops in British Columbia where he met and courted my mom-to-be. So, I guess you could say, "I'm here because of the flip of a coin."

I make these remarks at the outset of this essay to note that I have come to believe my being here did not occur 'par hasard'—by the chance outcome of a coin toss. I hold it to be true that there is a reason for my being!

Those who know me know that, for as long as I can remember, I've been on a quest to discover just what that reason is. It's perhaps a natural consequence of this quest that *The Urantia Book* came into my hands.

Without intending to be critical of any Californians in my reading audience, I should mention that, after quickly scanning the blue book's Table of Contents, my first response to this tome was to remark out loud that it must be the product of some fringe cult-group whose brains had been addled by over-exposure to the sun.

Now that I have read it, when people ask me what my feelings concerning this revelation are, I reply. "I could care less whether it is or is not what it says it is! Its importance lies in the fact that it gives me a language which empowers me (for the first time) to fully express the ideas/concepts/notions—'thoughts'—that somehow impinge themselves upon 'my' consciousness."

I compare the Fifth Epochal Revelation to Erwin Kreysig's *Advanced Engineering Mathematics* (ISBN: 0471333751). Kreysig's text is every engineer's (of my generation at least) 'bible' vis à vis the mathematics necessary to engineering. As an engineer, his text is my primary resource whenever I need to refresh my understanding of a mathematical concept.

In keeping with this analogy, *The Urantia Book* is another 'text book' in my personal library. It provides me (provides to me) the reference material necessary to the purposeful pursuit of my ascension career.

Of particular import for me is the Urantian use of the word *personality*. You might be asking, "Why?" I would reply to your question by saying, "Because this particular application of the 'word' gave expression to a 'thought' that had heretofore been inexpressible to the point of becoming inaccessible—even though I sensed I fully 'groked'² the notion.' Before the 'word' I could only express the notion metaphorically; by analogy with a hologram (in particular to a discrete piece of a shattered holographic plate).

² Go to ... <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grok> ... for a definition of this concept.

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Let me explain.

While studying optics as an undergraduate student in engineering I took part in a laboratory experiment that examined ‘holographic images’—holograms—captured on glass plates (the glass plate being the equivalent of a ‘negative’ in the context of pre-digital photography). To help you better understand exactly what a hologram is, think back to Star Wars (if you can) and the scene with R2D2 where Luke views a holographic, three-dimensional projection of Princess Leah. That true-to-life, albeit miniature, image of Princess Leah was standing in free space and could be heard to say, “Help me Obi-Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope.”

Princess Leah was a ‘hologram’ in that scene. The projected light-beam (also visible in the scene) had passed through a ‘holographic’ glass plate which provided the ‘information’ necessary to construct the image of Princess Leah in free-space.

At the conclusion of the experiment my lab instructor tasked me to return the glass plate to storage and, while doing so, I accidentally dropped it. It shattered into what seemed like hundreds of pieces. I turned to look at my instructor with a sense of trepidation. You see, the study of holography was in its infancy at the time and holographic plates were very expensive to produce. Surprisingly, the accident became an opportunity for further study.

Consider that equivalent ‘negative’ for a moment. If you were to tear that ‘negative’ into pieces and then use one such piece to develop a picture, what would you see? The resulting picture would be a partial reconstruction of the original based on the ‘piece’ of information contained within the portion of the negative used. Right? Right!

Guess what happened when a single shard of that broken holographic plate was used to generate a hologram. Have you guessed?

The image was reproduced in its entirety!

The size of the shard seemed not to matter. Each and every shard could reproduce the whole! Each shard, no matter how small, ³ carried all the ‘information’ necessary to ‘reproduce’ the whole.

Before I explain how this analogy empowered me to express the ‘wordless thought’ I spoke of above, let me quote from the essay, “Personality and Man”, which George Park presented at Villa Nova University during IC05:

The Urantia Book reveals a spiritual concept of personality which is new to mankind. We are aware of personality, but man has never conceived of personality as a reality in and of itself. We see the differences between form, substance, and essence, but man has failed to recognize the independent reality of personal presence.

³ Actually, there is a point at which a holographic shard becomes too small to reproduce the hologram. For the purpose of this analogy, I conveniently ignore that.

