



FREE DOWNLOADS OF *THE URANTIA BOOK* AT URANTIA.ORG

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By Joanne Strobel, Urantia Foundation, Illinois, United States

Urantia Foundation has been providing free electronic downloads of *The Urantia Book* and its translations for almost eight years, since 2010. The primary reason why we provide them for free is our commitment to dissemination. In [Article II of the Foundation's Declaration of Trust](#) it says:

The concordant objects for which the Foundation is created are to perpetually preserve inviolate the text of *The Urantia Book* and to disseminate the principles, teachings, and doctrines of *The Urantia Book*.

Free electronic downloads are now available in eighteen languages and in twenty-six

electronic formats. Why so many formats? We constantly strive to accommodate an ever-increasing assortment of devices, the different software on each, and consumer preferences for one electronic format over another. Which format is best for you? [Click here.](#)

Another reason for providing free downloads is to increase the availability of the book around the world. You've undoubtedly heard that the number of bookstores is rapidly declining. While thousands of new books are published each year, any book published in prior years is considered "backlisted." That makes *The Urantia Book* a backlisted book of sixty-two years. The likelihood that a bookstore will stock *The Urantia Book* is diminishing year by year. And that significantly reduces the chance of someone stumbling across it while browsing bookshelves in a shop.

While Urantia Foundation does its utmost to place the physical book in brick-and-mortar bookstores and online retail stores around the world, the challenges are endless. Some corners of the globe present difficulties—if not impossibilities—when attempting to distribute the physical book. But our efforts

are rewarded by knowing that, no matter where you call home, whether it be Africa, South America, Asia, or Europe, if you have a Wi-Fi connection, then the book can be downloaded in its entirety. It is comforting to know that neither income levels, nor geographical locations are barriers for obtaining *The Urantia Book*.

Cesare Nicoletti of Italy wrote, "I discovered *The Urantia Book* online by searching 'Religions in Italy.' How wonderful it was to download the Italian translation from urantia.org. Since then I have been helping Italians find the book online through Wikipedia and my Facebook page. I am confident that soon there will be a reader's group in Italy."

The number of downloads from urantia.org continues to increase. When you combine the number of downloads from our website with



The Apple app

those of the Apple (iPhone) App, the numbers exceeded 100,000 in 2016 alone.

Richard Jernigan is a fan of the Apple app and wrote, "The Apple app of *The Urantia Book* is beautifully laid out, closely approximates the print version, and has versatility to fit one's

personal preferences. I use it daily."

And the App developer writes, "If you have the app, please take a moment in the App Store and write a favorable review. It really makes a difference. Apple uses the number and quality of reviews to decide how often

to show an app in search results, among other benefits. A simple yet long-lasting and useful way to help people discover *The Urantia Book* is to lend your voice by leaving thoughtful online reviews wherever the book is available."

Make no mistake: We are still selling more than twenty thousand physical books each year. But when you factor in the number of downloads, you can conclude that slowly but surely this revelation is spreading!

NOTEWORTHY DECISIONS FROM THE JULY 2017 BOARD OF TRUSTEES



By Judy Van Cleave, Trustee, Secretary, Urantia Foundation, Idaho, United States

New Executive Director

Starting on September 1, 2017, Tamara Strumfeld became the new executive director of Urantia Foundation. This well-deserved promotion comes following her nearly 14 years of service at Urantia Foundation. During Tamara's tenure she has done almost every job imaginable, including the implementation of numerous committee initiatives and the management of a wide array of translations, book distribution, and outreach projects. Tamara has been a diligent server of the circles because of her dedication to

getting *The Urantia Book* and its teachings into the world.

Work at 533 and Beyond

The day-to-day work of Urantia Foundation went rather smoothly during the second quarter of 2017. Tamara, Joanne, and Ashley made sure that we did not miss a beat. Another special thank you goes to all the board committees, especially to the website committee consisting of Richard Jernigan, Víctor García-Bory, Lu Schanfarber, and Tamara Strumfeld. Additional thanks go to Sherry Layton for her outstanding work on the Chinese fundraiser.

Some people wonder how our very small staff gets everything done. It is true that we have a small team on



Tamara Strumfeld

site, but a much larger team of outsourced contractors and volunteers assisting them. We have become very 21st century and virtual/zoom in our work with outsourced help. How fortunate to have such a talented team of readers worldwide working for the Foundation!

Here is a list of most of the outsourced team: Team Zig (website management company); Mary Jo Garascia and website translators working on urantia.org; Michael Zehr as UBIS webmaster; Bob Solone working on reader services; Cece Forrester doing administrative tasks, editing, and data entry; Larry Watkins on programming of text files; Georges Michelson-Dupont on text formatting; John Strobel and Ken Keyser on maintenance, repairs, and oversight of the building; over two dozen translators and revisers; Jay Peregrine assists the Translation Committee; Tim Kenny and Knutte and Associates provide accounting and auditing; the UBIS board and facilitators are all volunteers; Bob Purcell provides our trademark and copyright work; and IT maintenance is contracted with Geek Squad and Tim Kenny's IT manager, Paul Kenar. In addition to the



Tim Kenny

outsourced team, individual board members work and accomplish so much for the Foundation.

