

Igniting My Spiritual Passion—Cheryl Phillips

I was raised in the First Christian Church and developed a love for Jesus at the age of five. As I entered high school, my curiosity about other religions grew. This led me to explore Buddhism, Hinduism, and a variety of New Age philosophies through extensive reading.

In 1987, a friend introduced me to *The Urantia Book*, and I was captivated. It seemed to answer all my questions and offered explanations that resonated deeply with me.

In 1989, Jehovah's Witnesses knocked on my door. Drawn by their worldwide brotherhood and their dedication to a remarkable and well-organized ministry, I believed the Jehovah's Witnesses would embrace *The Urantia Book*. Motivated by this conviction, I joined them, embarking on a significant and transformative chapter of my life. Initially, my husband grew jealous of the time I spent studying with the Witnesses, as we often laughed and enjoyed ourselves during discussions. Eventually, he joined me, and in 1990, we were baptized together. For fifteen years, we were deeply involved in their community—helping build new Kingdom Halls, participating in door-to-door ministry, and attending five weekly meetings.

Our journey with the Jehovah's Witnesses started in Austin, Texas. Later, we moved to Washington State, where we joined another congregation for two years before returning to Austin. However, over time, certain doctrinal beliefs, such as the idea that only 144,000 people would ascend to heaven, became difficult for me to accept. This eventually led us to disengage from the Witnesses after moving to Midland, Texas. That period marked a spiritual low point for me, filled with doubt and depression as I struggled to find a community committed to a higher spiritual purpose.

In time, *The Urantia Book* reignited my spiritual passion. In 2012, I ordered ten copies of the book, placing two in local libraries and sharing the others with my husband and friends. I joined the Urantia Book Fellowship and found an online study group, which, in those pre-Zoom days, conducted sessions over the phone.

Since then, my engagement with the Urantia community has grown immensely. I have participated in numerous classes through Urantia University, including “A Way of Life in the Family of God” and “The Progress Project.” In 2019, I graduated from the School of Evangelists under the Christ Experiment. I also began hosting two study groups: one focusing on Part 4 of *The Urantia Book* every other Wednesday, and another started in 2015 every Thursday now delving into Part 3. Additionally, my husband and I have a personal study session every Tuesday.

My spiritual journey has also included exploring *A Course in Miracles*. I completed two rounds of its “40 Days with Jesus” program and, since 2021, have hosted a weekly Zoom study of the text.

My involvement with other Urantia-based groups continues to expand. I participate in Mission Urantia and Mansion World Teachings and have recently volunteered with the Historical Society's archive department. I am deeply committed to supporting others on their spiritual journeys—we are, after all, a family.

Two passages from *The Urantia Book* beautifully encapsulate my guiding principles:

“The highest happiness is indissolubly linked with spiritual progress. Spiritual growth yields lasting joy, peace which passes all understanding” (*Paper 100:4.3*).

“The presence of a friend enhances all beauty and exalts every goodness. By intelligent symbols man is able to quicken and enlarge the appreciative capacities of his friends. One of the crowning glories of human friendship is this power and possibility of the mutual stimulation of the imagination. Great spiritual power is inherent in the consciousness of wholehearted devotion to a common cause, mutual loyalty to a cosmic Deity” (*Paper 160:2.8*).

These words inspire and motivate me to live a life devoted to spiritual growth and community, always striving to bring joy and understanding to those around me.