

HOW I FOUND THE URANTIA BOOK

or

HOW THE BOOK FOUND ME

Collected by

Julia K. Fenderson

HOW I FOUND THE URANTIA BOOK

OR

HOW THE BOOK FOUND ME

Introduction

One of the joyful experiences of URANTIA Book students everywhere, is to share the story of "How I Found the URANTIA Book". It doesn't matter how long you have been reading but each one in a little study group sincerely enjoys hearing about how you found the Book and likes to share his story. Finding the Book has proved to be a momentous event in the life of every true URANTIA Book student. Often a study group, meeting for the first time, will open discussions by each one telling his very meaningful story. It was exhilarating and inspiring to hear these stories in Alaska, in various islands of Hawaii as well as in many study groups and gatherings on the mainland.

Noting the keen pleasure and delight everyone experienced, I conceived the idea of broadening this sharing base by reproducing each story in the exact words of the story-teller, and then compiling them in expansible form so that new stories could be added as they came in. Please send yours!

After hearing innumerable, fascinating stories, certain important facts began to emerge and common denominators began to appear. . . . but I won't deprive you of the pleasure of those discoveries.

A few contributors did not leave their name and address as they handed their papers to me in a crowd. If you happen to be one, please let me know. Others, please do send in your story with name and address and your permission to share it.

I hope these stories give you the spiritual inspiration and joy they continue to give to me. Also, they point up certain work we must each be doing.

Please mail your story to:

Julia K. Fenderson
9980 Farragut Drive
Culver City, CA 90230

Note: This initial presentation will consist of seven stories until I can get enough return on my investment to buy more paper. JKF

Cost of this Presentation:
\$1.00 ea.

COMING HOME TO FATHER

As a college sophomore I remember pondering the word "God". I couldn't think what it should mean. It seemed just a word, with no referent, an invention of man. How could people even talk about "God"?

Then I remember hearing the idea that God is abscondite, hidden. He is nothing identifiable. One could only say what he is not. Sort of a black hole in space, maybe. But what use was that? I didn't care enough to think.

Then I got interested in Eastern thought--in Brahman and atma, man merging with the universe oversoul through contemplation and self-identification with deity. That made a little more sense to me. But with it I threw out the idea of any specialized deity attribute of Jesus. Jesus was just a highly developed man of insight. We were all equal sons of God. What could be so special about Jesus?

My next step proved more fruitful. I began consulting the I Ching. Its philosophy became my ethical and moral foundation. I discovered the wisdom of self-restraint. I cultivated a sense of spiritual center. I saw that I was the creator of my destiny. I plugged my life leaks. My living efficiency rose. With a brother I revived a business of my elderly father. I found the young woman whom I wanted to marry. Providence smiled on me. I was working with life.

I had arrived at a point where the desire to harmonize with life, to know the universe will, was my rising intent. In reality I was searching for God. It was his cosmic eye that saw my need. I found the URANTIA Book. Thank you Jay Newbern! For a year I picked at it.

Its style entranced me--straight, flat-out declaratory about the most enormous topics, universe organization and deity manifestation. I liked simple sentences with simple truths, such as God never being subject to surprise. I was intrigued with the foretaste of those things which I would discover when I reached Paradise and searched the written records of the beginning of things.

It was good science fiction, a great story, space age drama, and a masterpiece of prose.

But deeper currents worked on me and within me. I read the first chapters on the Godhead simultaneously with a determined effort to rapidly complete the Jesus section, to understand the life and teachings of Jesus. The ideas of God and God-Man, Father and Son, Father-Brother, and God-Father grew within me. I revered the idea of God the Unknowable, the Absolute, descending to God the personal, into God-Man. I reveled in its fact: Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, Son of Man. How perfectly right for the Infinite to come to man as man: a descending Son of God offering the helping hand, man to man. It made sense, a perfection of sense. God made sense. He spoke to us, as one of us. How right! How natural! How beautiful!

This idea isn't new with the URANTIA Book, of course. But the incarnation idea had always been linked in my recollection of Christianity with the atonement: Christ crucified for our sins, the sins and guilt of the whole world shifted onto an innocent lamb, to be crucified, whose blood was to be shed to appease the ruthless wrath of a stern and inflexible God of justice and punishment. That made me sick. I was relieved and heartened to find this idea sifted out and discarded as a remnant of the primitive tribal superstitions and beliefs of the Hebrews, an assault upon the perfection of the divine love, his unchanging love.

