

Universal Life Friends Letter

1983. #1, JANUARY

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OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

U.L. Friends, 753 44th Av.
San Francisco, CA 94121

The "Universal Life Friends" is a small and informal correspondence group within the Universal Life Church, Inc. We meet mostly by sharing our letters with each other in a publication called the "Universal Life Friends Letter", coming out every month or two.

We are essentially a non-sectarian group but we take as our motto an old Quaker saying: "There is that of God in every one". We understand this to be a fundamental truth, found not just in Christianity, but in one way or another in all religions. We also believe this to be a truth harmonizing perfectly with the fundamental belief of the Universal Life Church: "As an organization we have no traditional doctrine. We only believe in 'that which is right'. Each individual has the privilege and responsibility to determine 'what is right' as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others. We do not stand between you and your God". The UL Friends as a group have no further doctrine, although as individuals we may take it on from there, each in our own way. This puts a big emphasis on individualism, but we would equally emphasize that we be friends, and share more with each other.

For our "subscription fee" we ask that you write us a letter now and then, sharing your religious concerns and insights with us. We will then publish it in our "UL Friends Letter". We will try to include everything we receive. In general letters should be of a religious nature, but we understand this in a very broad sense, so a poem, a drawing, or a bit of humor might be quite appropriate. Some might write in the spirit of Quaker silent worship, and define that in a very traditional sense. That would be great, but we have no intention of being so restrictive. Most of us are far too inhibited about such already. Zen letters, Sufi letters, Hare Krishna letters- all are welcome. Furthermore let us not be too concerned about spelling and such. We don't want to be paralyzed into perfection. We also volunteer to type your letters for you, if that is your wish, but they should be clearly legible. We do have some space limitations, so letters should be of a reasonable length.

It is our hope and belief that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and be every bit as deep and meaningful as the spoken word. Hopefully too more than a few deep friendships might develop in this way.

To protect your privacy, we will not print your address unless you give us permission. If necessary you can write someone in care of us, and we will forward.

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November 23, 1982

U.L. Friends
753 44th. Ave.
San Francisco, California 94121

RE: U.L. Friends Letter #5

Dear Friends,

I am thankfull for the latest issue of U.L. Friends Letter, and I am especially gratefull to Ananda C. Dalenberg for his note; #4. page 12. This is a huge bit of help to me since I have no experience in journalism and find it difficult to know what to write in letters to such as the U.L. Friends Letter, for publication. Thanks, A.C.D.

Robert E. Paul #90760: I was born on March 27, 1935. I was brought up in the Methodist, Luthern and Catholic faiths, of course at different times and learned rather early that various faiths confused me as well as, I'm sure, many others, as to just what determines the true faith. I am a lot like the "Secular" aspect of Humanism. I seek knowledge and understanding with an open mind, questioning everything, in my quest to learn what is the truth. I believe I have, at least to my satisfaction, found that it isn't necessarily the sect or faith that one professes to follow but more important how the teachings of that faith is applied in our daily lives and associations with other human beings. All faiths, of which I know, teach and encourage understanding and respect for each other, as humans. This I can associate with and understand, therefore I believe that the teachings and inspirational aspect of all faiths are similar, only interpreted in various ways by various faiths so as to meet the intent and purpose of which ever faith it be. In Universal Life Church, Inc. I feel the freedom of manner of belief, worship and the idea of "the Right to determine what is right for each individual, so long as it does not infringe on the rights of others", to be the very essence of what all faiths try to instill and encourage.

I became a minister in the Universal Life Church, Inc. in 1980, due mostly to the Name Universal Life, for it says what I have come to accept and believe is the truth. Life is Universal, Salvation is Universal, Brotherhood, to be Brotherhood must be Universal, we are an integral part of the Universal Life of life.

