

Why I Believe
The URANTIA Book

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Written by
Harry McMullan

Illustrated by
Larry Mullins

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IN 1967 I CAME ACROSS AN UNUSED COPY of *The URANTIA Book* on sale for 50 cents while browsing through a used-book store in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where I was attending college. Since the price was right, I bought the book and became fascinated by the story it told of the life of Jesus. While being aware of its possible fictitious nature, I received such spiritual comfort and inspiration from the story, I felt that even if *The URANTIA Book* account were not about the actual historical Jesus, the man it described must have been very much like him. We have no way to know, for example, whether Jesus really made a trip to Rome when

he was 28 years old, the Bible being silent concerning his years from 13 to 30, but *The URANTIA Book* description seemed like something he *might* have done. After reading the section on Jesus' life, I was sufficiently impressed to continue my study of the book, aware of the awesome possibility that the book might, in fact, be the revelation it claimed to be. Such an outrageous claim makes it unlikely that the book might be a mixture of truth and contrived fiction; either it is a divine revelation or a brilliant hoax in religious trappings. The possible danger of such a fabrication would be shaped by whatever motives actuated the hypothetical human author in his fictionalization of such a 2,097 page, million-word tome.

After reading about 1,000 pages of the book, I began wondering what the angle might be — specifically, whether anyone was making money off the book. The title page indicated that the publisher was in Chicago, so through directory assistance I got the telephone number, called and made an appointment to fly up for a visit.



A TRIP TO CHICAGO

I was initially disappointed, but later pleased, with the small-potatoes set-up of their headquarters. Clearly, money was not being lavished on facilities. The four older ladies whom I met gave no indication whatever of getting rich out of their work.

Contrary to my expectations, there were no mystical, occult, or "metaphysical" trappings to their operation; in fact, it was boringly commonplace. No one tried to convince me of anything, to solicit money or to interest me in joining anything. My inability to ascribe ulterior motives to those who worked in the organization was a point in favor of the legitimacy of the book they were distributing.

Often, the new reader's first question concerns the origin of *The URANTIA Book*, and how it came to us. Several passages in the book discuss origin but really tell very little, and raise more questions than they answer. Those who were in a position to know

the details of the book's origin are now deceased, but during their lives they declined to discuss specifics on the grounds that the world should judge the book for what it is, and not for what it might be, based on the phenomena surrounding its reception. The best assurance for a new reader on this point is the consistent experience that as *The URANTIA Book* is studied, the question of origin invariably becomes less and less important, to the point of irrelevance. *The URANTIA Book* must eventually be judged by what it says. Either the proof is in the pudding, or it is not.

HOAX OR REVELATION?

The basic problem is *The URANTIA Book* claims to be a divine revelation. Such a claim immediately challenges the reader to decide whether it is the most important book on earth, or just another hoax, with no middle ground. Of course, an assertion does not prove itself — a writing is not a revelation merely because it says that it is. This leads us into the age-old philosophical question of how we can decide whether something is true. When one views the diversity of human belief down through history, a person might be tempted to be skeptical of all conviction; the passing of the years having shown so many beliefs to have been erroneous to a greater or lesser degree. Religious belief, in particular, is a complex phenomenon.



MANY OF MANKIND'S STRONGEST BELIEFS HAVE BEEN DISPROVED

Doubtless others would supply different reasons, but the following factors influenced me in deciding that *The URANTIA Book* is what it says it is:

1. Correspondence to Reality: On thousands of points where I am able to compare statements in *The URANTIA Book* with what I know of the world, I find agreement. *The URANTIA Book* is notably specific in verifiable examples in its section on the history of our world, where it discusses the progression of geologic, biologic and social evolution as disclosed in the stone pages of geologic time and human history. It is specific to the point of saying, for example, that the source of the biblical account of the "Star of Bethlehem" was conjunctions of the planets Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces on May 29, September 29, and December 5 of the year 7 B.C. This assertion was made in only two sentences (on page 1352) as an aside. A British astronomer named David Hughes has now plotted the planetary circuits backwards from their present positions, and with only trivial differences has verified these conjunctions to have taken place. Even had the hypothetical human author of *The URANTIA Book* been capable of performing the calculations necessary to make such a statement in the pre-computer 1930's when the book was written, the ordeal on that point alone would

have been worthy of a book in its own right, as witnessed by Hughes' 250 page book, titled appropriately, *The Star of Bethlehem*, which he published in 1979. Were *The URANTIA Book* a hoax, its author at least would have given such a significant finding more prominence. If the human author had been unsure, he would presumably have left himself some slack to allow for error, rather than making such a specific statement, capable of disproof which might discredit the entire work, of which that statement is only an insignificant and unnecessary part.