Committee Reports

As always, the board reviewed reports from the Book, Education, Finance, Fundraising, Governance and Nominations, Public Relations, and Translation Committees. A great deal of work continues on all fronts. As new milestones are accomplished, we will share them with you.

Finances

The second quarter of 2017 was a "steady-state" quarter in spending with our investments doing well. Expenses were slightly above 2016 but below budget. We expect that trend to continue. Donations year-to-date are

up because of a one-time estate distribution and an early 2017 year-end-match pledge. Normal donations were slightly above last year. As usual, the winter match fundraiser will be vital to finishing 2017 with a balanced budget.

Books

Year-to-date physical book sales were down around 9%. Tamara reported, "This is certainly not due to a lack of effort on the Foundation's part. We all know that the book industry is changing, and that keeping a 1955-backlisted book in the bookstores is becoming more difficult. Still, I do not feel that this is a trend, but rather the natural ebb and flow of growth." Hopefully, by the end of 2017, we will be back to positive growth of physical book sales. On the bright

side, German book sales were up 277%.

The number of Urantia Books downloaded from www.urantia.org continues to grow. So far 57,349 books have been downloaded, which is up 41% from 2016. When you factor in these downloads plus downloads from the Urantia Book Apple app, clearly the Urantia Revelation is getting into the world but by a different means than our predecessors ever imagined. We live in a new digital age, and our job is to make *The Urantia Book* and its teachings easily available on the web. With that said, we believe there remains a vital need to keep physical books readily available.

Outreach

Urantia Foundation has a

desire and budget to support outreach efforts by readers and organizations. We frequently provide low-cost or even free books and secondary literature to those who are sharing the revelation with potential new reader communities. If you have an outreach project that needs our help, please ask. While our budgets are limited, we frequently have enough resources to support local reader outreach efforts. It is our sacred duty to bring this revelation to the truth-hungry souls of this world.

Succession Planning

The promotion of Tamara Strumfeld to executive director signals the true beginning of transitioning the leadership of Urantia Foundation to the next generation. Tamara will do an excellent job, and so will her

younger cohorts. Succession planning and implementation is the highest organizational priority of Urantia Foundation. This bridge to the future includes who leads, how we reach younger readers, the services we provide, and the financial legacy we leave for the next generation. A new fund has been created called the "Generation Bridge." If you want to invest in the revelation and the next generation of believers, please make out your wills and specify that you are giving to the "Generation Bridge." Note in your will that your donation is earmarked for this fund. Of course, you need to provide for your families, but investing in the revelation provides fuel for building a more spiritual and peaceful world.

The New and Improved Trademark Policy

As we discussed after the April meeting, Urantia Foundation has passed the following new trademark policy.

2017 Usage Policy for Urantia Foundation's Registered Trademarks:

Urantia, Urantian, and the Concentric Circles Symbol

Urantia Foundation's new policy for trademark usage was approved by the Board of Trustees on April 22, 2017. It was revised from the 1998 policy due to the many changes brought about by developments with the Internet, smartphones, social media, blogs, and the expanding global distribution of *The Urantia Book*. This new policy expands the safe-harbor and fair-use rights for the name Urantia, Urantian,

and the Concentric Circles Symbol (consisting of three azure blue concentric circles on a white background).

This policy is based on the following guiding principles that protect Urantia Foundation's trademarks while providing fair use and safe harbors.

1. Preserve the text of *The Urantia Book* inviolate by using the circles and the name Urantia Foundation to identify *The Urantia Book* and translations published by Urantia Foundation.
2. Empower others to expand the awareness, education, dissemination, and socialization of the good news of *The Urantia Book*.
3. Safeguard the name Urantia to protect it from

being preempted. The name Urantia should lead people to *The Urantia Book*.

If you have any questions about this policy or other uses of the registered trademarks, please contact Urantia Foundation by telephone at +1 (773) 525-3319, by email at urantia@urantia.org, or by letter addressed to Urantia Foundation, 533 W. Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614, USA.



Fair Use and Safe Harbored Rights

1. The term "Urantia" may be used in reference to the planet earth. The terms "Urantian" or "Urantians" may be used in reference to inhabitants of the planet earth or to persons

who read *The Urantia Book*. Both "Urantia" and "Urantian" may be used as an expression of a person's faith and belief system.

2. The Concentric Circles Symbol and/or the word Urantia may be used in connection with non-profit and non-commercial activities (other than in connection with copies of significant portions of *The Urantia Book*). These include events celebrating the relationship between humans and God, such as prayer sessions and worship groups; Urantia Book conferences and study groups; and ceremonies such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Published materials in print and on social media postings for these activities may include the Concentric Circles Symbol and/or the word "Urantia." There should be no suggestion

that Urantia Foundation approves, sponsors, or endorses an activity or is affiliated with the activity unless Urantia Foundation agrees in writing to such participation. The trademark symbols "TM" and "@" may not be used in print or web-based materials in association with these activities.

