

# A Revelation of Cosmic Evolution

Byron Belitsos

Purported to be a modern revelation to humankind, *The Urantia Book* comes across at first glance as a futuristic encyclopedia of spirituality, history, philosophy, science, and metaphysics—all framed within a striking evolutionary and integral cosmology. The book's 2,097 pages of teachings are vast in scope, depicting, for example:

- a “prime directive”: the evolutionary imperative that rules space-time reality
- eternal life: a detailed guide to the soul's evolution after death
- the unique self: why each human personality is unique in all eternity
- the divine indwelling: each of us has a pure spark of God within
- cosmic history: a “revelatory” history of our planet (whose name is “Urantia”)
- the Integral Absolute: the unity of evolutionary and existential (perfect) realities

For me, the Urantia text has long served me as an integral guide to evolutionary cosmic reality. At times it has served me by taking on the role of a post-modern, sacred text (especially just after I first stumbled upon it in 1974), but over these 36 years, *The Urantia Book* has always for me been an indispensable philosophic/cosmic reference text. For example, it was the integral philosophy of the Urantia revelation that—in the mid-1990s—led me to take Ken Wilber much more seriously after his publication of *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*. I went on to create one of the earliest integral websites, ikosmos.com (founded in 1997), after which Ken invited me to be an inaugural member of the Integral Institute. I also then met and was for a time a student of Andrew Cohen.

But these days, in my current reading of the Urantia revelation, I focus especially on its teachings about *the nature and purpose of the human soul*—how our personal soul is an evolutionary-experiential reality that actually grows in depth and breadth through our daily moral choices. In other words: The evolutionary import of each decision and each personal experience, at any moment of waking life, is actually preserved *as* our soul; all meaningful experience that is based on choosing true values gets *incorporated into us as a new divine invasion of the personal soul*.

Further, personal soul growth continues throughout our eternal life and yet *ends* in our perfection in the far-distant future—and this reality is in actually *the secret* of the evolution of Deity itself. The evolution of God is (in part) constituted by the accumulated evolutionary soul growth of all beings in all domains; and this reality, when combined with the physical and biological evolution of the grand universe itself, equals the God of Evolution. And this “face” of God is both a counterpoint and complement to existential, eternal, non-experiential, creator Deity, mythically known as God the Father/Mother.

## **An integral, evolutionary picture of Jesus and Christianity**

“Read *The Urantia Book* and spiritualize your thinking.”

—Deepak Chopra

Some regard *The Urantia Book* as a postmodern Bible, and since its publication in 1955, the book has sold over 650,000 copies in English and has been translated into eleven languages. Not unlike *A Course in Miracles*, the Urantia material updates and expands the teachings of Jesus. Followers of Jesus are especially attracted by the book's

magnificent detail on his life, and its clearer, deeper, and far more philosophical presentation of Jesus' gospel. Its seven-hundred page narration of the life of Jesus (which is Part IV of the Urantia text) enhances our concept of the love of God—i.e., our heavenly “Father and Mother”—and greatly augments our understanding of ethics, health, happiness, love, service, forgiveness, mercy, friendship, marriage, and spirituality.

Finally, the Urantia revelation provided the world with an “integral, evolutionary Christianity” *long before* latecomers in the Integral Institute began talking about Integral Christianity. Thus, when it first appeared in 1955, *The Urantia Book* was, in my view, far ahead of the current trend. However, none of this exempts the Urantia book and movement from critique and *critical analysis*.

### **The mythic heaven (of old) is not the last stop**

“*The Urantia Book* has been very important to me.  
Any spiritual seeker is bound to find sustenance here.”  
—Marianne Williamson

By all accounts, *The Urantia Book* is a unique artifact in the history of religion and revelation. Its off-planet pedigree is a subject of intense controversy, but tens of thousands worldwide regard *The Urantia Book* as revelatory, and now dozens of writers, teachers, healers, and visionaries are beginning to create a global cultural phenomenon around this mysterious tome. It is arguably a leading feature of the emergent integral, global, worldcentric culture.

In the publishing domain, the current outpouring is evidenced by ambitious reference works, several novels (including an international bestselling series in Spanish authored by J.J. Benitez and published by Planeta), a proliferation of excerpt books, and now, the first professional-quality interpretive work, a new book entitled *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* (Document It! 2010) by Sheila Keene-Lund, a well-known teacher in the Urantia community. In this, the sixth decade since its appearance, a rich underground literature has arisen among the diverse and far-flung worldwide Urantia community, but not until Keene-Lund's work has a single author succeeded in comprehensively relating the complex teachings of the Urantia text to existing knowledge in multiple fields.

*The Urantia Book* is a book-with-a-mission that is unique in its category: its readership has grown entirely by word of mouth; and oddly, this has been the intention from the beginning of the Chicago-based Urantia Foundation, the original publisher and copyright holder, whose trustees solemnly refused to spend on publicity in its first decades of existence—and whose permissions policy discouraged interpretive works. Even so, hundreds of study groups are now spread out across the world, and many celebrities have come forward to defend the teaching, including the Deepak Chopra and Marianne Williamson, and even Hollywood stars such as Edie Adams, Jackie Gleason, and writer-producer Norman Lear. Still, the Urantia text has been met with very little notice by the religious establishment, even though it contains a highly ambitious challenge to contemporary Christianity with its claim to contain the true life and teachings of Jesus—in such depth that its adherents claim its teachings far exceed the New Testament in religious significance. Keene-Lund, for example, examines this claim in detail. Truly, the Urantia phenomenon is a new religious movement to watch, offer

profound teachings suitable for any Evolutionary. And Keene-Lund's acclaimed new book is likely to be a lead-off secondary work for anyone hoping to delve into its rich revelations.

I now believe that the Urantia text—after a long period of obscurity due in part to the post-modern rebellion against Christianity—can now take its place among the classics of universal, evolutionary spirituality, providing as it does a “megasyntesis” suitable for the twenty-first century that rivals (and complements) that of Ken Wilber, Aurobindo, Teilhard, and other great synthesizers of knowledge.

“The Urantia Book is a tremendously insightful book and [I] still find it very interesting.”

—**Stephen R. Covey**

Byron Belitsos is a writer, journalist, editor, the publisher—and the coauthor two previous books about *The Urantia Book*, including *The Center Within*. He is also coauthor of *A Return to Healing*, winner of the Nautilus Gold Prize for Best Health Book of 2009. Byron has been a student of *The Urantia Book* for 36 years, and has written, spoken, and given workshops worldwide on its teachings. Belitsos received a B.A. (Honors) in intellectual history from the University of Chicago in 1977. His graduate studies have embraced history, literature, religious studies, and theology at University of California and CIIS. He also studied poetry with Allen Ginsberg at Naropa Institute. Belitsos was also an inaugural member of Ken Wilber's Integral Institute. He resides in Fairfax, CA.