Many historical statements in *The URANTIA Book* are not capable of proof or disproof, but the correctness of what I can verify gives me confidence in what I cannot verify. By analogy, if a man makes 1,000 statements to me of which 450 can be verified, and all of the verifiable statements are found to be true, I develop confidence in my source that his remaining statements, which I lack the means to investigate, are likewise true.



A UNIQUE VIEW OF HISTORY

2. Internal Consistency: In addition to agreeing with the objective world, *The URANTIA Book* agrees with itself. It never says that $A + B = C$, and later that $B \neq C - A$. Its consistency is a powerful evidence of its validity. The story of God's relation to man from the times of his sojourn on an evolutionary planet, through his long journey toward perfection, all fits together like a million-piece jigsaw puzzle. Its complexity is on the order of putting the parts of an airplane together so that it will fly, except more difficult because the parts of the product are intellectual and spiritual rather than metal and plastic.

If *The URANTIA Book* is a hoax, what intellectual giant wrote it? I cannot conceive of any one person with the breadth of knowledge, insight and writing skill, nor any group of scholars and theologians that could have submerged the individual opinions and writing styles of its members to have produced the internal consistency of *The URANTIA Book*. Obviously, the book was put into print somehow, so if



WHO COULD HAVE WRITTEN IT?

it is not what it says that it is, what is it? How do we account for it? Its description of our lives after mortal death and its predictions concerning the future of the earth may seem strange, but would not a description of even our present era seem inexpressibly strange to, say, a soldier, cobbler or cleric of medieval times? In our present ignorance about the future, even accurate prophecy must appear peculiar, so we should not dismiss *The URANTIA Book* account on grounds of credulity. Upon reflection, what *The URANTIA Book* says about the progression of life after death seems to me both logical and probable. It teaches that God has a purpose for his entire universe, which includes myriads of other inhabited planets, and that after death we continue to serve and progress in the universe home he has created for his children.

3. Inner Witness: In the final analysis, a person believes what "rings true." Religious people believe that truth resonates with God's spirit in their souls, creating an inner conviction which validates what is being heard. Such evidence could only be convincing to the one who experiences it. In my case, reading the spiritual concepts of *The URANTIA Book* for the first time was like returning home. It was as if

the primordial outlines of truth in my mind were focused and reinforced, to deny which would have been inconceivable.

4. The Test of Time: For the past 19 years, I have studied *The URANTIA Book* on virtually a daily basis. I have read its 2,097 pages word by word at least eight times, and major parts of it at least 25 times. I have listened to and given numerous lectures on it, have studied it alone and in groups, and in general have been deeply involved with it for years. It's the human condition for a person to become intensely enamored of something or someone and have the passing of the years bring on disillusionment, but in my case, I believe and appreciate *The URANTIA Book* more as time passes. Years of deep scrutiny and prayerful reflection leave me believing that *The URANTIA Book* is exactly what it claims to be.

5. The Witness of Others: I have met many people who believe *The URANTIA Book* is fraudulent, but up to now, with one exception, I have never met a person who has read the entire book and did not believe that it was given to us by God. It has an appeal to persons of all races and ages, to persons of every social, political, economic and educational background with the stamina to undertake reading such



THE URANTIA BOOK HAS A UNIVERSAL APPEAL

a massive book. It has precisely the appeal one might expect of a book given to us by the Father of all.

6. Spiritual Flavor: The whole of *The URANTIA Book* is predicated on faith in and dependence on God. The spiritual beings who authored the papers consider themselves fellow seekers with us after the will of God, and otherwise show humility before the Creator. *The URANTIA Book* is devoid of any tinge of anger, jealousy, malice or vindictiveness. It is written in precisely the spirit in which one would expect a divine revelation to be written.