3. The Concentric Circles Symbol and the word "Urantia" may be displayed on any page of a website provided that:

The word Urantia is used 1) as an identifier of an individual's beliefs, 2) as a reference to *The Urantia Book*, or 3) in reference to the name of planet earth. The symbol is not used as the website identifier but rather to convey other meanings associated with the symbol as described in *The Urantia Book* such as the banner of Michael, the symbol of Melchizedek, or the material emblem of the Trinity government. The symbol may also be used as an identifier of a person's beliefs in the teachings of *The Urantia Book* similar to the way Christians use the cross. The circles and the word Urantia cannot be used next to each other as an identifier or like a trademark unless licensed by Urantia Foundation. There should be no suggestion that Urantia Foundation approves, sponsors, or endorses the website or is affiliated with the website unless Urantia Foundation agrees in writing to such participation. The trademark symbols "TM" and "@" should not appear with the Concentric Circles Symbol or the term "Urantia" on a website.

4. An individual person may use the Concentric Circles Symbol and the words "Urantia" and "Urantian" as an indication of his or her

personal faith in God and his or her respect for the teachings set forth in *The Urantia Book*. This includes using the circles and/or the word "Urantia" on personal social media pages, such as Facebook. The trademark symbols "TM" and "@" should not appear with the Concentric Circles Symbol or the term "Urantia" on a social media page.

5. Jewelry, drinking utensils, shirts, headgear, key chains, ID tags, tote bags, banners and flags, license plates, writing implements and other collectibles displaying the Concentric Circles Symbol and/or the term "Urantia" may be made and sold provided no more than 5000 of each such item are sold in any calendar year. There should be no suggestion that Urantia Foundation approves, sponsors, or endorses the item or the sale or is affiliated with the manufacturer or the seller unless Urantia Foundation agrees in writing to such participation.

The trademark symbols "TM" and "@" should not appear with the Concentric Circles Symbol or the term "Urantia" on any collectibles or in any associated advertisements or sales materials. The manufacturer and seller cannot make any claim for trademark rights in the Concentric Circles Symbol or the term "Urantia" by such use.

6. The Concentric Circles Symbol and the term "Urantia" may be used in purely aesthetic artwork such as posters, videos, paintings, pennants, flags, or other visual representations of its meaning as expressed in *The Urantia Book*. Such use should not suggest that Urantia Foundation approves, sponsors, or endorses either the artist or

the artwork or any associated activity in which the artwork is used or displayed or that the artwork or any associated activity is affiliated with Urantia Foundation unless Urantia Foundation agrees in writing to such participation. The trademark symbols "TM" and "@" should not appear with the Concentric Circles Symbol or the term "Urantia" on your artwork.



Urantia Foundation's Rights

1. Urantia Foundation owns the

rights to the Concentric Circles Symbol on all books incorporating or relating to the text of *The Urantia Book*. The Concentric Circles Symbol may not be used as a logo/identifier on such books, whether in digital or physical form.

The word Urantia or Urantia Book may be used to identify a book with *The Urantia Book* and its teachings. But the term "Urantia" may not be used with any books in a way that implies Urantia Foundation has approved, sponsored, or endorsed any such materials or that the materials are affiliated with Urantia Foundation unless Urantia Foundation agrees in writing to such participation.

2. The Concentric Circles Symbol may not be used in connection with any work containing a copy of a significant portion of the English text of *The Urantia Book*, nor may the term "Urantia" be used in a way that implies Urantia Foundation has approved, sponsored, or endorsed the work or that the work is affiliated with Urantia Foundation unless Urantia Foundation agrees in writing to such participation.

3. Urantia Foundation owns copyrights in many translations of *The Urantia Book*. Significant portions of these translations should not be copied without the prior written permission of Urantia Foundation.

The English language text of *The Urantia Book* may be used to independently create a non-English translation; however, the Concentric Circles Symbol may not be used with any such translation. The term "Urantia" may not be used with any such translation in a way that implies Urantia Foundation has approved, sponsored, or endorsed any such translation or that the translation is affiliated with Urantia Foundation unless Urantia Foundation agrees in writing to such participation.

4. Urantia Foundation owns copyrights in the cover designs of all Urantia Books created by and for Urantia Foundation. Significant portions of the book cover design may not be used, except to the extent of presenting or displaying what is clearly an actual copy of *The Urantia Book*.

5. The name "Urantia Foundation" may not be used other than in reference to the legal entity named "Urantia Foundation." Any names or trademarks substantially similar to "Urantia Foundation," such as "Foundation for Urantians" may not be used.



URANTIA FOUNDATION'S INDEX OF *THE URANTIA BOOK*



By Tamara Strumfeld,
Urantia Foundation,
Chicago, Illinois, United
States

In the early years of the Urantia Book project, work on an index began. Many hands played a part, including Dr. William Sadler, Wilfred Kellogg, Anna Kellogg, Bill Sadler Jr., Anna Rawson, and Edith Cook. They inscribed a note on the dustcover of the first printing that "the Index of *The Urantia Book* is published in a separate volume. Price \$8.00." What wishful thinking! Little did they foresee the scope of such a complex project, and to date, the index has never been printed.

