

## **Q & A with Sheila Keene-Lund** Author of *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop*

*Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* by Sheila Keene-Lund is a high-level explication of *The Urantia Book*, a little-known epochal revelatory text claiming superhuman authorship that was first published in 1955.

Born in Spain to an English father and a Puerto Rican mother, Sheila Keene-Lund has been an avid spiritual seeker since her teens, serving as a Transcendental Meditation teacher, a deaconess in the Liberal Catholic Church, and as a hospice worker who developed workshops on spiritually caring for the living and dying. She is currently education committee chair of Urantia Association International and vice president of the Urantia Association of Florida. Sheila offers presentations and workshops, nationally and internationally, on the concepts and practical application of the principles discovered in her research and described in *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop*.

### **How does *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* differ from current religious thinking?**

*Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* is the first book to reconcile and compare our current understanding of the origin, history, and destiny of the universe—as well as humankind’s spiritual evolution—with the information contained in *The Urantia Book*, the latest planetary revelation. The result is a comprehensive and inspiring worldview that includes and uplifts all others—one that brings new meaning to the myths of ancient times, clarifies and expands all religious worldviews, and validates and elevates the discoveries of science.

### **What do you mean by the phrase “planetary revelation?”**

Since ancient times, human evolution has been guided by revelation: either personal or planetary, the latter also being called “public” or “epochal” revelation. Personal revelation is discovered through study, visions, or reflection on personal beliefs and convictions; planetary or public revelation is imparted by celestial or superhuman personalities as the inspiration for a new era of planetary evolution. What is revealed on these occasions is determined by how much the collective human mind has progressed and can assimilate.

According to *The Urantia Book*, which is purported to contain the latest planetary revelation, our world has received five such revelations. The first four of these provided important glimpses of eternal realities, such as the concept of God and survival of the soul; some of these concepts survive in the belief systems of organized religions today. And now, the divinely revealed knowledge contained in the last of these five revelations is being disseminated and assimilated worldwide in the form of the Urantia text. The Urantia revelation has been translated into 14 languages and over 650,000 copies of the English editions have been sold. What many readers have discovered is that the Urantia revelation fills in missing pieces in our religious history and in our understanding of origin and destiny; it also validates and expands upon the conclusions humans have made with regards the findings of archaeology and science. *The Urantia Book* itself is over 2000 pages long and is written in a very dense language, which tends to intimidate many people. *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* is the first book to reconcile a wide swath of human knowledge with this epochal text to make this revelation accessible to the majority of the people.

**You say that celestial or superhuman personalities imparted the latest planetary revelation. Can you expand on this?**

*The Urantia Book* describes the vast universe as having semi-spiritual and spiritual counterparts. (Interestingly, science has discovered that 90 percent of the universe is unseen.) Just as the physical universe is teeming with mortal humans, so is the spiritual universe teeming with different types of celestial beings (for a lack of a better word); in other words, there are those who are of spirit origin and there are also beings like you and I, who have been born and eventually die on their planets of origin. After this experience, they embark on the afterlife, and they move inward through the multilevel universe as they grow in spirit status. All ascending beings are guided in their journey, and one of the ways that this is done in the physical plane is through revelation. It is through progressive revelation that the errors in our human philosophies can be rectified and that we gain more comprehensive knowledge about eternal realities.

**How did *The Urantia Book* actually come through to us? How did it get put into book form?**

*The Urantia Book*, also known as *The Urantia Papers*, was authored by a large group of celestial personalities—a corps of angelic and super angelic beings (known in short as “revelators”), and their mission was to present a many-sided epochal revelation to humankind in the form of a printed book.

The presentation of these papers to our planet (known to the revelators as “Urantia”) involved a thirty-year process that was completed in the early 1940s. Most of the communications that resulted in *The Urantia Papers* consisted of direct interaction between a superhuman revelatory commission and a contact group that consisted of six humans based in the city of Chicago—with a single individual (whose identity is unknown) acting as the key human conduit. In addition, a group of several hundred people known as the Forum, which met once a week during these years in Chicago, were indirectly involved in the communication process. Members of the Forum were encouraged to provide feedback on initial drafts of papers authored by the revelators, which in turn was communicated to the celestial authors through the human contact group. This input included but was not limited to hundreds of questions, the answers to which are seamlessly woven throughout the text of *The Urantia Book*. Much of the process involved in the materialization of the papers is poorly understood, but certain aspects of this work are a matter of record. One thing is certain – the work was not channeled.