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It may also be useful to consider two additional quotes taken from *The Urantia Book* this time:

Personality. The personality of mortal man is neither body, mind, nor spirit; neither is it the soul. [0:5.11]

Personality, in the supreme sense, is the revelation of God to the universe of universes. [1:5.13]

The Urantia Book empowered me to use the word-symbol ‘personality’ for what had heretofore been ‘wordless thought’. Until I had that word-symbol, my only means for both accessing and addressing that ‘thought’ was by means of a metaphor—the analogy of the holographic shard. The shard metaphorically represented what I perceived to be an ‘instance of God’ through the ‘agency’⁴ of which God became ‘knowable’ to me. Our revelation ‘told’ me that ‘personality’ of the finite mortal type, bestowed by the First Person of Deity,⁵ reveals God to his universe (just as my holographic metaphor had already done for me).

That one word-symbol provides for me the true measure of the value of our Fifth Epochal Revelation. What a wonder it was! I now had a ‘word’ for a ‘thought’ the ‘presence’ of which in ‘my’ ‘mind’ had previously been virtually inexpressible. That word transformed a notional concept from the ephemeral to the well established; from the ethereal to the very tangible. It truly was a personal revelation!

You will undoubtedly have noticed my increasing use of quotation marks to wrap certain of the words I use. You may even have remarked to yourself that I have taken this use to an extreme. Or, hopefully, you have recognized that I am using this convention to single-out certain words that, perforce, must not simply be read over (or read through). When encountered, these words require that you pause to consider who or what they speak of. To reflect upon the meaning that lies behind them.

Recall that our revelators began their narrative by pointing to the ‘paucity of the English language’ and the resulting difficulty they had in conveying their revelation to us, the readers of their narrative. It seems to me that we must be ever mindful of this observation and recognize that there is often ‘more’ to the words we read than may be evident at first glance. Our challenge is to discover the meaning behind the words; the meanings the words allow us to access. We need also to keep ever in mind an additional constraint that underlies this same narrative.

The revelators forthrightly alert us to the conditions placed upon their mandate. They explain that, as they present their revelation, they must always give preference to the highest existing human concepts (ideas/notions/thoughts). They also tell us that they can only

⁴ I encourage you to keep this concept of ‘agency’ in mind as you continue reading.

⁵ I specify ‘by the Father’ here because I am referring to what I uniquely identify as *divine-personality*, which I believe is distinct from the *human-personality* ‘acquirement’ derived from the Conjoint Actor (see note 14).

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resort to pure revelation when the concept for presentation has no adequate previous expression by the human mind (for example, *morontia* and *mota* are pure revelation whereas the *Trinity* and *virgin birth* are not). Take note that their mandate deems ‘adequate expression’ to be sufficient to their purpose. Hence, any existing concept, as expressed by a human mind, need not be precisely correct; it need only be more or less adequate; more or less good enough.⁶

At this point another equally pertinent observation needs to be made.

The revelators are supernal- not human-beings. So, when the text reads, “We can (or cannot) ..., do (or do not) ...” or the like, *it does not necessarily follow* that we humans are so constrained. True, it well may be that we are. But it can equally be the case that *we may be uniquely qualified* to do what supernals cannot!⁷

For example, when a Divine Counselor says ...

Personality is one of the unsolved mysteries of the universes. We are able to form adequate concepts of the factors entering into the make-up of various orders and levels of personality, but we do not fully comprehend the real nature of the personality itself. We clearly perceive the numerous factors which, when put together, constitute the vehicle for *human* <my emphasis> personality, but we do not fully comprehend the nature and significance of such a finite personality. [5:6.2]

... we (humans) may be uniquely qualified to comprehend what they do not.

It’s important to notice that the Divine Counselor took pains to specifically identify the type of personality that was beyond comprehension as ‘human’. Given that ‘we’ are ‘personalities of the finite mortal type’ and Divine Counselors are not, ‘we’ may be uniquely qualified to do what a Divine Counselor cannot! The exhortation, “Know thyself!”⁸ may well be the single most important piece of advice to come down to us by way of human expression.

At this point, should you be inclined to enforce the so-called *Law of Observation*, which states that the observer cannot be the subject of observation, consider this remark found in George Park’s IC05 essay:

... there is more to personal experience than the law of observation. In the paper on the Seven Master Spirits, a Universal Censor says, “Creature personality is distinguished by two self-manifesting and characteristic phenomena of mortal reactive behavior: self-consciousness and associated relative freewill”. [16:8.5] Self-consciousness transcends the law of observation; the self-conscious observer is *reflectively* aware of the thing observed.