Not only did the book introduce a new vocabulary, but it also included concepts that the revelators themselves tell us have no true expression in the English language. Strings of words, nuances of meaning, and layers of language challenged those who attempted to index this work for many years. Ultimately the index became so

complex that it was abandoned in the files of Urantia Foundation for twenty years.

On a random day in 2007, former Executive Director Jay Peregrine discovered this abandoned work on index cards in an old-fashioned filing cabinet tucked away in the corner of one of the storerooms in the basement of 533. We were all delighted with his discovery!

It was quite a job to convert the physical cards to an electronic format. Over a two-year period Nathan Bartford, a summer intern, and a temporary worker created Word documents containing the information on the cards. Once that was done, Larry Watkins of Denver, Colorado, spent months 1) converting the Word docs into HTML files, 2) writing a program that would drop the Paper:section.paragraph numbers into all the references, which contained only page numbers at that time, and 3) link the references directly to the online text of *The Urantia Book*.

Then the project to check the references began. MaryJo Garascia of Denver, Colorado, did the first round. She checked each reference making sure it linked to the proper place in the book, and Larry made the corrections in the HTML files. This took almost a year.

Knowing this work was too

much for one pair of human eyes, we recruited almost two dozen volunteers to check the references again. Each volunteer received one letter and made sure each reference went to the correct paragraph in the book online. All errors were sent to Larry, who again made the corrections. This phase took about two years.

Words cannot express how much appreciation I have for everyone who participated in that phase of the project! Thank you!

After it was complete, I reviewed the letter A and discovered that, although the index had been elevated significantly, it was still riddled with errors and issues. If the index was ever going to be published, it still required a deep revision.

That is when Cece Forrester of Chicago, Illinois, was recruited. She is a professional editor and a long-time student of *The Urantia Book*. What a blessing it was to have her on the team! She worked diligently on correcting, updating, rewriting, etc. The process was as follows:

- Cece would check a letter and note all the errors and do the rewrites.
- I would review her edits and send them to Larry, who made the corrections.
- Then I would review the accuracy of the corrections that Larry made.

- Finally, Larry would again make the final set of corrections.

This process continued, round after round, for four long years. There were countless weekend hours, and many anticipated deadlines missed. Like the group in the early days, I did not foresee the scope of such a complex project.

But the finish line for the first edition of the index was finally crossed at 6:02 p.m. (CDT) this past Friday, September 29. I like to think that the members of the early group were somehow informed and were pleased by the news.

Again, I would like to thank everyone who participated in this project. And special recognition must go to Larry Watkins. All the HTML coding and programming he did was voluntary. Larry was always available, quick with his turnarounds, and never cranky with my incessant emails of never-ending corrections.

The team at Urantia Foundation is excited to make this online index available to the readership. Since it is conceptual, it will allow users to find not only words and phrases, but also ideas and concepts. In addition to online search engines, this index will be a useful study tool. Plans are also underway for an enhanced e-book. We will keep you posted.

Little did they foresee the scope of such a complex project.

DANCING WITH GOD: EMERGING IN SACREDNESS— A RETREAT FOR WOMEN AT URANTIA FOUNDATION



By Line St-Pierre and the attendees

What can be expected when thirteen women gather for a retreat called, "Dancing with God: Emerging in Sacredness"?

From the very moment of arrival at Urantia Foundation, the atmosphere of welcome, appreciation, and joyful anticipation was palpable. Thank you for the feminine touches, Joanne, Jen, and Tamara at 533!

It was in a milieu of trust created on the second floor of the Foundation that thirteen women, all students of *The Urantia Book*, gathered for this special retreat. The retreat facilitators used the Fishbowl method of conversation, in which leaders sit in the middle of the circle and begin a conversation that the outer circle later joins into. We contemplated and delved into two questions: How do I become aware of the sacred in the drudgery of everyday life? And how do we as women emerge in sacredness?

After three inspiring days of sharing, meditation, prayers, and laughter, we came to a better understanding of how the divine presence works in

us and around us. We have become more aware of our responsibility as the moral standard-bearers and the spiritual leaders of mankind, daughters of God.

Following are some comments from the attendees of the retreat as they danced with God.

- To have been privileged to participate in this emergence in sacredness has been a blessing beyond anything I could have imagined. The friendships formed, the knowledge gained from the life experiences shared by others,

the realization that we, as women, share a deeply spiritual common goal for ourselves, our children, and all of humanity on this planet, will serve to inspire and motivate me in the future to "take my place" as a daughter of God emerging in sacredness.

- I never experienced anything like this, going so deep where my heart and spirit released so many emotions of laughing and crying.

- We shared our lives, bared our souls, and came away with a better appreciation of *The Urantia Book* and how we can

apply its teachings to our everyday lives. Thank you for the warm and safe atmosphere where we delved into our hidden inner beings!