I am presently incarcerated, for Manslaughter, serving 21 years in the Louisiana State Penitentiary. I have learned to have concern for my fellow man, since I see such gross lack of concern for any man, his rehabilitative interest or progress, or his rights of law and his dignity as a man. This infuriates and frustrates me, and it is the force of these things being denied and abused by those in charge of the prison and courts of this state that inspired me to found and make a success of Universal Life Church, Inc. Congregation here at the camp I am assigned to. As Pastor of the Congregation, I

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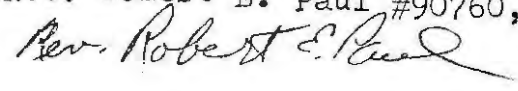
am striving to sustain the interest and desire to redeem some semblance of dignity and pride among the members of my congregation by taking the fight for recognition and acceptance of our congregation to the state supreme court. We as a congregation have acquired the support for our intentions from some well known and respected persons of the state.

We are fighting to have the legal right to organize and sponsor a drug abuse program for those who have had drug problems in thier lives. This is a program that is not available to prisoners here, yet it is often spoken of by state officials, that there is such a serious drug problem in the prisons as well as outside of them. We believe what we are trying to do is part of the purpose of our being in this world, in the situation, circumstances, and time which we are. It is the design of the Universal scope of things that we have been provided the knowledge of U.L.C. as well as having been inspired to serve our fellow man in a way we are able and, we believe, qualified.

We all have a purpose and reason for being born and educated, we all have a particular designated fate and objective in life, why not what I have accepted as a worthwhile reason for my being where I am? I am not attempting to show reason for accepting me or my place, here as being the Universal Intent. To the contrary I am the result of my previously chosen life and be that as it may I still feel there is a usefull and beneficial task I can perform despite my means of reaching this decision as to the purpose or use of what is left of life for me. To some this will undoubtedly appear or sound as some sort of scheme or con of another prisoner; I can't and won't attempt to impress anyone of my true intentions and sincerity, those are of no concern to me. I am my own life's product and resultant factor, but I feel I am granted a great gift and opportunity to attone for the misconceptions and understandings of life I held for so many years. Every man understands he must have some usefull and purposefull meaning for his life. It is recorded in the Christian Bible that some of the Apostles were imprisoned. Possibly this is why I am here, to learn for myself that there is reason and purpose for my life. If I am wrong, who is to be concerned, have I asked anything of anyone? NO! Not for myself. Rather I seek the opportunity to spread the love and benefit bestowed to me through the Universal Understanding of Broth-erhood.

We need and will truly appreciate any and all information on the best recommended methods of succeeding in counseling on drugs and the dangers of their abuse. We do have several drug abusers in our midst, but all we can offer is our personal experiences and still we aren't sure how this might be understood by those never having actually experienced drug use. We are average intelligence, not trained or professional counsellors. We realize we do need help in succeeding in our program. We will truly appreciate any and all ideas or advice that might be of help in this.

Rev. Robert E. Paul #90760, Pastor



A NEW YEAR'S DAY IN THE SPIRIT OF JUBEL

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Let us all celebrate the coming of the New Year with more song, poetry, prayer, myth, and merriment! Let there be Jubel Trumpets sounding joyous tidings everywhere!

The Jubel Trumpet, originally made from a ram's horn, might indeed be a symbol for the kind of spirit we are searching for during these grim and somber times. "Jubel" (rhymes with "bluebell") means "to Halloo!; to shout, sing, or celebrate with joy; Rejoice!". In a slightly different form as "Jubelate!", it begins the 66th and 100th Psalms, here meaning "Shout joyfully to God!". Now that's the kind of spirit we need.

While we are at it, let's dream a wild dream and aim to make New Year's Day a United Nations world holiday, to be celebrated as a day of universal peace and harmony between all nations, all religions, and all mankind. That might seem to bold a dream, and it would be so if it were not for the fact that January 1 is already close to being a world holiday, and in some lands it is celebrated in a spirit not far from Jubel.