An important point I would like to add here is that how *The Urantia Book* came to be is not as important as recognizing its value. *The Urantia Book* is primarily a book of spiritual insight and guidance, containing the highest quality of insight into spiritual truth and Reality of any book I know. It presents the most meaningful spiritual cosmology available on the planet - the best in Christian eschatology paling by comparison. It contains the most dynamic, complete, and spiritually uplifting picture of the life and teaching of Jesus available. It integrates science, philosophy, and religion more effectively than any other religious source. And it is validated more completely by experience than any religious view with which I am acquainted. The information in *The Urantia Book* has the potential to get rid of the current philosophical stagnation which is sabotaging our efforts to progress socially. *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* facilitates this process by helping readers discover new and higher meanings and values as they examine and explore current knowledge from philosophy, history, culture, science, and religion, through the provocative lens of the Urantia revelation.

**You said this revelation was years in the works and was finally published in 1955. Why then?**

If *The Urantia Book* had been published prior to 1955, the human mind would not have been able to grasp much of its content. For example, *The Urantia Book* provides extensive information about the Sumerian civilization including its origin; it presents a universe with an aggregate evolutionary potential of around seven trillion inhabited planets. Without the archaeological discoveries of the Sumerian tablets in the late nineteenth century and the discovery of the outward motion of galaxies by Hubble in the 1920's, for example, the information in *The Urantia Book* would have been too far-fetched.

**How do recent scientific discoveries validate the information presented in *The Urantia Book*?**

Many discoveries in science support statements made in *The Urantia Book*. Archeological findings in the Americas and in the south of India, for example, are beginning to conflict with the widely held "out of Africa" theory. The website [Ubthenews.com](http://Ubthenews.com) provides a timeline of discoveries that shows how science is increasingly catching up to *The Urantia Book's* historic and scientific information. *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* also correlates many scientific discoveries with the information in *The Urantia Book*.

**In what ways does *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* fill in the missing pieces in our history?**

It is impossible to truly appreciate the present without knowing important facts about our past. It is so easy to miss the value of these stories of gods fighting with gods, and gods coming down to Earth to create humanity, by dismissing them as fanciful. *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* recounts some of the myths and legends from various parts of the world and points to the recurrent elements that they share. By reconciling these with the revelation in *The Urantia Book*, gaps in our knowledge are filled in and we gain insights into the origin of our creation and combat myths. As we discover deeper meaning in our prehistory, we grow in awe and appreciation of our ancestors who ensured through story telling that the happenings of long ago would not be forgotten.

**What is the cosmological model presented in *The Urantia Book* and how does it relate to The Big Bang model?**

First let's talk about the Big Bang Model:

According to the Big Bang model, the universe started out from infinite density and temperature – and then expanded, thinned out, and cooled. The Big Bang model rests mainly in observable facts such as:

1. The outward motion of galaxies first discovered by Hubble in 1929.
2. The radioactive dating of Earth which matches with the Big Bang model calculations.
3. The abundance of primordial elements such as Hydrogen and Helium found in the observable universe.

However, the Big Bang model is faced with problems. For example, there are globular clusters in space which appear older than the universe and although this issue has been addressed, there still

remain questions as to how accurately the ages of these objects are measured. Also the observations that led to the idea that up to 90 percent of the matter in the universe is unseen, made up of dark matter that has not been detected, is still to be adequately addressed by the Big Bang model.

Nonetheless, the Big Bang cosmological model is widely accepted as a virtual proven fact. To some, this model is seen as a reasonable interpretation of their religious beliefs. However, the only fact about the Big Bang model is that it is an unproven theory.

Alternative theories exist and a most compelling one is the “respiratory universe” model presented in *The Urantia Book* which explains the two-billion-year expansion-contraction cycles of space. It also informs us about our grand universe, broadly illustrated as a wheel divided into seven multilevel inhabited superuniverses which rotate as a group around a central point in the cosmos; this “place” called the “central universe” is beyond space and time and is the source and center of gravity and all physical energy; it is also the destiny of all ascending personalities. The problems of the Big Bang are solved by this model. In my book, *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop*, I present a simple description of the creation and organization of the universe as revealed in *The Urantia Book*.

From a cosmic perspective, however, the most important point to bear in mind is that *The Urantia Book* provides for a vast spiritual cosmology supporting the physical one, presenting for the first time, a clear vision of humanity’s place in the universe and the individual destiny of the human personality after physical death.

### **What is the concept of God that is revealed in the Urantia text?**

Every religion has its concept of God and at first glance, they seem to contradict each other. However, the beauty of *The Urantia Book* is that it ties all of these concepts together to provide a comprehensive vision of God’s influence on the individual, in the world, and in the universe. In my book I simplify this complex topic, explaining, for example, the concept of divine personality in relation to human personality; the function and origin of evolving deity; and the indwelling presence of a fragment of the Universal God in each individual in relation to current understanding so that these concepts can be more easily comprehended.