⁶ I’d hasten to ‘guess’ the adequacy of the existing expressions of human origin were more often the latter (less adequate) than the former (more adequate)!

⁷ Again, I would hasten to ‘guess’ that our being uniquely qualified truly is the case!

⁸ This exhortation is inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple to Apollo in Delphi and is attributed by many to Phemonoe, the daughter of Apollo and the first Delphic Oracle.

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So, where are we?

I have tried to explain that *The Urantia Book* provides me with a language. That language gives tangible (workable) expression to the ‘discoveries’ I had made in my pre-blue-book spiritual journey. These discoveries are very much the ‘baggage’ I bring to this discussion.⁹ And finally, I think these bags are well suited to continuing my quest with the blue book as my guide.

Before sharing why I believe this baggage to be well suited to my post-revelation ascension career I wish to make two things clear. First, I claim not that I understand, but that I want to understand; and second, I hope you will be free with your criticism, whether it be constructive or destructive, so long as it is from the heart.

How best to start? Perhaps like this. Why the universe of universes? I believe it goes something like this ...

Do you remember the observation attributed to Deepak Chopra’s grand-daughter that was mentioned very early in this essay? She very casually stated (as if it was the most obvious thing in the world), “We have eyes so that the stars can see themselves!” Take some time to reflect upon just exactly what she meant by this simple and insightful assertion. Her perspicacity is remarkable!

Let me paraphrase. The stars come to know themselves **because we see them**.

Could the answer to the question, “Why the universe of universes?” be that simple! Could the purpose of creation be to allow the **I AM** to see that **HE IS**”?

Consider the following:

As a time-space creature would view the origin and differentiation of Reality, the eternal and infinite I AM **achieved Deity liberation from the fetters of unqualified infinity** <my emphasis> through the exercise of inherent and eternal free will ... [0:3.14]

A strange thing occurred when, in the presence of Paradise, the Universal Father and the Eternal Son unite to personalize themselves. Nothing in this eternity situation foreshadows that the Conjoint Actor would personalize as an unlimited spirituality co-ordinated with absolute mind and endowed with unique prerogatives of energy manipulation. His coming into being completes the Father's liberation from the bonds of centralized perfection and from ***the fetters of personality absolutism*** <my emphasis> ... [9:0.10]

The achievement of “Deity liberation ...” suggests a prior confinement; “liberation from ... fetters of personality absolutism” speaks to breaking free from bondage. Such language strikes me as contra-intuitive to say the very least. It describes the **I AM** as confined by (confined in) infinity and eternity; it speaks of the Father being in bondage because of

⁹ For any baggage clerks among us I openly declare that I packed the bags I carry. They have not been out of my sight or care.

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perfection! The revelators continue with this strange language when they note that the absolute perfection of the infinite God causes him to “suffer the awful limitations of unqualified finality of perfectness.” They go on to say this would continue to be the case were it not for the fact that:

... the Universal Father *directly participates in the personality struggle* <my emphasis> of every imperfect soul in the wide universe who seeks, by divine aid, to ascend to the spiritually perfect worlds on high. This progressive experience of every spirit being and every mortal creature throughout the universe of universes is a part of the Father's ever-expanding Deity-consciousness of the never-ending divine circle of ceaseless self-realization. [1:5.15]

What does this mean?

Hopefully, I don't appear too presumptuous when, once again, I offer to paraphrase.

The **I AM** chooses to make the Qualified distinct from the Unqualified (Absolutes). The expression of the Trinity relationship on Paradise is the immediate consequence of this inherent and eternal free will act. The concomitant consequence of Trinity and Paradise is the universe of universes. The universe of universes is the ‘arena of action’ wherein spirit beings and mortal creatures ‘act’. The outcome of ‘action’ is experience. When experience is both replete and complete, God the Supreme eventuates. God the Supreme is experientially self-aware. And so it is that the experiential divine circle finds the closure that contributes to God ‘knowing himself’.

How does this come about?

Through a free will act of volition, the **I AM** chooses to step out of the state of eternal and infinite unity, wherein the potential for relationship does not exist. As Deity, which personalizes as God, the **I AM** steps into a differentiated, temporal, and finite domain characterized by relationships. Experience reintegrates godhead into something more than before. Such is the ordained outcome this free will choice the **I AM** makes (consider Blake's notion of moving from innocence to higher innocence through experience).

In the simplest of terms: outside of creation the **I AM** cannot see that **HE IS**; creation changes that.¹⁰

Recalling that God the Supreme is the ‘outcome of action’, it would appear that creation, the arena of action, makes it possible for the **I AM** to see that **HE IS**. The question we ask ourselves must now be, “Who or what is the ‘agent of action?’”¹¹

¹⁰ Stepping ‘out-of-it’ for a moment, it's worth mentioning that these ‘simplest of terms’ were the result of several iterations. From the very first iteration, every time I wrote this sentence, something—to say someone would be too ‘personal’ (hint, hint)—compelled me to re-write it until, in this final form, I had a ‘that's it’ moment! ‘That's it’ moments, for me, are little epiphanies; those insights—auto-revelations if you will—that seem too positively ‘ring’ with the ‘Spirit of Truth’.

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I believe one of the quotes above has already answered that question. An agent of action is a ‘spiritual being’ or ‘mortal creature’ of ‘progressive experience’ who contributes to expanding the consciousness of Deity through the divine circle of self-realization.

But just what, exactly, constitutes a ‘progressive experience’?

I think that answer must be a function of choices made using free-will. I feel comfortable with this answer because the revelators tell us the following:

- ✚ Experience gained through each and every free-will choice that is in accordance with the divine plan contributes to ‘growing the soul’.¹²
- ✚ The ‘soul’ contributes to the eventuation of God the Supreme.

Because it seems reasonable to conclude that ‘progressive experience’ requires free-will, I ask my question again, “Who or what is the ‘agent of action?’”

The agent of action must, at a minimum, possess free-will. As a consequence of this requirement it seems to logically follow that, regardless of type, an agent of action must be a ‘person’ (where being a benefactor of ‘personality bestowal’ from God the Father—the First Person of Deity—denotes ‘person-hood’).

Let me summarize once again. An arena of action is necessary for the **I AM** to ‘see’ that **HE IS**. ‘Agents of action’ (actors) in that arena must be ‘persons’. It is only through the Father’s bestowal of ‘(divine-)personality’ that ‘spiritual beings’ and ‘self-conscious’ ‘mortal creatures’ are ‘persons’.

Oh, and one other thing ...

God is neither self-centered nor self-contained; he never ceases to bestow himself upon all self-conscious creatures of the vast universe of universes. [2:2.5]

Is this last observation as full of portent for you as it is for me?

Why so portentous? Think about it. God, the *sine qua non* of personality, unceasingly bestows himself (his ‘self-ness’) upon ‘self-conscious creatures’.¹³ Does this bestowal of ‘self-ness’ not explicitly imply the gift of ‘personality’? Surely there is no reason to mistake

¹¹ We now come back to the concept of ‘agency’ that I alerted you to earlier. I believe investigating the question, “Who is doing it, who is the doer, who is ‘the agent of action?’” is crucial to understanding our ascension career. As this essay continues, and while keeping the concept of agency in mind, ask yourself this question, “Would the pre-personal fragment of God, that deliberately chose (not who deliberately chose—who is a ‘personal pronoun’) to indwell a personality of the finite mortal, want to fuse with a ‘rock?’” The question is not as trivial as it sounds. It is really asking, “Who is it (not what is it—a ‘rock’ is a ‘what’; not a ‘who’) that our TA wants to fuse with?”

¹² Recall that the first such choice satisfies the absolute criteria for the bestowal of a prepersonal fragment of God.

¹³ Notice that self-consciousness is the immediately antecedent condition for ‘personality bestowal’; bear in mind as well that the bestowal of the God fragment depends upon personality making a morally correct choice. The realization that these conditions constitute criteria for their related bestowals is no less noteworthy.

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His bestowing Himself for his follow-on bestowal—the prepersonal bestowal that is consequent upon ‘personality’s’ first moral choice. When the revelators say that He unceasingly bestows Himself upon all self-conscious creatures, they *are speaking of the bestowal of ‘(divine-)personality’*.