Many of us of the modern world are searching for deeper roots, and we might well turn our attention to the meaning of New Year's Day. It was once a glorious and joyful celebration of the birth or rebirth of Time, and of the World itself. Why not return to such origins, and have everywhere more Odes to the New Year, Odes to the birth of the World, new resolutions, new hopes, prayer, meditation, myth, mummings, merriment, and much divine nonsense. Furthermore this could all surely be in a spirit of universal peace and harmony, so as to truly honor and adorn the birth of the New Year.

Such a holy-day would ideally be marked by some great celestial event among the stars and planets, and lo and behold, such is the case. "Perihelion Day" occurs on or about January 1. It is the day the earth, in the course of its orbit around the sun, is closest to the sun. Thus we have here a beautiful celestial symbol of the great cosmic cycles of birth and renewal.

Such a day would seem to call for a celestial display of fireworks of some sort, as has long been the custom in China and Japan. Even in the West, an errant fire-cracker or two still survives in modern civilization.

In China and Japan, and in many older civilizations, New Year's Day is not only the birthday of the World, but is also a universal birthday for everyone. Thus everyone is a year older on that day, a tradition that somehow lives on happily side by side with the more modern notion of individual birthdays.

We might well consider adopting such a custom ourselves. Think of what a "happy universal birthday party" we could have on the same day all over the world. Think too of what a profound blessing it would be for those of us who can't remember the birthdays of even our own immediate families, let alone others we admire and love. For those of us seeking an added depth in such festivities, it would surely be not hard to find, for we all share in the profundity, joy, suffering, and mystery of birth.

In any case, no matter what our customs and beliefs may be, the sheer wonder that we and this fragile planet exist at all should be sufficient cause for us once a year to celebrate this amazing fact with great jubelation.

To some extent such festivities might be thought of as interfering with some Christmas traditions. On the other hand it might add to and deepen the Christmas cycle. January 1 is already important as the Octave of Christmas, and as a day especially honoring the Virgin Mary. Appropriately enough, it is also in a sense a "universal birthday" honoring the lesser Catholic saints, who are not individually honored on some special day of their own. It would seem then that New Year's could easily harmonize with Christmas, even though in itself it belongs to no one particular religion.

As for more frivolous matters, it might be added that a Jubel Trumpet in its original form as a kind of ram's horn is getting hard to find these days. One might then have to settle for its modern day equivalent, the long straight-pipe plastic horn, still somewhat popular on the streets comes New Year's Eve. It is not a bad compromise, and actually has quite some potential. Others might prefer yodeling, another manifestation of the Jubel spirit. Indeed the word to "yodel" is etymologically akin to "jubel". In any case there surely is a plentitude of ways and reasons for us all to jubelate. Also, it might be well to remember that in the tradition of a universal birthday, animals too are included. One might then extend an invitation to the family dog, who would probably be more than delighted to join in the festivities.