7. Results of Reading: As a means of testing the value of what they heard, Jesus gave his followers the practical principle of "judging the tree by its fruit." Applying that test, *The URANTIA Book* has helped me to understand the value God places on every one of his children, to experience personal security in his love and upholding, and to be motivated by the belief that he has important work for each of us to do. *The URANTIA Book* has led me to seek God more diligently and better accept the love and inner peace which he offers to each of us. I am personally acquainted with scores of individuals whose faith in God, inspired by *The URANTIA Book*,



“BY THEIR FRUITS YOU WILL KNOW THEM”

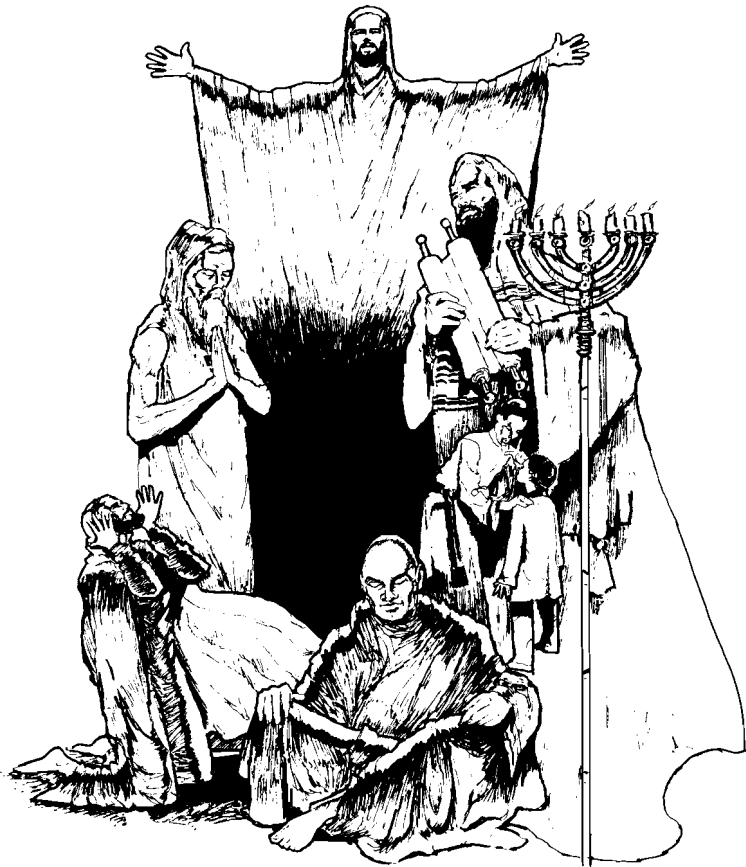
has delivered them from the ravages of alcohol, drugs, hate and despair.

8. Concept Superiority: Our highest concepts of God can never approach the reality of God himself. If we feel that they do, if we believe that a mortal in 50 or 100 years can approach an adequate comprehension of the Intelligence which brought forth the universe, we should question both our lack of humility and the smallness of our view of God. Since God is infinite, our most exalted concepts of his nature must fall pitifully short of the truth, beauty, goodness, love, mercy and grace which he embodies. Descriptions of God in written words at best can only suggest Truth. Any description of God which portrays him as more just, loving and merciful must

necessarily come closer to the truth than a competing description, since God must infinitely surpass what any human mind can comprehend. In comparing those of my previous beliefs which were inconsistent with *The URANTIA Book* portrayal, I concluded that even if the Urantia view were not true, at least it must be more nearly true than what I had previously believed.

SEEK THE BEST OF EACH RELIGION

For his personal philosophy of life, a student of comparative religion might high-grade the best concepts of the various religions with which he is familiar. If he intends to join a denomination, however, he must choose the one which suits him best. For example, if he were Protestant in inclination, he might admire the Presbyterians for this, the Baptists for that, but join the Methodist Church if he felt that it had the most advantages and the fewest disadvantages for his particular outlook and temperament. Few decisions in life are clear-cut, but rather consist in choosing that course which has the most relative advantages and the fewest relative disadvantages. With *The URANTIA Book*, however, I have had the amazing experience of finding either equality or superiority of concept at every point of comparison with every system of belief I have been exposed to. Despite — or as a reflection of — this



THE URANTIA BOOK ILLUMINATES THE BEST IN EACH RELIGION

superiority, it does not speak disparagingly of other religions, but rather directs its readers to seek out the best in each. In no way does it discourage anyone from belonging to the religion or denomination of his or her choice or heritage. This attitude confirmed my belief that even if *The URANTIA Book* were not altogether true, that at least it must be headed in the right direction.

Since there is no Urantia "creed" to which a person is asked to subscribe, the Christian will naturally be concerned to know what the book says about Jesus Christ. In short, it is impossible to read the 775 page narrative of Jesus' life in *The URANTIA Book* without developing a greater love for and appreciation of Jesus, whom it describes as the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Over the years I have tried to distill the essential concepts of the book into a few principles. In spite of how it might first appear, it is *not* primarily about angels, Ancients of Days, history, geology, metaphysics, philosophy, Adam and Eve or the Trinity. It is about our relationship with God. The following represents my view of its seven main teachings:



1. GOD

There is one God who created, upholds and sustains all reality, and in whom we live, move and have our being. He has sent his Son to inspire us and his spirit to indwell our minds and guide us into the ways of truth.

2. MAN

We are all God's children, and we should love and serve each other as God loves and serves us.

3. GOD'S PLAN

God has a perfect, all-encompassing plan, not only for the universe as a whole, but for each of us individually. In discovering and fulfilling this plan we find our highest usefulness and pleasure.

4. ETERNAL LIFE

God will provide us unlimited opportunity for purposeful service, adventure and spiritual growth as we ascend towards God and perfection on the many worlds of his universe domain.

5. GRACE

Without God's help, we have no power to correct our personal shortcomings. All spiritual qualities are free gifts from God which we cannot earn, but must only be willing to accept.

6. FAITH

The price of eternal life is faith in God, sincerity of purpose, and hunger and thirst for truth and righteousness. Faith is a gift of God which we strengthen by praying, worshiping, and sharing our inner lives with him.

7. COMMITMENT

As we forgive others who have wronged us, we experience God's forgiveness, and if we wholeheartedly surrender to the embrace and guidance of his spirit, he will transform our lives and give us the assurance of his presence.

The spiritual concepts of *The URANTIA Book* occur in many other places in bits and pieces. What it offers is the *manner* in which these concepts are filtered out and fitted together into a majestic view of God's relationship with man — who we are, why we are here and how we may continue our journey Godward. In no other writing are such teachings set forth so as to give such a sense of the intellectual, philosophical and spiritual unity of God's dealings with man in the realms of matter, mind and spirit.



A MAJESTIC VIEW

There is perhaps no more fitting way to close this pamphlet than with the following two quotations from *The URANTIA Book*, which tell us what faith in God can do for each of us, and what *The URANTIA Book* can do for the world:

"Personal, spiritual religious experience is an efficient solvent for most mortal difficulties; it is an effective sorter, evaluator, and adjuster of all human problems. Religion does not remove or destroy human troubles, but it does dissolve, absorb, illuminate, and transcend them. True religion unifies the personality for effective adjustment to all mortal requirements. Religious faith — the positive leading of the indwelling divine presence — unfailingly enables the God-knowing man to bridge that gulf existing between the intellectual logic which recognizes the Universal First Cause as *It* and those positive affirmations of the soul which aver this First Cause is *He*, the heavenly Father of Jesus' gospel, the personal God of human salvation." p. 2093



"The time is ripe to witness the figurative resurrection of the human Jesus from his burial tomb amidst the theological traditions and the religious dogmas of nineteen centuries. Jesus of Nazareth must not be longer sacrificed to even the splendid concept of the glorified Christ. What a transcendent service if, through this revelation, the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and be presented as the living Jesus to the church that bears his name, and to all other religions!" p. 2090



No pamphlet can begin to do justice to the life-changing power of *The URANTIA Book*. You need to read it yourself. *The URANTIA Book*, © 1955, is published by URANTIA Foundation, 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614. For further information and additional free copies of this pamphlet, you may write Asoka Foundation, PO Box 82009, Oklahoma City, OK 73148.