

Spiritual Perspectives for a New Era

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We are living in one of the great pivotal periods of history. Society has undergone more change in the last one hundred years than the world has experienced in the previous two thousand. Information is exploding. Some fields of knowledge are doubling every decade or less. Ninety percent of the scientists who have ever lived are alive today. We are unlocking the secrets of the microcosmos and beginning to travel in outer space. During this century we have evolved a new physics, a new astronomy, a new psychology, and the beginning of a new philosophical age.

Our planetary life is changing so fast contemporary society is experiencing future shock. There is a sense of alienation from our traditional cultural values. Our relation to life has become ambiguous. There is a pervasive intuitive feeling of meaninglessness in the civilization of the twentieth century. We have lost our spiritual orientation. The great religious systems of the past no longer command the total commitment of humanity or fulfill their ultimate needs. We are passing through a collective psychological and spiritual reorientation equivalent in magnitude to the emergence of Christianity from the ruins of the Greco-Roman civilization.

Humanity is Searching

A form of searching underlies the erosion of institutional religion in our day. The deterioration of the credibility of traditional social, economic, political, and moral values among our most perceptive youth is building a hunger for a new spiritual vision. The growing lack of relevance elicited by ancient spiritual frames of reference which have their roots in pre-scientific thought and culture has triggered an explosion of cults, new religions, and psychomystical movements.

Just as in the past philosophical-cultural transitions, there is a proliferation of phenomena and movements. In this so called "Age of Aquarius" we have thousands of gurus, astrologers, numerologists, graphologists, and prophets of every sort. Millions of people are pursuing psychic phenomena, channeling, Zen, Yoga, I Ching, Theosophy, Spiritualism, Scientology, Transcendental Meditation, UFOs, and mind altering drugs. Among the dozens of new sects which have sprung up are The Unification Church, The Divine Light Mission, The International Society of Krishna Consciousness, The Children of God, The Way International, and many others.

A New Vision of Reality

There is a search for spiritual reality today which is unprecedented in modern times. What is the meaning of all this yearning for spiritual truth? If we can learn from history, it means that God is at work in our world preparing us for a new spiritual epoch. Many and diverse creative influences are contributing toward this goal. We should like to invite your attention to a book which, we believe, is destined to play a key role in this new spiritual age. It is *The Urantia Book* published in 1955 by URANTIA Foundation of Chicago, Illinois. *The Urantia Book* is one of the most promising sources of creative thought in philosophy, religion, and culture in our contemporary society. Without publicity or promotion this unique book has sold more than 200,000 copies. The overwhelming consensus among those who have read the book is that it will receive universal recognition.

In its 2,097 pages *The Urantia Book* presents an integrated picture of the universe which has extremely broad ramifications. The book's observations and insights regarding the arts, the social sciences, and the physical sciences suggest relevant answers to individual and world problems. Its all encompassing grasp of the dynamics of civilization and culture shed wisdom in almost every area of human endeavor.

Pioneering Contemporary Scholars

Modern day scientists, philosophers, and theologians are trying to accommodate our growing understanding of reality to traditional ways of looking at the universe. The factual world of scientific knowledge can no longer be explained or understood by the theories which seemed adequate only a few

years ago. London University physicist, David Bohm, sees reality in a relational wholeness. Our world of experience, he believes, has its roots in a deeper level of reality which he views as a holographic universe. In a similar manner, Carl Sagan in his book, *Cosmos*, updates our knowledge of physical phenomena and expands our conceptualization of the universe.

Paul Tillich, the most widely read theologian of the mid-twentieth century, strives to restructure our perception of spiritual reality. His description of God as the inescapable "ground of being" adds a new dimension to the religious aspect of life. The British mathematician and philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, enlarges our traditional Deity concepts. His view of the primordial and the consequent natures of God have been amplified by Process Theology into one of the major theological developments of the twentieth century. Buckminster Fuller, one of the most creative minds of our generation, sees God functioning in the evolutionary process of the world.

Harvard psychologist, Henry A. Murray, observes the distress, confusion, and alienation felt by so many people in our present day society. He, along with Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Jung, believes the root cause of this dispirited condition arises from an inadequate religious orientation to life. Dr. Murray conjectures that we need a new universe mythology, a vision of ultimates, which will "claim the head and heart" of twentieth century people. British authors, C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, recognize this same need. In their writings they try to prepare us for such an enlarged and inspiring vision of spiritual reality.