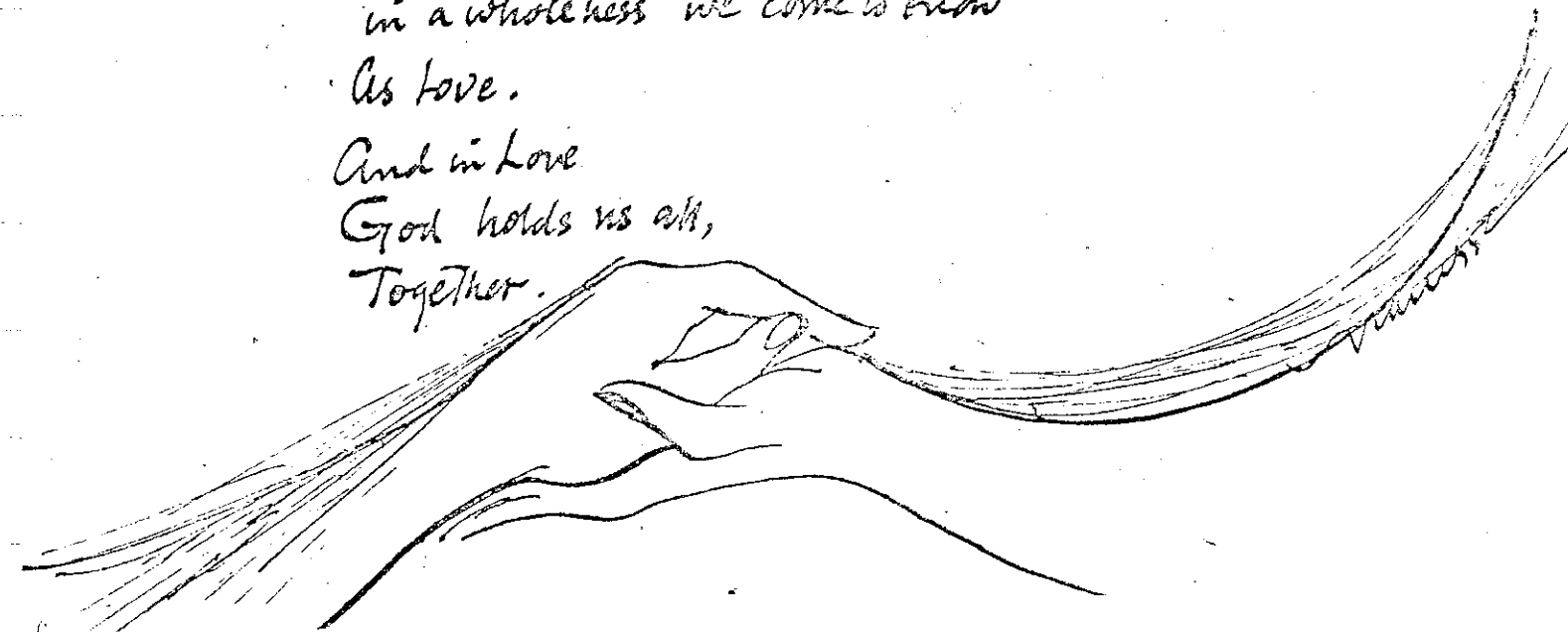
That is not to say that everyone needs to join some noisy New Year's party. Actually silent prayer and meditation might be equally appropriate, if not more so. For some the ideal might even be a long walk alone under the stars, in the spirit of Jubel.

Together we grow
 not separated, divided
 Alone, or in isolation.

We grow best
 when we come to know
 that we are one with every living soul
 every atom, every cell
 every living, moving thing,
 as well as so-called static form...
 All a part of us and we of them!

for we are born and grow
 in a wholeness we come to know
 as love.

And in Love
 God holds us all,
 Together.



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SCRIPTURE CAKE

Excellent for any festive occasion, weddings, receptions, cake sales, and also an excellent, healthy everyday dessert.

In a large bowl, cream ½ cup butter until light and fluffy.
Blend in ¾ cup Molasses.

In another bowl, stir 2 cups all purpose flour
with ¼ tsp baking soda,
dash of salt
½ tsp. ground Cinnamon, ¼ tsp Ground Cloves,
and dash of Ground Ginger.

Mix together 3 beaten eggs,
½ Cup Buttermilk, and
1/3 Cup Honey.

Combine egg mixture and dry ingredients
alternately with butter mixture.

Mix well, and add
1 Cup raisins
1 Cup Chopped dried figs
and ½ Cup chopped Almonds

Bake in a greased, floured 9x5x3" Loaf Pan for 40 minutes at 325° — Loosly cover with foil and bake 50 minutes longer. Let cool in pan 10 minutes. Remove from pan and cool on a rack.

Brush all sides with Orange Juice or Wine.

Wrap in foil and store in refrigerator for one or two days.