Next question: can we not say that in bestowing his ‘self-ness’ God is bestowing the very ‘stuff’ of God-ness? that personality is ‘god-stuff’? There is no irreverence in this question. When, in the moment, we are at a loss for words, we often use ‘stuff’ to describe what we would not otherwise be able to articulate. It is in that sense that I use it. Personality is ‘stuff’ I really cannot otherwise describe; it is the ‘stuff of God’.

Put it this way. The revelators tell us that ...

Without God and except for his great and central person, there would be no personality throughout all the vast universe of universes. *God is personality.* [1:5.7]

There is concomitant realization that adds to the portentousness of this observation for me. This understanding immediately brings forth another revelation. Suddenly I realize that, when I learn that I am made in (that we all are made in) the image of God, the image I see in the mirror is not what is being described. Rather, reference is being made to the god-stuff ‘imaged’ in (manifested by) my being! You and I are ‘persons’ in the Urantian sense of that word. You and I are persons and persons are god-stuff.

Take a deep breath, pause for a second, and consider Marianne Williamson’s observation:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.¹⁴

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. Now I'd hazard a guess that most blue book readers would immediately identify this glory within as our Thought Adjuster. I have a question. Are we certain about that identification? I'm not.

We find it easy to acknowledge the presence of our personal God fragment life coaches and we do so with gratitude and a sense of comfort. We understand that these indwelling spirits are fathers to our morontial souls. But does father to mean father of? I do not believe it can. Our Father bestows these life coaches only after the soul is born. In fact, we know that

¹⁴ Go to the website at ... http://skdesigns.com/internet/articles/quotes/williamson/our_deepest_fear/ ... for more information about Marianne Williamson’s work.

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the necessary condition for their bestowal is that very birth. We also know that our life coaches are constrained not to actually do anything. Our free will is sovereign.

Since manifesting the glory of God is an action, I believe we need give more consideration to our antecedent gift when we identify the glory within. It seems to me that personality, the stuff of God, is the actor manifesting the glory of God that is within us. Personality is the light that shines so that men can be led to glorify God. This is what I perceive to be the full portent of that revelatory Urantian word-symbol—the meaning accessed by the word.

Personality is a unique endowment of original nature whose existence is independent of, and antecedent to, the bestowal of the Thought Adjuster. Nevertheless, the presence of the Adjuster does augment the qualitative manifestation of personality. Thought Adjusters, they come forth from the Father, are identical in nature, but personality is diverse, original, and exclusive; and the manifestation of personality is further conditioned and qualified by the nature and qualities of the associated energies of a material, mindal, and spiritual nature which constitute the organismal vehicle for personality manifestation. [16:8.3]¹⁵

God, being eternal, universal, absolute, and infinite, does not grow in knowledge nor increase in wisdom. God does not acquire experience, as finite man might conjecture or comprehend, but he does, within the realms of his own eternal personality, enjoy those continuous expansions of self-realization which are in certain ways comparable to, and analogous with, the acquirement of new experience by the finite creatures of the evolutionary worlds. [1:5.14]

Could it be that ‘certain comparable and analogous ways’ refers to the actions of each divine personality bestowal as made manifest by every organismal vehicle? It seems to me that we are getting down to those imponderables I mentioned at the outset. Who am I? am I alone in the universe? why am I here? where am I going?

The answers seem to be taking shape this way. I am a person and I am not alone. I can help the **I AM** come to see that **HE IS** and, in so doing, I am working to reintegrate godhead and, through this ascension journey, I am taken home! To refer to an earlier quotation once again, “...the Universal Father directly participates in the personality struggle of every imperfect soul in the wide universe who seeks, by divine aid, to ascend to the spiritually perfect worlds on high.”

The I AM chooses to become WE ARE to see that HE IS.

¹⁵ Packed away in my baggage is a description for the “material, mindal, and spiritual nature of the organismal vehicle for personality”. Your interest will determine whether unpacking this description warrants its own essay. By way of a teaser, I will say this much. I see a difference between personality bestowals made by the First and Third Persons of Deity. The one is down-reaching ‘divine personality’; the other ‘up-reaching’ human personality. There is a tension between them—the tension between down-reaching and up-reaching hands. There is a choice to be made. We can choose to see a boundary (a closed door) that separates the one from the other. Or we can choose to see a junction (an open door) that joins them together. We can choose the way of the rebel. We can choose the way of the meek. We can exalt what is humanly imperfect; or embrace what is perfectly divine. Whatever our choice, the universe of universes is unfolding as it should.

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