A Bold New Spiritual Vision

The Urantia Book integrates and structures all of these contemporary prophetic views in a unique holistic cosmos. It is a Twentieth Century universe perspective integrating science, philosophy, and religion. The book is divided into four parts. The first section describes the nature of Ultimate Reality and the astronomical or cosmological nature and organization of the universe. This picture is essentially in harmony with our present astronomical knowledge and parallels the Swedish astronomer Charlier's concept of a hierarchical universe.

The second section of *The Urantia Book* relates to our local

galaxy or local universe and its interrelationships. Here the loving and effective ministry of Christ is the central reality through which everything else finds meaning and purpose.

The third section of *The Urantia Book* narrates the story of the origin and development of our world, "Urantia." The interesting material in this account coincides with the best of our scientific and historical knowledge.

The fourth section of *The Urantia Book* contains a 774 page version of the life and teaching of Jesus which is solidly rooted in the historical New Testament story. This superb presentation of the life of Jesus brings vibrant coherence to the sketchy New Testament picture and with it a new authenticity. It is basically acceptable to all religions, emphasizing the unifying religion of Jesus rather than the divisive theologies about Jesus.

A Holistic Universe Perspective

A more detailed description of the different sections of *The Urantia Book* may be helpful. Part I, The Central and Superuniverses, and Part II, The Local Universe, would be philosophically classified as metaphysical in nature. That is, these sections portray the ultimate nature of things. *The Urantia Book* presents an integrated and masterful view of Ultimate Reality. Concepts of Deity, ranging from a personal Universal Father to impersonal Absolutes, are so well unified the holistic picture is maintained. The nature and attributes of God are discussed as they relate to the universe and to the individual. The Trinity is conceptualized with greater intellectual and spiritual clarity than any other description in theological literature. The material and gravitational center of the universe, the Isle of Paradise, is referred to as the nuclear source of all energy, matter, life, and personality. A marvelously organized hierarchical universe is described which includes trillions of inhabited planets in all stages of physical, mental, and spiritual evolution. Mechanistic and vitalistic interpretations of natural phenomena are integrated. Science, philosophy, and religion are seen as partial aspects of a larger integrated universe.

The Urantia Book presents one of the most realistic and inclusive material-mindal-spiritual cosmologies in the entire field of philosophy and religion. It portrays an eminently reasonable picture of the conditions and nature of immortality. Survival depends on the spiritual reality status of the individual.

This, in turn, is determined by our free will decisions toward God, by our loyalty to truth, beauty, and goodness as these values are sincerely understood. Nevertheless, evil, sin, and judgment are stern and sober realities in the universe. *The Urantia Book's* intriguing picture of life after death is not only appealing to rational intelligence but has the ring of authentic spiritual reality. The interrelationships of body, mind, soul, and spirit are treated with insight and originality. The central challenge to human beings involves making a balanced and sane effort to achieve God-consciousness. Growth toward perfection is seen as the fundamental urge of human life. This growth is evolutionary, culminating, and virtually endless.

A Relevant View of Our World

Eric Fromm observes that our technological civilization is experiencing a revolution of hope. The editorial board of *World Perspectives* declares that we are in the process of developing a new consciousness. There is an ecumenical power of mind and heart enabling people to re-create their life and become aware of this divine destiny. The American psychologist, Abraham Maslow, has directed our attention to the importance of "meta-needs" or "Being Values" which constitute the spiritual foundations of human nature. The Italian psychiatrist, Robert Assagioli, speaks of the basic significance of transpersonal qualities and the Spirit Center of human consciousness. The Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, calls contemporary humanity to rediscover the all important "I-Thou" relationship of life. Humanistic Psychology and Holistic Medicine see human nature as an integration of body, mind, and spirit which is distinctively shaped by the higher human values. The writings of the French priest, Teilhard de Chardin, discover and illuminate the hand of God in the entire evolutionary process. Teilhard believes we have entered the greatest period of change the world has ever known. Humanity, he says, is moving toward the "Omega Point" of mental-spiritual awareness.