The URANTIA Book finally makes sense out of Jesus for me. Jesus makes sense. I believe him. And because of him I know something of the Father. What is God if not, at least, the Father of his children? A Father even as this Son so portrayed him. Yes, God is person. What sense to a world of men endowed with personality, free-will, and deity aspiration? if not to herald the ever ascending scale of personality realization--even to the ultimate discovery of the primal personality, the bestower of personality, the Universal Father!

So, what is God to me now? He is the one eternal reality. He is my Father, who wills the well-being of all his children, my brothers and sisters in spirit, and he desires that my will become as his will. He is what Jesus says he is. As a child I was raised with some primitive ideas about him, as a student I rejected them, and as an adult, and as a Urantian I accept him in his truth. I am a Christian. I am his faith son.

I see how the world is in need, as was I in need of a refreshed Christianity, shorn of its paganism and institutional barnacles, its shells and skeletons of creeds and rites and rules, and ecclesiastical tickets to heaven. How we have waited these near two-thousand years for this cleansed message with its simple call to the worship and love of God in faith service to man.

But I find even more than this in the URANTIA Book. It is the resolution to every theological question I have ever entertained. I understand the source of sin in the world (which is not our racial guilt). Above all, I see an end to it. It is not far off. I see the cosmic drama of the Son of God come down to the least of his worlds, that none might be lost. I see a glorious destiny for those who join in faith to follow his example. I see a new age. I see Christendom reigning in the hearts of all men. I see URANTIA reigning in the heavens, reborn. We have a destiny. A universe beholds us.

And, most importantly, we have work at hand, to the fulfillment of which we can go in confidence that aught is in vain, that each vaguely perceptible step is one lasting step closer, that each day each victory of the divine through us is lasting, eternal, from the first, because we have willed it so, and so believe.

We go to inherit a never-ending always-expanding universe, firm in the faith that human striving is not in vain, that man is no mistake, that eternity is ours in so far as we ever go forth to receive it. Thank you Father. Our hearts runneth over.

Blessed is he who cometh
in the name of the Lord!

Amen

JEFF WATTLES, Ph.D.
1817 Oxford Street, #18
Berkeley, CA 94709

4.

Here is my story:

About four years ago I was a graduate student in philosophy at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. I had the opportunity to be host for a few days to a teacher of Transcendental Meditation. During one of our many discussions I asked him, "How does Indian philosophy relate to the teachings of Jesus?" He said little but mentioned the URANTIA Book. He explained that he had traveled to the Chicago area partly in order to visit the URANTIA Foundation, and he invited me to come with him. I declined. He made his visit, said nothing about it and left the next day.

Increasingly curious, I drove down to 533 Diversey Parkway, introduced myself and said, "I understand that you put out a book, and I'd like to see it." Because it was nearly 5:00 o'clock, I only had time to read the titles of the Papers; I thanked the lady and said, "I don't think I want to spend \$20 for that today."

That night I had extraordinarily vivid recollections of the titles of the Papers and determined to read the book. So, the next day I drove down again to the Foundation and asked to buy a copy. The lady explained, "This is a book of philosophy and religion. It is best to read it from beginning to end." And that is exactly what I did!

RYAN MAPES
139 Syracuse Walk
Long Beach, CA 90803

The URANTIA Book came to me after several years of extremely trying circumstances when I had experienced great mental anguish. One day it occurred to me that I was not my body, and not my mind, but that there was a much more real facet of my being and personality. I began reading religious materials such as the Bible and the Bahagavad Gita and came to some conviction and faith in spiritual realities.

One day a friend presented the URANTIA Book to me. I opened the Foreword and all the truths portrayed in my previous readings and experiences seemed to be validated as a bolt out of the blue. Now I finally had something tangible to work with and I trust that the URANTIA Book will continue to transform my life and my mind in the future as it has given me sublime hope and faith in my short career as an evolutionary being of URANTIA.

PATRICIA BEDELL
2560 West Glenoaks
Anaheim, CA 92801

5.

In 1960, the URANTIA Book was first brought to my attention by my husband-to-be, Jeff. But at that time I was not interested. After we were married my life was busy and full, acquiring a college degree, then teaching for two years. Next came raising a family of two children. Jeff's career required moving frequently in those first seven years. During that time, I would occasionally pick up the URANTIA Book, more out of curiosity than anything else, and read at random an interesting paragraph or a few pages. At Christmas and Easter I would read the accounts of the birth and death of Jesus.

