

Why Study The Urantia Book?

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Ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings are the resources upon which our spiritual benefactors depend in order to do their work within our minds. We each control the quality and quantity of these resources available to them for their work in our inner lives.

Knowledge is not necessary for salvation. Neither is it necessary for an experience of the presence and love of God in one's inner life. Why, then, take the time and effort to read, study and learn?

Knowledge is essential for personal growth

From the perspective of The Urantia Book, knowledge provides ideas which can be associated together for the discovery of meanings—and meanings are the open doorway through which we perceive values. "The human mind does not create real values; human experience does not yield universe insight. Concerning insight, the recognition of moral values and the discernment of spiritual meanings, all that the human mind can do is to discover, recognize, interpret, and choose." [196:3.10]

As we personalize the values (incorporate them into our interactions with others) we discover that by integrating them into our behaviors we set the stage for new experiences which lead to a recognition of additional new meanings. The process is the mechanism of real growth.

Meanings and values are somewhat like the steps on a ladder. The discovery of new meanings makes new values possible. Changing our behaviors to reflect the better values then makes the perception of deeper meanings possible. And thus does growth proceed.

The acquisition of knowledge does not equate to growth, but knowledge is an essential component of growth. It is similar to the way we sustain our material bodies. Food does not equate to growth, but it is essential for the metabolic processes which themselves produce growth. Likewise, knowledge is essential for the spiritual processes which yield growth—the personality managed association of meanings and values.

"Real educational growth is indicated by enhancement of ideals, increased appreciation of values, new meanings of values, and augmented loyalty to supreme values." [100:1.3]

"Education is the business of living; it must continue throughout a lifetime so that mankind may gradually experience the ascending levels of mortal wisdom, which are:

- 1. The knowledge of things.
- 2. The realization of meanings.
- 3. The appreciation of values.
- 4. The nobility of work--duty.
- 5. The motivation of goals--morality.
- 6. The love of service--character.
- 7. Cosmic insight--spiritual discernment.

And then, by means of these achievements, many will ascend to the mortal ultimate of mind attainment, God-consciousness." [71:7.5]

In this view, knowledge is the foundational element in the development of our ability to more fully experience God-consciousness.

The book provides insight into the cosmic context in which our lives are constructed. Understanding how processes of social evolution in our world work enables us to work more effectively to guide those processes toward the destiny envisioned by our creators. Understanding the context in which we live and struggle helps us make decisions and have attitudes toward life which are more cosmically productive and less the result of ignorance and illusion. Our growth as cosmic citizens progresses as we increasingly understand the cosmic context, the nature of the culture and civilization in which we actually live, and as we begin to make decisions and take actions which relate to this larger cultural heritage and social identity in the universe.

Knowledge is essential for relevant service

Knowledge is essential for meaningful service; not just a collection of facts but a well-ordered intellect in which there is a spiritually servicable frame of reference, a system of reference points relative to which experience is evaluated, and an active process of deriving meanings and choosing values.

The world in which we are attempting to serve the Master's purposes is undergoing the most rapid social transformation in its history. This means that the context within which we hope to serve is constantly changing—necessitating a constant updating of our understanding of that

environment and the shifting regions in which our work might be most effective. *The less we know about the context in which we're attempting to serve, the less effective will be our efforts.*

There are strong anti-intellectual trends in the contemporary world and within The Urantia Book readership as well. In my view the majority of Urantia Book readers are not well-read at all. There is a dearth of appreciation for the philosophical and theological foundation which the book is intended to illuminate; there often is a sense that The Urantia Book is all that it needed. The Urantia Book itself notes this problem:

"Unless the moral insight and the spiritual attainment of mankind are proportionately augmented, the unlimited advancement of a purely materialistic culture may eventually become a menace to civilization. A purely materialistic science harbors within itself the potential seed of the destruction of all scientific striving, for this very attitude presages the ultimate collapse of a civilization which has abandoned its sense of moral values and has repudiated its spiritual goal of attainment." [132:1.3]

But regarding religion, the authors admonish us that,

"Religion can be kept free from unholy secular alliances only by a critically corrective philosophy and the prevention of fanaticism by the compensations of the scientific mental attitude." [99:3.9]

To be engaged in effective kingdom service in the world involves constant study and a lifetime commitment to continuous self-education.

