

Question

Do the authors of The Urantia Book comment on the ideas of process philosophy and process theology?

Answer by Chris Halvorson

The short answer is "yes"; and as the revelators stress over and over again, the most fundamental problem with all of the past scholarly attempts to understand human nature, the nature of God, and the relationship between the two is the lack of a true recognition of personality, and its distinction from selfhood. Scholars are aware of the word symbol "personality", but they do not comprehend to what fact of reality it actually refers; hence, they cannot truly understand anything.

Here are some of the statements in The Urantia Book in regard to process philosophy and process theology. The revelators acknowledge the idea of "process", but they clarify it. For example:

"Life is really a process which takes place between the organism (selfhood) and its environment. The personality imparts value of identity and meanings of continuity to this organismal-environmental association. Thus it will be recognized that the phenomenon of stimulus-response is not a mere mechanical process since the personality functions as a factor in the total situation. It is ever true that mechanisms are innately passive; organisms, inherently active."
(112:1.13)

"Physical life is a process taking place not so much within the organism as between the organism and the environment. And every such process tends to create and establish organismal patterns of reaction to such an environment. And all such directive patterns are highly influential in goal choosing." (112:1.14)

"In the human organism the summation of its parts constitutes selfhood--individuality--but such a process has nothing whatever to do with personality, which is the unifier of all these factors as related to cosmic realities." (112:1.18)

"The evolutionary type of knowledge is but the accumulation of protoplasmic memory material; this is the most primitive form of creature consciousness. Wisdom embraces the ideas formulated from protoplasmic memory in process of association and recombination, and such phenomena differentiate human mind from mere animal mind. Animals have knowledge, but only man possesses wisdom capacity. Truth is made accessible to the wisdom-endowed individual by the bestowal on such a mind of the spirits of the Father and the Sons, the Thought Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth." (101:6.4)

The first three above quotations are from section 1 of Paper 112, which has the title "Personality and Reality", in parallel to "Process and Reality", the title of Alfred North Whitehead's seminal book on process philosophy, published in 1929. The revelators also point out the limitations of the concept of "process" in regard to God. For example:

"The infinite and eternal Ruler of the universe of universes is power, form, energy, process, pattern, principle, presence, and idealized reality. But he is more; he is personal; he exercises a sovereign will, experiences self-consciousness of divinity, executes the mandates of a creative mind, pursues the satisfaction of the realization of an eternal purpose, and manifests a Father's love and affection for his universe children. And all these more personal traits of the Father can be better understood by observing them as they were revealed in the bestowal life of Michael, your Creator Son, while he was incarnated on Urantia." (3:6.7)

"The religionist of philosophic attainment has faith in a personal God of personal salvation, something more than a reality, a value, a level of achievement, an exalted process, a transmutation, the ultimate of time-space, an idealization, the personalization of energy, the entity of gravity, a human projection, the idealization of self, nature's upthrust, the inclination to goodness, the forward impulse of evolution, or a sublime hypothesis. The religionist has faith in a God of love. Love is the essence of religion and the wellspring of superior civilization." (102:6.3)

"Those who would invent a religion without God are like those who would gather fruit without trees, have children without parents. You cannot have effects without causes; only the I AM is causeless. The fact of religious experience implies God, and such a God of personal experience must be a personal Deity. You cannot pray to a chemical formula, supplicate a mathematical equation, worship a hypothesis, confide in a

postulate, commune with a process, serve an abstraction, or hold loving fellowship with a law." (102:7.3)

I'm sure that the mention of "process" in these last three quotations is in direct response to the early proponents of process theology, in particular, Charles Hartshorne.