In 1968, we purchased a home near a new, small Congregational church. The minister of that church was the catalyst for the changes to take place in my religious life. Over a period of a few months it was the combination of his sermons and conversations, and my observations of the way that he lived and cared for others, that awakened in me a growing hunger and thirst for knowledge of Jesus and of God on a personal and intellectual level.

And so, this URANTIA Book, which for so many years had been touched more often to be dusted than to be read by me, was eagerly taken from the shelf and read by a new me.

ROSE SCHWEIKERT
Star Route 1 - Box 622
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Always looking for the right answers, a friend of mine and I discussed any and all philosophies. One time, when she returned from Hawaii, she said: "Wait till you see the book I have ordered." The URANTIA Book. When it finally came, she lent it to me, as she was involved with Zen.

It seemed like a flash flood--overwhelming. Then I started to read the fourth part first and after that I could not leave it alone. I am going through it, page by page, for the third time and each time it seems more wonderful.

So far, I have not been able to discuss it with my friend as I don't think she has read it.

What a great blessing--this URANTIA Book!

MARK FREEMAN
P. O. Box 9891
San Diego, CA 92109

6.

As a Christian minister (nondenominational) I was searching for a more complete definition of spirit, both for my own enlightenment and also to find more specific information for another interested person. As doctrine I had been taught that spirit was simply an activating force, but I was aware that the original Greek and Hebrew words had meanings that also included qualities of mind.

In the La Jolla, California, public library, I picked up a copy of the URANTIA Book and, flipping haphazardly through the pages, noticed a number of papers defining the Father's spirit as a fragment of himself that indwells our mind and "adjusts" our thoughts.

After getting the book home and scanning the sixty-five page table of contents my doctrinal prejudice against the words "Trinity" and "Evolution" almost caused me to put the book aside without reading further, thinking that it was probably written by a Catholic author. But my brief glimpse of the Thought Adjuster section roused my curiosity enough to consider what "the opposition" had to say about it. I felt that I should at least be familiar with their viewpoint.

My second impression after noticing some of the authors: Divine Counselor, Universal Censor, Mighty Messenger, etc., was that perhaps it was a Rosicrucian publication since they use some rather high sounding titles.

Still, my objective was further research regardless of the source of the information. As I began reading about the Thought Adjusters I gradually became more and more impressed by the friendly yet unquestionably authoritative tone of the writing. In fact I found the material so believable that I decided to see whether the book defined Trinity in the standard way that Trinitarians accepted it.

Aware that most of mankind's knowledge is only partial at best, I discovered that the Father, Son, and Spirit can truly function as a Trinity just as many religionists believe. At the same time my belief that Jesus was not the second person of this Trinity was also confirmed.

Similarly the new revelation corroborated my belief in the direct creation of Adam and Eve while convincingly broadening my understanding of man's evolutionary beginnings on this planet. Here again opposing views of science and religion were both shown to be partially correct. The book's explanation that man was the final result of a long series of sudden mutations that "Life Carriers" in cooperation with divine spirit had designed as an inherent part of the original life implantations thoroughly satisfied my theological logic.

This much enlightenment was sufficient to overcome the other two obstacles to my reading the entire book. First, it was an unusually long book containing many scientific explanations that I thought probably wouldn't be very interesting. And second, it would require me to acquaint myself with what seemed to be a great many new terms with extensive definitions. Would it be worth my time? I decided to start at the beginning and read it at least as far as it would continue to hold my interest.

Accustomed to keeping close track of the time I spend on various projects, I began the reading on March 16, 1972. By page 651 my notes had become so lengthy that I began to first consider the possibility of buying a copy of my own from a used book store. I was surprised to learn that used URANTIA Books sold quickly and that many of these dealers were acquainted with the book whereas most clerks in religious book stores had never heard of it.

About this time I also discovered the Concordex which not only contained far more exhaustive reference material but had it indexed for fast retrieval. After all the writing I had been doing this would have been a real bargain for me at double the cost. Still, I bought the Concordex simply as an aid to revive my memory of the ideas I had read whether or not I ever finally did get a personal copy of the URANTIA Book. I just couldn't believe that the book could continue to sustain my interest for an additional 1,400 pages.

I noticed personal differences in writing style from paper to paper but no inconsistencies; minor differences of speculative opinion but no contradictions. The incidental fact that I found no typographical errors in such a long book also impressed me. It seemed almost too perfect. I felt sure I'd find some parts of it disappointing before I reached the last page. At the same time I found my interest intensifying. I even began praying at the end of each day that nothing unforeseen might happen to prevent me from reading the book through at least once.

