

other Christian leaders from a serious evaluation of its message:

1. It comes from a source that is not known and trusted by religious and theological groups.
2. It is a large book (2,097 pages) and some sections can be difficult to read.
3. It claims to be new revelation and understandably causes suspicion, if not fear or hostility.

Hopefully, we have left those days of cultural naiveté when claims of authority are regarded as a criterion of truth. Revelatory authenticity is a secondary consideration. The primary challenge posed by The Urantia Book is pragmatic. Does it have something creative and constructive to contribute to our modern philosophic-religious outlook? Evaluated on the basis of spiritual insight, philosophical coherence, and reality-centeredness, it presents, in the judgment of thousands of people who have critically examined it, the finest world view of religion available to contemporary society.

The Urantia Book, like any other book on religion, should be read critically but with an open, spirit-guided mind. It is not, and should not be seen as, a challenge to the Canonical literature of the church. Canonical literature, including the Bible, is the result of divine initiative and guidance that has been tested by centuries of experience and wisdom in the church. The Urantia Book, like all other contemporary literature, can only serve as an adjunct to the scriptural sources of faith in the church. You will find that it supports an enlightened Biblical approach to religion. Most people have a greater appreciation of the Bible as a result of reading The Urantia Book. Although individuals may determine the per-

sonal value of the book in a relatively short time, its worth and place in the church can only be determined by generations, if not centuries, of experience.

An Integrated Universe

The Urantia Book presents an integrated, holistic view of the universe. It combines the best traditional concepts of God with the most meaningful present day concepts (Tillich, Teilhard de Chardin, Whitehead) into a uniquely coherent system.

A hierarchical, structured astronomical universe, teeming with millions of inhabited planets, is paralleled by a similar spiritual cosmology. The book presents a superior understanding of our planetary history, dynamics, and destiny. Evolution functions as the key physical and spiritual modus operandi of the universe. The mechanisms of the physical universe are integrated with the purposes of mind and spirit overcontrol. An excellent summary of the development of religion and the growth of civilization is given with conciseness and insight. The authors' penetrating analysis of religion, culture, and the family is of exceptional quality.

The last section of The Urantia Book contains an extended version of the life and teachings of Jesus. This inspiring presentation of the bestowal mission of Jesus to our world brings life and authenticity to the sketchy New Testament story. Its teachings are basically acceptable to all religions. They emphasize the religion of Jesus which is unifying rather than the religion about Jesus which tends to be divisive. The central challenge of contemporary human beings is to make a balanced effort to achieve

God-consciousness. Growth toward perfection (God) is seen as the fundamental motivation of life. This growth is evolutionary, culminating, and virtually endless.

A Resource Not an Imperative

Although the message of The Urantia Book is solidly rooted in the perennial philosophy and religious experience of the past, it does present an enlarged view of the universe and God. Religious institutions usually find expanded knowledge and insight difficult to assimilate. Light can blind as well as guide. Truth that is presented prematurely brings frustration and rejection. The Urantia Book, therefore, may be disturbing to some people even though it is supportive and positive toward all people and all human efforts in the search for truth and spiritual understanding.

The Urantia Book is among the most significant sources of spiritual guidance available to present-day society, but it is not an end in itself, nor is it a necessary means to spiritual enlightenment. Its potentials for individual and social growth, however, are so great it should be highly recommended to all who are interested in the creative possibilities of a spiritual renaissance in our society. Its message is balanced and profound. Its approach is open and benign. There are no threats or coercions to "believe." It seeks to work in and through the evolutionary process and within the social institutions of our world. The Urantia Book strives to stimulate the spiritual regeneration and evolutionary advancement of all humankind. It points out that the kingdom of God is an invisible spiritual fellowship that is destined to become a living organism transcending social institutions. The authors of the book

seek to encourage and strengthen all religious institutions toward the fulfillment of their unique potentials in ministering to the spiritual needs of humanity.

How Can The Urantia Book Contribute to Our Christian Heritage?

There are three basic reasons for ministers and Christian leaders to take the time to read The Urantia Book:

1. The book is being discovered by thousands of people at an increasing rate. You may find it helpful to having a working knowledge of the quality and scope of its message.
2. In the judgment of many ministers and Christian leaders, the book contains the greatest stimulus to spiritual growth in contemporary literature. You may wish to examine the basis for this opinion.
3. You may be a searcher for philosophical and religious truth. If so, you are aware of the limitations of our historic philosophic-religious resources. You will find The Urantia Book one of the most enlightening sources of spiritual truth you have ever read.

Hopefully, these reasons will motivate you to read this book. Through its pages you will discover new aspects of reality and deeper insights into living spiritual truth that will enhance your work and daily living. The Urantia Book has a wealth of resource information and insight to help solve problems in our complex society. It presents the highest principles of judicious thinking and healthful living. Its message emphasizes balance and maturity while teaching respect for established traditions, laws, and usages. The spiritual universe is so realistically and authentically portrayed, it

can be instrumental in lifting one's life to a new level of spiritual effectiveness.

by Meredith Sprunger

The Urantia Book is a wake-up call to our planet from the rest of the inhabited universe, telling us where we are, who we are, and why we are, as individuals and as a collective human family. It is also the story of why up to now we have been largely ignorant of our origins, history, and destiny, and of our place in the vast universe that our small world has always had a beloved place in, no matter how blind we've been to that. We have never been alone, as individuals nor as a world, and now The Urantia Book is given us to reveal our true home—that of our world in space and that of our individual beings in the heart of the eternal Creator. The spirit of God lives within each of us, to guide us through the universe after this life to his presence at the Source and Center of all things. Finally, the book is also a year by year, day by day, even minute by minute account of the life and teachings of Joshua ben Joseph, Jesus of Nazareth, told by eyewitnesses to the events of the noblest and most selfless life ever lived, a story not limited by human vision and understanding that clarifies and illuminates the Biblical account.

You can find The Urantia Book in libraries and bookstores, or you can order it from the Urantia Book Club. There is a network of Urantia Book study groups all over the world and visitors are always welcome. For study group information, or information about general reader services, international seminars and conferences, fellowship gatherings, or availability of study and inspirational materials, contact:

**For more information write:
Fellowship@UrantiaBook.org
Or Call: 1-877-288-3772**



The Urantia Book and Christianity

Rarely does one find a book on theology or religion which has the potential of changing the conceptual patterns of our culture. Over twenty years ago a small group of United Church of Christ ministers discovered a stimulating volume entitled The Urantia Book. Urantia Foundation published this book in 1955.

Since that time other clergymen and tens of thousands of laypersons have become interested in this unusual book. The overwhelming consensus is that it will receive universal recognition. This challenging book is a fascinating document for personal spiritual growth and intellectual development. It may become the most important source of information revitalizing the church and restructuring theology since the Reformation.

The growing number of ministers and religious leaders discovering the book are surprised that a publication of this spiritual quality and potential has remained virtually unknown for over twenty-five years. A partial answer is because the publishers have not promoted it. They believe that the low-key evolutionary process of person-to-person introductions is the wisest method of acquainting people with the book. In addition, there are three major factors which have discouraged clergymen and