- Almost all of us have been wounded on this planet. Loss, disappointment, abuse, and grievous tragedies abound. Often, we don't share the real heartbreaking stories of our lives with others. Last weekend was a rare opportunity for a small group of women to share some of our deepest sorrows in a safe and supportive place. A lot of healing transpired. It was



Back: Katharina Becker, Rhonda McColgan, Dolores Rubio-Turtle, Meredith Tenney

Middle: Lana Heckenberg, Cheryl Glicker, Charlene Lutes, Jackie Koury

Front: Doreen Heyne, Carrie Prentice, Lila Dogim, Jen Siegel, Peggy Brown, Line St-Pierre

surprising to learn how many women carry heavy burdens, but it was even more inspiring to hear story after story of ways in which individuals have experienced the Spirit responding to prayers for help and leading them out of dark places. The weekend was a remarkable testament to the love of our divine parents for their children. Only in a Urantia gathering could one expect to find so many people consciously aware of the divine presence in their lives, transforming sorrow into joy. What a blessing to be there among the women!

- I am so grateful for the support of all my sisters. In this retreat, there was no pressure, and it became easy to be intimate with meaningful sharing.

- Though we were a disparate group and from different parts of the country, we began using the Fishbowl method of tackling questions and almost immediately felt the love of God in our midst. Rarely can such a trusting, spiritual environment develop among people in such a short time. I have made twelve new "forever friends." We played, too, adjuring to a Chicago piano bar to hear the multi-talented Bob Solone, who sang "Georgia on My Mind" and many other standards.

- Coming from that group and into the world made me see people differently and how giving time and attention makes the world a better place for me and those I come in contact with. I better understand now how to bear and show the fruits of my faith.

- The sharing with women quickly turned into an intimate sisterhood naturally fostered and held together by trust, safety, and respect. Hope and healing prevailed. My intellect knew I was a special child loved by God. Now it's in my heart where it rests today. I experienced sacredness as a woman, an elusive state for me until this special weekend. Thank you, daughters of God, for thirteen new friends in the Spirit and for helping me into a deeper relationship with the One who continues to shape my soul.

The Daughters of God group, facilitated by Katharina Becker, Doreen Heyne, Carolyn Prentice, and Line St-Pierre, would love to share this model with other groups to help them

encourage more women to appreciate their value and calling. If you would like to experience this retreat, we would be happy to travel to your retreat site to meet with your group. If you plan a date, gather six to eight women, and reserve a venue, we will commit to meeting with your group. We look forward to empowering more women to follow their spiritual longings for sisterhood and outreach. Please contact Line St-Pierre for more information at line.stpierre@gmail.com.

THE 2018 URANTIA ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



By Antonio Schefer, Heerlen, the Netherlands

Urantia Association of the Netherlands invites you to come to Europe during the early spring of 2018. From April 12 to 15, Urantia Association International is hosting its tenth international conference in the beautiful surroundings of the flower

fields near Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and we want you to be there too. These international conferences happen every three years and should not be missed. They provide wonderful opportunities for social interaction and inner growth while promoting a genuine fraternity with others from many cultures.

The conference theme is "Jesus as a Teacher" and will be fully focused on our Master. Besides his spiritual education, He showed us methods on how this education is most fruitful. What can we learn from him? What do we need in the twenty-first century to be true followers of his teachings? The program will provide a platform for many international readers, and there will be attendees who have studied the book for many years who can help us

learn more what the fifth epochal revelation is all about. There will be plenaries and workshops that will explore these relevant topics with an emphasis on learning by experience and by sharing in small groups.

We are looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at this event. Visitors are coming from around the world, and our financial aid committee is working hard to collect funds and manage requests from readers who need financial assistance to attend this conference. If you feel inclined, please contribute to our Conference Financial Aid Fund by visiting <https://urantia-association.org/get-involved/donate/>.

You may register for the event at <http://www.uai2018.org/program/register/en>. We also urge you to book your accommodations in the hotel now! A lot of activities take place in the region surrounding the conference venue at this time of the year, so it is very important to secure lodging early. You can book your room at <https://www.nh-hotels.com/event/the-10th-urantia-association-international-conference>.



THE IC'17 CHILDREN'S PROGRAM: HOW I GOT BY WITH A LOT OF HELP FROM MY FRIENDS!



By Marie Vasile, California,
United States

“Act boldly and unseen forces will come to your aid.” This is an anonymous quote Linda May shared during our Urantia Book study sessions. I would hear her and think: What a pleasant affirmation! If only I could have that sort of abiding trust in our heavenly creators and unseen friends.

Although I have been a reader for over thirty-five years, somehow that sort of conviction has always escaped me. My husband, Tom, teases me that I do a great imitation of Olive Oyl from Popeye, “Oooh! Oh, my! Oooh, my heavens!” Of course, having the teachings of *The Urantia Book* has helped. Still, the issues of my psyche persisted until a meeting with fellow reader Derek Samaras launched a transformative adventure for me. I have come to believe that this meeting was not by chance. He introduced me to Miranda Clendening, who was planning the children’s program for the Urantia Book Fellowship’s 2017 International Conference (IC’17).

Now that our nest is empty, it seemed the perfect opportunity to give back and help with the children’s program. Unfortunately, I fell ill, so I was not able to join the Fellowship Family Life committee calls until September. By then, Miranda had moved on to co-chairing the entire conference and had a heaping platter of commitments.

It became clear that if the children’s program were to happen, I would have to be a major player, maybe even the leading planner. I was not looking for such a responsibility. I was still recovering from being ill, and I had just accepted a new job. This was not the sort of thing I did—taking on leadership roles of this nature. Surely this calling did not have my name on it.

I turned to prayer and worshipful problem solving. “Dear Lord, what could I possibly bring to this situation?” I would ask. And I would get back, “Well, if not you, then who?” The answer was no one, really. Everyone else on the committee was more fully obligated. I was the most likely candidate. So, with much doubt and trepidation, I accepted the responsibility of organizing the children’s program for IC’17.

Children’s programs take planning and incorporate so many details—snacks, toileting, rest breaks, first aid supplies, etc. My head was spinning. Fortunately, there have been great women—Julia Fenderson and Sara Blackstock—preceding me, creating a wonderful

foundation from which to provide the Jerusalem Marketplace experience. With five conferences under her belt, Sara promised her mentorship and proved a saint, supporting and encouraging at every turn. Sara, kudos to you for your decades of devotion to our children and family life!

Extensive planning was required. Some days were eight to ten hours of just communication, keeping all parties apprised of needs and decisions. The Fellowship Family Life committee met once a month, and we assessed and adjusted as necessary. I created six drafts of a program schedule. Finally, a children’s program developed that appeared workable.

Accent here on “appeared.” I could only hope that what we planned would fly. We needed so many volunteers. Each attending parent was asked to volunteer a minimum of two hours. The parents of three of our five enrolled families were already involved up to their eyeballs in the functioning of the conference. From where were the necessary hands going to come? I would pray, and help came out of the woodwork, mostly.

The help appeared first with the Deoto family, Riula and William Deoto and their children Solonia and Gabriel: without them there could not have been a children’s program. Riula, our program co-chair, saw me through every anxious step of the



planning and delivery. Tom Vasile, my husband and co-chair, did so much at home behind the scenes and all he could in Denver. Lucia Samaras, Derek's mother, stayed most of every day just to help. Patricia Strawser and her Spiritual Engineering young women led Friday afternoon, meditation and art. Jack Miller taught yoga our first morning. Pato Banton came to tell a story as a Jesus Follower, and being the creative sort he is, coordinated a skit, which we performed excitedly before his Friday night concert. Janie Whinery folded paper boats that the children enjoyed coloring. Justin Michael and Patrick Yesh organized our gallery visit. Tony Finstad and April Helen Morgan provided so much calm, reassuring moral support, especially on Saturday—Interfaith Day. Christilyn and Steve Larson donated straw and floral decorations. And as for Jack Kane—he's been designated our unseen Family Life member and guardian angel! Whatever hole we found, whatever supply we needed, Jack was Johnny-on-the-spot. He built our jail; provided boom boxes, snacks, supplies; found friends to teach us jewelry making—you name it, he secured it for us, refusing to be reimbursed. I am convinced the angels on high are singing his praises, as I cannot proclaim them enough. Thanks, Jack!

For the equivalent of three and one-half days, those who ventured into the Jerusalem Marketplace played, sang, prayed, and worshipped together. All fingers and toes, arms and legs stayed intact. We shared basic principles about our heavenly Creators' special connections with each child, so I hope we met our goal of a safe, fun, spiritually-infused experience for our children.

One participating parent related that he did not enter a classroom or sit through even

one workshop, yet it was his best conference experience to date because of the abundance of loving service and unselfish devotion he experienced.

In my experience, it was all transforming. We were able to create a little bubble of care, concern, compassion, and love that is still seeing me through. I spent unfathomable hours planning, so the structure was present, yet with no guarantee we could pull it off. But we did—boldly and blessedly.

During our August Family Life committee meeting, we communicated everything to Sara. In closing, she shared that "to work with children is to work with the angels." Yes, Sara. I consider myself the most blessed—thanks to all my seen and unseen friends!

"Act boldly and unseen forces will come to your aid." No longer do I view that as a pleasant platitude. I now know what abiding trust looks like. Instead of wringing my hands, I say gratefully, "Oh, my heavens!! Let's roll up our sleeves. There's work to be done here with my name on it, and it is going to be glorious!"



SIGNS AND WONDERS



By Ken Keyser, Illinois,
United States

Editor's Note: On August 21, 2017, local Chicago readers of The Urantia Book gathered at the home of Marilynn and David Kulieke to celebrate the birthday of Jesus. Ken Keyser presented the following during the event.

Did you have an opportunity to witness the total eclipse of the sun as it crossed North America on August 21, 2017? Whether you traveled to be on the path of totality, observed the transit in partiality from where you live, or just saw the photos in the news, an eclipse is a delightful celestial display.

Much publicity prior to the event speculated whether the world was about to receive a "sign." For some readers of *The Urantia Book*, the fact that the eclipse was to occur on Jesus' birthday lent even more credence to its possible importance. In an effort to unpack some of the hype, I have reviewed a few statements that *The Urantia Book* makes on the subject.