Often I would read a statement that sounded so complex that I was sure it was beyond my understanding. Yet, invariably throughout the book each succeeding paragraph continued to clarify the concept presented until it seemed that my mind could at least grasp hold of it with some degree of actual comprehension.

After 407 1/2 hours I completed the first reading on June 18th averaging slightly more than 11 1/2 minutes per page, although I remember spending more than an hour per page through some sections.

With the exception of a few book dealers and librarians, no one I spoke to knew about it and no one I met had read the book beyond more than a few pages. I searched in vain for book reviews and magazine articles about it. The thought suggested itself to me that I might be the only person on earth who had read it, because as a minister discussing many of the subjects the book contains with thousands of individuals and hundreds of congregations over a period of more than twenty years, no one had ever mentioned the URANTIA Book. Yet I couldn't believe that there wasn't a group of people somewhere who got together to talk about what they had read and how they could best put the information to use.

Alvin Kulieke, then President of the URANTIA Brotherhood, was the first to reply to my inquiries. The next letter was from Clyde Bedell who told me about the Los Angeles Society; through them my name was given to Captain Bill Hazzard in San Diego who invited me to the meetings at his home where, in turn, I met Betty Tackett--one of the group who had the privilege of reading the URANTIA Papers before they were published, and the individual who had donated the book that I discovered in the La Jolla Public Library. In discussing it, neither of us felt that my finding it had been just a chance occurrence.

DUANE L. FAW
BGen. USMC(Ret)
Professor of Law
Pepperdine University School of Law

8.

HOW I FOUND THE URANTIA BOOK (OR VICE VERSA)

In late August 1965, I left the United Air Lines ticket counter at Dalles Airport (located in Washington state but serving Portland, Oregon) musing at the alliteration on the ticket just issued me: DALLAS--DENVER--DALLAS--DULLES, the latter airport serving Washington, D.C., but located in Virginia. Only Denver seemed out of place, but there was no direct flight from Dalles to Dallas. Shortly thereafter I boarded an airplane for Denver.

To pass the time I carried a paperback book on Edgar Cayce. When airborne, I read some of it.

On the seat next to me, nearest the window, sat a woman. My recollection of her appearance is very dim. My present impression is that she was slight of build, very tastefully dressed, and was either light-complexioned or pale. Her hair was, as best I remember, a light shade of brown. As a wild guess at her age, she seemed about my age (at that time, 45) or older.

As we approached Denver I recall talking to her about the Edgar Cayce book. It contained something about reincarnation. She asked me if I believed in reincarnation. I responded that I neither believed nor disbelieved in it, that I did not have enough information about it upon which to base an intelligent belief, but that I did believe in an afterlife of some sort. In the course of a relatively brief conversation she asked, in effect, if I was seriously interested in finding out what happened to people after they died. I replied that I was, that the study of religion was almost a hobby, and that I had bought the Edgar Cayce book to see what answers, if any, it could provide to my many questions about the role of man in the world, and his future.

At some point in the conversation she asked if I had ever heard of a planet called Urantia. I had not. She said she belonged to a group which considered that we live on a planet called Urantia, and that when we die, we simply go to another planet for a while, then to another and another, etc. I remember her saying with proper dignity, assurance and pride that she knew "exactly where" she was going when she died.

Upon inquiring where she, and the group, got their information, she responded that it was all contained in a large book called the URANTIA Book; that there had been a limited publication of it, but quite a few were available; and that more books were being published. She mentioned something about Chicago.

The woman seemed quite concerned that she did not have a copy of the book with her to let me have at the time. She urged that I find and read a copy of the URANTIA Book, and said that my search for the truth would never be complete until I read it. She said nothing more about its source or contents.

We both deplaned at Denver, Colorado. I had only a few minutes to change planes to Dallas, and I assumed Denver was her destination. I went to the boarding area for my plane. While standing there waiting to board, someone tapped me on the shoulder. It

was the woman. She said, "There is someone here I would like for you to meet," and led me back into the lobby area of the terminal. I had already forgotten her name, but she remembered mine.

In the lobby stood a very dignified man, well dressed, with white hair--apparently in his late 60's or beyond. With him were several people. I remember a woman standing on each side. The woman from the plane said to him, "This is the man I told you about meeting on the airplane." Just as we were being introduced and shaking hands, the loud speaker called for the boarding of my plane. I did not understand his name. He quickly asked if I were seriously interested in learning about the role of man in the universe and about man's relationship to God, to which I replied an unequivocal "Yes". He said, "Then you must get a URANTIA Book." He expressed regret that he did not have one with him to give to me, but emphasized, as I rushed away to board my airplane, that I should read the book.