### **You’ve indicated that *The Urantia Book* has a new biography of Jesus Christ. Who was this man Jesus according to the text?**

Most of the information that we know about Jesus is found in the New Testament of the Bible and also in the Dead Sea Scrolls that were discovered in 1947. While this information has provided enough guidance to allow for spiritual evolution, the sources also contain inconsistencies, errors, and gaps in knowledge that create the philosophical stagnation and spiritual disorientation that foster human divisiveness, evident throughout history. By contrast, *The Urantia Book* provides the first complete presentation of the life of Jesus, including his missing years, clarifying his teachings, the purpose of his bestowal on Earth, and the many events in his life that have been misunderstood. In *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* I addressed the many questions I had as a Catholic that had been on my mind since my teenage years, and I did this by reconciling current knowledge with the revealed story in *The Urantia Book*, and whenever possible, comparing claims in the revelation with archaeological and scientific discoveries.

## **What is “heaven?” What is the relationship of heaven to the material universe?**

We all have distinct ideas about heaven. Some of us think of heaven as a location, the place they can find God. Others perceive heaven as the destination of the “good” souls. Still others think of heaven as a state of bliss. We find greater meaning in heaven when we can relate it to our world and our universe. In *Heaven Is Not the Last Stop* the concept of heaven is clarified and expanded beyond current definitions. Heaven is recognized as the vast expanse in the multilevel universe through which ascending humans travel in their journey to God. It is the vast arena where we grow in our ability to know, love, and serve God. And we don’t do this alone. Ascending personalities are assisted by a vast host of celestial beings that are specifically assigned to this task.

## **If heaven is not the last stop, what is?**

Our concept of heaven as a “state of being” or “as a place of eternal rest” is outdated and uninspiring. To have greater meaning in our lives, heaven must be understood within the context of our universe. With the discoveries of science and the insights of the most recent planetary revelation, we can finally define heaven as the vast expanse of the unseen universe that ascending personalities go through after death of the physical body on their way to find God in Paradise, the center of all creation. Heaven is the arena where evolving beings grow toward perfection. What is extremely exciting is that revelation tells us that humans, as perfected spirits, may one day be involved in helping organize the levels beyond the present outer limits of the grand universe.

## **When Jesus spoke about the “kingdom of heaven,” what was he referring to?**

There are two main definitions that Jesus was referring to: one was intimated when he said “my kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36) and also when he said “God reigns in the hearts and lives of individuals (Luke 17:20,21). When Jesus spoke of his heavenly kingdom he was referring to the unseen part of our universe, which we will experience after death. The kingdom of God in this world represents the personal realization of the spiritual brotherhood of the sons and daughters of God on Earth; the establishment of the brotherhood of man through every individual’s commitment to doing the will of the Father—becoming Godlike.

## **What would you say are two of the most URGENT revealed religious concepts?**

It depends from what perspective I am answering. From a Christian perspective I would say it is the discovery of the true life of Jesus and his teachings and also the discovery of a spiritual cosmology that supports the belief in an eternal destiny. From the perspective of science, I would say that it gives insights into information about the universe that has yet to be discovered and about the global migration of the human races in pre-historic times that would be fascinating to explore. Each religion and belief system would find concepts in the Urantia revelation that resonate with their teachings and even expands upon them.

### ***Is Heaven Is Not the Last Stop a religious book?***

The concept of religion today is mostly misunderstood. I have discovered that true religion, like spirituality, is the living and dynamic experience of knowing and finding God with the goal of growing in perfection, in godlikeness. When we associate religion with the rigid dogmas of religious institutions, or separate religion from spirituality, it loses much of its power to inspire and it is this power to inspire that is needed to discover and embrace higher ideals to live by. With this definition of religion in mind, then yes, my book is religious because it will expand the reader's understanding of God and their place in the universe to awaken an increased passion for self development – for becoming the best one can be for the sake of this and future generations.

### **What would you say is the will of God?**

The will of God is perhaps one of the simplest concepts in religion to deduce. Yet you would not think so, judging by the multitude of definitions in the Internet for the will of god. If we can accept that human beings with will were created to eventually know and find God, to grow in perfection, in Godlikeness, then we can translate this concept into a practical mission statement that says that the will of God is that each of us develop a balanced, God-knowing personality for the purpose (and purpose is important) of growing in our expression of the qualities of divinity and in our ability to contribute to the brotherhood of man. This universal interpretation of God's will brings forward the issue of our personal responsibility for progressively developing our soul as well as the attributes of intellectual, moral, and spiritual character-development that are essential to advancing civilization.

Most of us get caught up trying to figure out what special activity we are supposed to do in this world; the problem with this is that it freezes us up; we become for all intent and purposes, paralyzed. If we recognize that every moment of the day is an opportunity to grow, to become the very best that we can be for the sake of others, then we become more effective and prepared to do God's work, whatever that may be.