Eclipses and supposed omens

During an eclipse, the sun can seem to disappear during the day and the sky to darken in a matter of minutes. This led some

ancient cultures to attribute such an incident to supernatural causes and regard it as a bad omen. "The early Nordics thought that eclipses were caused by a wolf that devoured a portion of the sun or moon." 85:3.4 (946.6)

It is true that eclipses have played a trifling part in human history. The outcome of a few minor historical battles changed because of an unpredicted solar eclipse. In some cases one side, being aware, gained the advantage when the other side, being unaware, became afraid or confused. Nonetheless, these were simply cases of utilizing what was happening naturally; no eclipse has ever occurred with the purpose of changing the outcome of a situation. An eclipse is an entirely natural phenomenon; two to five happen somewhere on the planet every year.

"It was not merely out of

curiosity that the ancients sought to know the future; they wanted to dodge ill luck. Divination was simply an attempt to avoid trouble. During these times, dreams were regarded as prophetic, while **everything out of the ordinary was considered an omen**. And even today the civilized races are cursed with the belief in signs, tokens, and other superstitious remnants of the advancing ghost cult of old. Slow, very slow, is man to abandon those methods whereby he so gradually and painfully ascended the evolutionary scale of life." 87:5.14 (963.9)

Magic and superstition

During the third preaching tour with his apostles and evangelists, while at Tiberias, Jesus gave a memorable talk on "Magic and Superstition." Paper 150 summarizes ten major points, the first point being that "The courses of the

stars in the heavens have nothing whatever to do with the events of human life on earth." 150:3 (1680) Even a cursory review of these ten points firmly establishes the value of the proper pursuit of science, while it dispels the myths about omens of good luck, harbingers of bad luck, and other supposed signs.

The Urantia Book notes that even the appealing legend of the star of Bethlehem was constructed by "well-meaning zealots" in an attempt to confirm that two extraordinary but wholly natural planetary conjunctions were a **token** that a great man had been born on earth.

"Oriental and near-Oriental minds delight in **fairy stories**, and they are continually spinning such **beautiful myths** about the lives of their religious leaders and political heroes. In the absence of printing, when most human



Back row: Mary Marshall, David Owen, Marilynn Kulieke, Geri Posner, Larry Postner, Lynne Kulieke, Belen Asidao, Mike Anczyk, John Strobel, Ken Keyser

Front row: Eugene Asidao, Colin Smith, David Kulieke, Julia Kelly Smith, Cece Forrester

Photo taken by Joanne Strobel

knowledge was passed by word of mouth from one generation to another, it was very easy for **myths** to become **traditions** and for **traditions** eventually to become accepted as **facts.**" 122:8.7 (1352.3)

The source of change

Jesus well knew that the people of his day yearned for the spectacular and the marvelous. On multiple occasions he challenged the "miracle minded" and "wonder-seeking generation" to instead pursue spiritual practices in their daily lives that would lead to great change. He said: "Remember that my kingdom is not to come with noise and glamor, but rather must it come **through the great change which my Father will have wrought in your hearts** and in the hearts of those who shall be called to join you in the councils of the kingdom." 137:6.5 (1533.3)

True signs that God is working near at hand

In the challenging era in which we live, oftentimes our seeking for a "sign" is our

search for proof that God is still working on this world. Jesus addressed that early in his ministry, just before the death of John the Baptist. On behalf of John, some of his friends brought to Jesus the last message which he ever received from John. They said: "John the Baptist has sent us to ask—are you truly the Deliverer, or shall we look for another?" Jesus paused to say to John's friends: "Go back and tell John that he is not forgotten. Tell him what you have seen and heard, **that the poor have good tidings preached to them.**" 144:8.1-3 (1626.6-8)

This simple message of reassurance to John foreshadowed a much greater narrative that Jesus was to share after his resurrection. In the course of his seventh morontia appearance, talking along the road to Emmaus during "The Walk with Two Brothers," Jesus quoted a number of passages from Psalms, Isaiah, and other prophets of the Old Testament.

"And have you never read in the Scriptures concerning this day of salvation for Jew and gentile, where it says that in him shall all the families of the earth be blessed; that he will

hear the cry of the needy and save the souls of the poor who seek him; that all nations shall call him blessed?

"That he will feed the flock like a true shepherd, gathering the lambs in his arms and tenderly carrying them in his bosom. That he will open the eyes of the spiritually blind and bring the prisoners of despair out into full liberty and light;

"That he will bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives of sin, and open up the prison to those who are enslaved by fear and bound by evil. That he will comfort those who mourn and bestow upon them the joy of salvation in the place of sorrow and heaviness.

"That he will not destroy the weak but minister salvation to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness. That those who believe in him shall have eternal life." 190:5.4 (2035.1)

I am persuaded that when we sincerely and wholeheartedly translate these simple directives into action, we are more remarkable than any sign or wonder. That, like

Jesus, we become living evidence, positively demonstrating that God is dynamically working on this world. "The more completely man understands himself and appreciates the personality values of his fellows, the more he will crave to know the Original Personality, and the more earnestly such a God-knowing human will strive to become like the Original Personality." 1:6.6 (30.5)

Strive to be Godlike, as Jesus instructed: preach good tidings to the poor, bring the prisoners of despair out into full liberty and light, comfort those who mourn, minister salvation to all who hunger and thirst for righteousness. That will demonstrate the great change that God the Father will have wrought in your heart. I am convinced that the **true signs** of God working near at hand are **ordinary things being done in an extraordinarily compassionate and loving manner.**

Note: All **bold** emphasis and modified spacing added by author.