BIBLE REFERENCE

Judges 5:25
Jeremiah 6:20

I Kings 4:22
Amos 4:5
Leviticus 2:13

II Chronicles 9:9

Jeremiah 17:11
Judges 4:19
I Samuel 14:25

I Samuel 30:12
Numbers 17:8

Proverbs 31:6

Rev. E.A. Baker
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98221

Blessings to All:

Greetings to the Members of the ULF Letter:

I have just received the November 1982 issue of the letter. Of course, since this writing will appear in the next issue, it will be considered old news. But I am attempting to make the point, that time is very relative. The "unwritten law", of writing, is that words are chosen to bring precise meanings to thoughts. But in order to be creative, it is necessary to break this "unwritten law". As often it is said, there is little difference between a madman and a genius. For each of them breaks the law. So instead of writing about new news, I am going to write about old news, and the transcendental news:

I am very glad to see, each of us involved with questioning our perceptions about God, self, relationships to each other, and relationships to God. As for myself, I take great pleasure in the many religions that have developed. I think every religion reflects the true desire of human beings to develop a relationship with God. (Of course, this true desire, oftentimes degenerates, into a means of achieving selfish ends.) I believe that God (one of the many Names we call the Supreme Being) takes great pleasure, in the many religions, except when it degenerates.... If everyone agrees, say "Amen. Selah, So-Be-It, Om-Tat-Sat, Aum...." Each of us relates to separate experiences, and varying depths of religious awareness, which is in turn categorized, and called a name, that each has been taught. "Tat-Tvam-Asi". Om...

To Yellow Mouse, I am glad that you found dualism, and Thisand That, worthy of appreciation. Linguistics, is at its best, when one considers language an art. Whatever word is used for God, is irrelevant. By definition God is beyond our invention of words, thoughts, concepts. God can only be described with words, with various adjectives, nouns, pronouns, performing certain actions (verbs). Each of these words comes from an object, or process. Therefore, if one tries to define God with words, and tries to trace the roots of words, the best that could be obtained is confusion. This breaks #3 of the Ten Commandments: No graven images. When one tries to build a definition of God from words, that reflect physical or imaginary objects and processes, then one breaks the third, of the Ten Commandments. I am glad, that you came to the conclusion, that at best we could worship the "unknown God". But it seemed you argued yourself into a double negative, by defining God as "unknown" in the first place. (I would also add, at this moment, God is God, and Good is Good, to try and relate them, puts a nebulous meaning on both.) The Biblical parable of the Tower of Babel, presents the case perfectly by showing that this Tower, built of clay (objects) had something to do with the confusion of languages. To bring an end to your trouble with the word "God", by definition, to yourself, God is beyond definition. God is beyond, objects, senses, Creation. Relating this to the dualism of religion, at this time, your approach is atheistic, in that you are attempting to build from matter, a God to worship. I have simply countered your approach, not you. I offer only a wider eye, when I say, "Yes. There is dualism to all decisions."

To E.G., I am glad to see that you have come to learn (unlearn) your education is a tool. Education doesn't make a person mean, or not mean. It merely expresses that meanness. An education provides more words, and processes to the knower. It is therefore

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uses, that determines whether the quality is nice or mean. For instance, some may think of my words as cryptic and longwinded, while others may think my words are precise and exact. I was polite to Y.M., for that person wrote and tried to communicate with me. But because you were not written first, by me, would you hold this against me? You are as important to me as Y.M., and all the others. I would warn you, however, don't condemn other educated people, because you understand that intellectualism is a tool that can be used for selfish purposes. An education can also be used in very unselfish circumstances also. For instance it can be used to communicate: Ellen, do you think I'm nice?... You know me only through my writing... Do you know my Purpose?... I try to follow my own advice, and in everything see God. Don't tell anyone this miracle: Yes. All things can be purposed. Its in the nature of matter to be purposed. Language and education and the brain are all either direct or indirect manifestations of matter. Therefore, "Yes. All things can be purposed."

Dr. Bowen, your Poem of Understanding, has beautifully expressed the warmth of God beyond even the dim sun at December. And that one steadfast Reality: "Rest easy, knowing that God is here."