It is not the role of knowledge to provide certainty. Certainty belongs in the domain of fanaticism and illusion. Uncertainty is an intellectual attitude essential for growth. The book makes a point of noting that "...uncertainty with security is the essence of the Paradise adventure." [111:7.1] It is the *process of thinking* that is important. Our thoughts must be in motion toward spiritual objectives in order for them to be directed.

Through the acquisition of knowledge and experience we construct a virtual model of reality within our minds. We make decisions and choices, not relative to universe reality, but relative to the virtual model we've constructed from our partial understandings, limited knowledge, and psychological illusions.

How closely does the model we've constructed represent reality? The book notes that our virtual models—"universe frames"—while they are necessary for thought, they are without exception erroneous to a greater or lesser degree. They are only scaffolding in a continuous process of growth. (See the discussion about "universe frames" in section 1 of Paper 115)

We should be constantly improving the accuracy and relevance of our internal models of reality. This is similar to the process of gradually bringing an image into focus in an optical device such as a camera or a telescope.

While knowledge is not necessary for personal salvation, it is critical to the degree of success we can expect to have in our work in the world, our work with the Supreme. You can't talk to people about the kingdom if you don't understand it; the more you understand about the nature of the kingdom, the easier and more relevant will be your conversations with others about these matters.

The intellectual aspects of religious experience are somewhat like a lens through which we can apprehend something of the nature of God and the universe context in which we are living. The book says that, "The divine nature may be perceived only with the eyes of the mind." [101:1.3]

What The Urantia Book says about the importance of intellectual growth

Here are some quotes from The Urantia Book about the importance of study and continuous intellectual expansion.

"In such a far-flung universe of universes there is always great danger of succumbing to the error of the circumscribed viewpoint, to the evil inherent in a segmentalized conception of reality and divinity." [19:1.4]

"When the development of the intellectual nature proceeds faster than that of the spiritual, such a situation renders communication with the Thought Adjuster both difficult and dangerous. Likewise, overspiritual development tends to produce a fanatical and perverted interpretation of the spirit leadings of the divine indweller." [110:6.4]

Balanced intellectual and spiritual growth is essential for good mental and spiritual health.

"To the experiential universes even divine values are increased as actualities by enlarged comprehension of reality meanings." [115:2.2]

Expansion of meanings is essential for the recognition of spiritual values.

"The incomplete and finite concept of the Infinite which is held by the temporal and limited creature mind is, in and of itself, potential evil. But the augmenting error of unjustified deficiency in reasonable spiritual rectification of these originally inherent intellectual disharmonies and spiritual insufficiencies, is equivalent to the realization of actual evil." [130:4.14]

Continuous study is essential for the correction of partial understandings and the recognition of spiritual insufficiencies.

"All static, dead, concepts are potentially evil. The finite shadow of relative and living truth is continually moving. Static concepts invariably retard science, politics, society, and religion. Static concepts may represent a certain knowledge, but they are deficient in wisdom and devoid of truth." [130:4.15]

Knowledge must be in a state of dynamic development in order to prevent our minds from becoming rigid structures of static concepts.

Some additional comments from The Urantia Book

"The progressive comprehension of reality is the equivalent of approaching God." [196:3.3]

"Man's terrestrial orientation, his cosmic insight, and his spiritual directionization are all enhanced by a better comprehension of universe realities and their techniques of interassociation, integration, and unification." [106:0.2]

"All such inner and spiritual communion is termed spiritual insight. Such religious experiences result from the impress made upon the mind of man by the combined operations of the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth as they function *amid and upon the ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings of the evolving sons of God.*" [101:1.3]

Look closely at this quote: "...as they function amid and upon the ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings of the evolving sons of God." *Ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings are the resources upon which our spiritual benefactors depend in order to do their work within our minds.* We each control the quality and quantity of these resources available to the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth for their work in our inner lives.

"Growing religious experience means incessant activity in spiritual growth, intellectual expansion, factual enlargement, and social service. There is no real religion apart from a highly active personality." [102:2.7]

Read material that challenges your intellect; get involved in service that challenges your personality—growth and insight come only from mental processes of struggle and problem solving.