I recall that at some point in the hurried conversation one of the women at his side said the man was the head of an organization with the word "Urantia" in it. I have no opinion whether it was a foundation, a brotherhood, a society or even a study group. My impression was that it probably equated to a local church.

Ordinarily, I would have forgotten the incident. There was nothing in my experience with which to associate the word "Urantia"; in fact, I did not even know how to spell it, and after a while I wondered if I even knew how to pronounce it. But on the plane to Dallas I kept thinking about the happy and peaceful look on the faces of the man and three women, and wondering if the URANTIA Book had anything to do with it. I was also impressed with the assurance of the woman on the plane, and with the apparently sincere concern of both the woman and the man that I read the URANTIA Book. Somehow, it continued to haunt me.

Within a day or two after arriving in Dallas, I spent an afternoon in my sister-in-law's apartment telephoning bookstores listed in the yellow pages trying to locate a copy of the URANTIA Book. The universal response to my inquiry was "the what book?" Then they asked me to spell it. I could not. I had them begin it with a "U" and an "Eu", and try the last syllable by spelling it with a "t", an "s" and a "ts". Nothing worked.

Some days later, upon returning to the Washington, D.C. area, I called all of the major bookstores in the area inquiring of the URANTIA Book, but with no success. I then went to the Library of Congress. An attendant helped me to look under "religion" for the book. It was not there.

Over the next few years as I traveled from city to city, if I had any extra time I spent it telephoning bookstores for the URANTIA Book. Among the cities in which I made telephone calls were: New York, San Diego, St. Louis, Houston and Atlanta. In early 1968, I visited a large bookstore on Okinawa where many American and European books had been duplicated and were on sale at bargain prices. There was no URANTIA Book.

In 1970, I attended a seminar in Chicago. One afternoon I remembered that the woman on the airplane had mentioned Chicago. I telephoned two major bookstores from the hotel. The second had heard of the book, but did not carry it and suggested that I might find one in a secondhand bookstore. That evening, instead of seeing "Hair" with others attending the seminar, a colonel and I spent the evening browsing through secondhand bookstores looking for the URANTIA Book. We still did not know how to spell it, but our phonetics were correct. Nevertheless, we found no trace of it.

The search for the URANTIA Book became such an obsession with me that I developed the habit of ducking into every used bookstore I saw and inquiring if they had a URANTIA Book. The standard answer was "a what book?"

Upon moving to California in 1971, my wife, Lucile, met occasionally with the wives of the law professors at Pepperdine University School of Law. In the spring of 1972 she was scheduled to host the group at our house. A day or two before the meeting our dog dashed through the living room of the house, became tangled with a lamp cord, and broke the glass base of a large decorator lamp. Lucile wanted it replaced before the meeting. I felt it could be repaired if I could find the right glass base. Consequently, I set out to find a glass base of the proper color and size.

The first five lamp shops had nothing that would suffice, and I became quite discouraged. The fifth one was located on Main Street in Santa Ana. As I left it, I saw next door a secondhand bookstore. As was my custom, I stuck my head in the doorway and said to the man behind the counter, "Do you have a URANTIA Book?"

"Do I have a what?"

"Forget it!" I replied.

"Hey, wait a minute," he called. "I didn't say that I do not have one. But I have been in this bookstore for (many) years, and no one has ever asked me for a URANTIA Book. In fact, I never heard of one until the other day. One just came in. I put it aside to see what it is, but if you want to buy it, I will sell it to you." He then walked back to a desk and picked up a dusty but unused copy of the URANTIA Book, which he sold to me for \$10.00.

The book was from the second printing in 1967, two years after my plane ride to Denver. It had no address of any kind within it. It was not until over a year later when I saw a new URANTIA Book in a Pickwick Bookshop (the second one I had ever seen) that I knew there was an address to which I could write for information about the book. The book was a later edition, and had the Chicago address in the flyleaf.

In early 1974, after I had started several persons to reading the URANTIA Book, I wrote to Chicago, and was placed in touch with Julia Fenderson in Los Angeles. Until I contacted her I had never talked with anyone except the woman on the plane and the people in the Denver airport who had ever read the URANTIA Book. By that time I had read the book twice, and I was on the third reading.

Oh, yes: the sixth lamp shop had exactly the right glass lamp base to repair the lamp, and the ladies' meeting was a success.