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE



By Daniel Casco, Indiana, United States

This is the story about how I asked for and eventually found *The Urantia Book*. My name is Daniel Michael Casco. I was born in April 1949, in beautiful Gary, Indiana. I was very much blessed with a loving, Christian family, and my mother and grandmother took my brothers and me to church every Sunday.

My grandmother was raised very religiously in the mountains of Southeastern Kentucky, and when I was a baby she often rocked me to

sleep, singing gospel songs from the Bluegrass country. I still remember those songs today. I learned a great deal about religion while growing up and attending church every week. I think all children should be informed about the spiritual life, our relationship with our heavenly Father, and the story of Jesus' life and teachings.

Attending church every week allowed me to feel as though church was my second home, and the people there were like

my extended family. I progressed very swiftly as a child, and when I was taught to pray before bed each night, I decided on my own to expand on the practice and pray when I woke, and soon throughout the day as well.

I was so excited about getting older and attending Sunday school like the older kids. For some reason, adults often asked me what I planned to be when I grew up. So one day I asked God what He wanted me to be,



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and I knew the answer was being the best that I could be. I did tell Him that I was uneasy around blood, but if being a scientist was good enough for Him, I could be just that.

My life, up to this point in 1955, was full of hope, knowledge, progress and direction. The future looked bright! This was the year that I would finally start first grade in both public school and Sunday school. It was a new beginning on my path to "be perfect, even as my Father in heaven was perfect."

Little was I prepared for the wall that I would run into. My first-grade Sunday school class was run by two mothers who read to us from the Bible. I couldn't read or write yet, and no one had ever read to me from the Bible before. The first lesson was about Noah and his ark. I hadn't heard this story before, and I listened with interest while the teacher told it. She got to the part about collecting the animals in pairs, male and female, and I couldn't imagine how Noah traveled the whole world back in that time. Perplexed, I raised my hand up in the air and asked how Noah got all the way to Australia. Perhaps my question surprised her, and I found her answer unacceptable. So again I asked how anyone during that time in history could have traveled not only to Australia but to everywhere else around the world in one lifetime. That didn't go over too well either, and she told me to be quiet, to sit there and listen, and to stop interrupting her.

I kept thinking about it and asking myself, "Why would God kill all of the innocent people as well as the evil ones? Would He not just rid the world of the evil ones and allow the good people to live?" I spent the entire week thinking about this and got so depressed that I couldn't hold my head up.

My mother took me back to Sunday school the next Sunday, but I didn't want to go. On the way to class with an almost-empty heart, I took one look at the exit door, pushed it open, ducked around the corner, and started talking to God about this problem. I remembered other issues too, and we went over them as well. Pretty soon it was time for my mother to return. With just minutes to spare, I came to the conclusion that there was only one way to fix this problem. I told God that He had to write another book. This new book needed to address the questions that I had and had to expand on other things too. After all, it was a new age of wonder in technology and science. God might as well go big, right?

Over the years thereafter, I just waited for the new book, not knowing that *The Urantia Book* had been delivered to Urantia Foundation at 533 W. Diversey Parkway, in Chicago, Illinois.

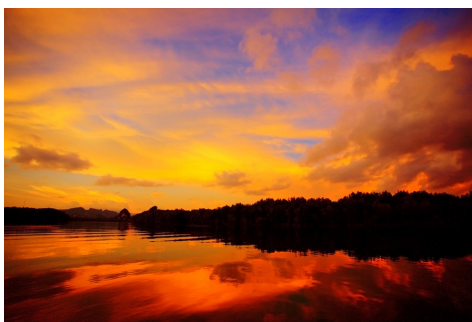
When I was twenty-one years old, I found myself in prison for refusing to be a part of the Vietnam War. I spent a lot of time sitting in my cell

wondering if there really was a God. I felt like an animal in a cage, but I still believed I was doing what God wanted me to do. So there I sat in that prison until one night a man came to my cell and told me to follow him. We got in a van, and he had the driver drive me to the entrance of the fort—Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The man told me to get out. I was free to go home.

Walking to the interstate with no money and the temperature very close to zero, I stuck out my thumb to hitch a ride home. Late at night, even back in those days, it was hard to hitch a ride. But I was very fortunate! A hippie named Robin was heading to Indiana from California, and he picked me up and took me all the way.

He asked if I had ever heard of *The Urantia Book*. I had not. So he told me about it, and when we arrived in Indiana, he showed it to me. Within minutes I knew that this was the book I had been waiting for since 1955. I have been reading it ever since.

The Urantia Book is truly a revelation of God, and its teachings are the greatest truths since the days that Jesus walked this earth. The teachings are the cornerstone of my loving service, and I am eternally grateful!



"He who believes this gospel,
believes not merely in me but
in Him who sent me."

Jesus, *The Urantia Book*,
174:5.7 (1903.4)