R.C. Richards, you are correct to say that pantheism is the broadest concept possible. But beyond concept is Reality. And there is the possibility that the Creation is merely a reflection of God, and that consciousness is the mirror, or even the conscience is the mirror. I agree with your Law of Action and Reaction, pertaining to the degeneration of Religion into dualism. Even Jesus said "A House divided cannot stand." Like you wrote, there isn't enough time to write, nor space to write about the total ramifications of It(God), and Its(God's) Creation), and I think you bit off a little too much, when you went ahead and tried anyway. I write this because you came across as being very negative on Christianity, and its followers. After all, a Pantheist, loving and serving the Creation, could easily degenerate also, and start loving gold, and money, as do other degenerating religions. What you propose is not new. New religions tend to degenerate into old religions. To condemn another religion, in order to establish another, has within it the seed of its own destruction, for this is the process of the world. A plant(religion) is born, lives, and dies, and its perpetuated by a seed, which we may say is the potential for life wrapped in a case. The only reason pantheism could replace Christianity is because the potential for life is already there. I don't think that there is any real need to change the names of religion again, because the future is not going to change the awareness of mankind. It, God, is the work we are to do. Constantly reflecting, meditating, and thinking on God. Jesus said the Kingdom of God is here. It is not in the future, or the past. God is not a mystery, and is manifested already. Therefore I say, "Tomorrow's is tomorrow's. Our's is now."

Tom Critchett, the name Purgatory, and Samsara, the result of sin, and karma, and their binding forces, is what you are writing about when you say the Dead and Spirits evolve. You seem to take pleasure in the persecution of this viewpoint of yours. Consider this, Western man's concept of the universe during the Middle Ages, declared it as perfect, and even the stars as spirits. The sky never changed, nor did heaven and hell. They were absolute. The Chinese observed the sky for changes, a changing universes. They also had ancestor worship(Dead). Western man is only beginning to understand the universe changes, don't you think it will be automatic that purgatory will enter the beliefs of religion.

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The broader question is, "How much of man's awareness is a part of self-fulfilling prophecy, and how much in Reality?" It has been theorized that in the Creation, matter and energy are neither created nor destroyed, only transmuted, and transformed. This would already put your proposal of fairness to all in existence. We perceive objects and energy moving, this is the maya, mirage. Our desires are what keep up an ego-trip, which prevents us from knowing everything is in perfect balance already. Each person must realize that the ego must be left behind. Therefore I say, "Leave yourself behind."

To Ananda C. Dalenberg, I take great pleasure in this letter. Your letter offers to everyone to, "Come and share."

To Larry Reyka. Evolution leads a course through life and death, and by its nature always changes. Boundries change, and laws change. God does not change. Humanism changes as human awarenesses change. To get to heaven, we need not change. Heaven is always the same, therefore we must always be the same, to enter "Heaven".

I think that about finishes what I have to say. After all the last sentences of each paragraphs, I wrote this time, were part of the November issue in which I wrote: "...

1. Yes. There is dualism to all decisions.
2. Yes. All things can be purposed.
3. Rest easy, knowing that God is here.
4. Tomorrow's is tomorrow's. Our's is now.
5. Leave yourself behind.
6. Come and share.
7. Heaven.

... "Time is relative. The future and the past are united in the present, and become transcendental.... That is what miracles are made of....

Tat Tvam Asi,

Robert C. Finch

Universal Life Friends Letter, News And Notes

1. This issue begins the second year of our existence. It will be sent out to about 30 subscribers, although this may include some who are inactive. We need to hear from you now and then, if you want to remain on the subscription list. We are also sending a copy to a few libraries. We welcome your suggestions as to whom we might send a complimentary copy. Our next issue will probably be out sometime in March.
2. Dr. Ross H.L. Bowen writes asking us to mention that his "My Proof Of God's Survival" is available to anyone for a donation to help defray costs. His address is 341 Trimble Road B3, Joppa, MD 21805.
3. A few of you have asked about the availability of back issues. Keeping an adequate supply of old issues on hand is both difficult and expensive. As an alternative however, the clerk is volunteering to copy and assemble the five issues of 1982 into one volume. Since this is both rather time-consuming and expensive, a donation of ten dollars per volume is requested. The current issue of the ULF Letter however will continue to be available at no charge.
4. A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU AND TO ALL !