British churchmen, Leslie D. Weatherhead and John A. T. Robinson, have eloquently described the decadent theological formulations of current day Christianity. These doctrines have their roots in the pre-scientific thinking of the Middle Ages. It is time, they tell us, for a new spiritual renaissance. The American Academy of Political and Social Science, in one

volume of their *Annals*, have documented the radical changes which have taken place in American religion since the 1960's. Public opinion research scientist, Daniel Yankelovich, says there is a form of searching underlying all of American life today. And George Gallop reports in a talk at Princeton Theological Seminary that "Americans today appear to be on a spiritual quest of major proportions...the final two decades of this century could, in fact, represent a unique chapter in the history of religion in the United States."

Part III of *The Urantia Book*, *The History of Urantia*, confirms and builds upon these and many other present day concerns and developments. It describes the origin and evolution of events on our planet. In addition to human biological evolution, it traces the development of civilization, culture, government, religion, the family, and other social institutions. *The Urantia Book* exhibits a superior understanding of planetary history, dynamics, and destiny.

The section discussing marriage and the family has a rich and realistic historical appreciation of the relationships of men and women. It has a balanced assessment of the contributions of both nature and nurture in shaping human life. Papers dealing with the nature and function of religion, the purpose and practice of prayer and worship, and the place of personal and institutional religion in life and society are among the best discussions of these subjects in print. Chapters which describe the loving nurture of the indwelling Spirit of God are of exceptional quality. They parallel the world's finest devotional literature stemming from first hand experiences of God.

The Life and Teachings of Jesus

Part IV of *The Urantia Book*, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*, while faithfully confirming the gospel story in the *Bible*, enlarges and enhances our knowledge about the mission of Jesus to our world. This expanded version of the life and teachings of Jesus has a universal appeal. Even when it is viewed only as a historical novel, it is unsurpassed in theistic philosophical reasonableness, spiritual insight, and personality appeal.

This life of Jesus not only fills in the "hidden years" from twelve to thirty, but also describes his pre-bestowal and post-bestowal experience. *The Urantia Book* integrates, enhances, and completes the Biblical story. It confirms the symbolic

closing statement of the Gospel of John, "There are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

In its biography of Jesus, *The Urantia Book* gives a thorough account of Jesus' life. The authors narrate his engaging childhood experiences and the events in his heroic struggle as a teen-age youth to overcome family adversity. They tell of his travels and adventures whereby he gained a thorough knowledge and complete understanding of human existence. The revelators depict fascinating vignettes of his personal ministry and the thrilling episodes of his public ministry.

You will enjoy reading this captivating story in its entirety. For those who have Christian backgrounds, this may be the best place to start reading *The Urantia Book*. You will find that *The Urantia Book* will give you a greater understanding and appreciation of the *Bible*.

The Question of Origin

Probably the most difficult question to answer about *The Urantia Book* is "Who wrote it?" It claims to be written by supermortal beings as a special revelation to our world. It purports to be the first major divine revelation since the coming of Christ to our planet. Such a claim certainly raises doubts in the minds of rational and responsible people. Almost every generation produces individuals who pose as the bearers of new revelation.

What is surprising about *The Urantia Book* is that it has almost nothing in common with radical or fanatical movements. It does not advocate a new religion but supports the best in all religions. Its viewpoint builds upon the religious heritage of the past and present; yet it is fresh, expansive, and profound. After a judicious and reflective reading of the book, one is impressed by the power of its own authenticity.

Nevertheless, *The Urantia Book* should be read critically like any other book. It should be judged by its content, not by any claims of authorship. Only after a thorough reading of the book and careful evaluation of its message is one in a position to speculate about authorship.

Even though *The Urantia Book* is among the most significant sources of spiritual guidance available to contemporary society, 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

anyone interested in the creative possibilities of a spiritual renaissance in our day. 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 authors of *The Urantia Book* are primarily interested in the spiritual stimulation and growth of people of all faiths and religions. The book has much to contribute to all of the religions of the world. Kenneth Boulding in *The Meaning of the Twentieth Century*, Alvin Tofler in *The Third Wave*, John Naisbitt in *Megatrends*, Fritjof Capra in *The Turning Point*, and many other prophetic voices point out that we are entering a major transitional period in human history. We desperately need enlarged and solid spiritual foundations with the visionary potential to give stability and guidance to the new era struggling to be born. I believe *The Urantia Book* has the greatest potential for serving in this capacity of any philosophical-religious resource now available to humankind. It is a seminal source of enlightening spiritual truth. All in all, *The Urantia Book* is the most exciting book of the twentieth century! I invite you to discover this resource for yourself.

For literature related to *The Urantia Book* or for additional copies of this brochure, please contact: