



URANTIA.  
FOUNDATION

## The Marriage and Family Adventure! An Online Symposium

June 14–15, 2024

All times listed are Central Daylight Time (GMT-5)

Zoom Sessions Link: <https://bit.ly/FamilySymposium2024>

*Each 30-minute presentation will be followed by a 45-minute panel discussion and questions from the audience.*



### Emcees Bill and Share Beasley

Bill and Share have been soulmates for 53 years. The Urantia Revelation came into their lives six weeks after marriage, and it has been a guiding light through life's many joys and tribulations. Their bright spots are the four children and three grandchildren in whom they delight.

Over the decades, their life has been Urantia-centric. They developed and facilitated youth retreats, served as conference speakers, workshop leaders, and study group hosts, and actively participated as officers and committee members with Urantia fraternal organizations and Urantia Foundation.

Share was an associate trustee. While she attended board meetings at 533, Bill helped Chef Jennifer Siegel in the kitchen!

### Friday, June 14

**10:00 am: Welcome**

**10:15 am: Family Life on the Neighboring Planet: How Far Are We?**

**By Olga López**

In Paper 72, the revelators have given us the great gift of explaining to us how a civilization on another planet lives, from which we can learn great things in many aspects of life and society. In this presentation, we will focus on the family life of this extraterrestrial nation, going through each of the aspects, and comparing them with the current situation in our societies today to see the similarities and differences. We will try to elucidate what we can do to improve family life on our world.

Olga lives in Barcelona, Spain. She has been married since 1990 and has two daughters (30 and 26 years old). A reader of *The Urantia Book* since 1995, a computer analyst by profession, and a graduate in philosophy by hobby, she has considered herself a seeker of truth for as long as she can remember. She has written five novels inspired by the teachings of *The Urantia Book* and has written other secondary works, in which she enjoys delving into the themes of the book that she is most passionate about. Olga manages the Spanish branch of Urantia Book International School (UBIS) and is a trustee of Urantia Foundation.



## BREAK 11:30–11:45 am

### 11:45 am: Marriage—What a Partnership!

By Joyce and David Anderson

Marriage is the basis of the family, and family is the building block of society, local government, international government, and even future cosmic citizenry. Success in marriage is critical for the individual participant and, in a larger sense, critical to the whole. This presentation will examine what *The Urantia Book* says about marriage. We will discuss the marriage relationship between a man and a woman. We will examine its history, evolution, purpose, and importance. And we will pay particular attention to the partnership aspect of marriage—its duties and obligations, and the importance of parenting. Throughout, we'll offer insights on what works and doesn't work.



David and Joyce, both longtime students of *The Urantia Book*, have been married for 36 years, have two adult children, and are attorneys. They have participated in various study groups for decades. They are active in their local Urantia Association, church community, and other charitable organizations. Joyce is currently secretary of the Urantia Association of the United States and Dave is a teacher-facilitator with Urantia Book International School. They run over 500 miles a year together and enjoy gardening, cooking, trips to the library, and visiting with family and friends.

## LUNCH 1:00–1:30 pm

### 1:30 pm: Religious Education for the Whole Family

By Alice Wood and Vicki Arkens

Since the outpouring of The Spirit of Truth twelve groups of master seraphim have been functioning on our planet to influence the course of human affairs. This presentation considers two groups of angels—the religious guardians and the progress angels—when devising ways to provide religious education for the whole family. Vicki will talk about the religious guardians with regard to her children's curriculum. Alice will consider the progress angels when she shares her approach to engaging children in religious training and worship.

As a second-generation student of *The Urantia Book*, Alice had the teachings thoroughly enmeshed into her life. She is the creator of [UrantiaLifeLessons.com](http://UrantiaLifeLessons.com), which offers services for kids (SeraphiMail activity pages, CherubiMail coloring pages, and Family Week), as well as inspirational videos for adults. She serves as the communications chair of Greater Lake Michigan Urantia Association and is the program coordinator for Urantia University's Teacher Education Program. Alice is the mother of two boys who exercise their good influence by making sure that she goes outside to play each day.

Vicki is a longtime reader of *The Urantia Book* with a special interest in Part IV. She has given numerous workshops at Urantia conferences. She created [UrantiaYear.blogspot.com](http://UrantiaYear.blogspot.com), a website that contains her annual cycle of readings, as well as information on a children's curriculum titled *One Page Stories of Jesus*. Vicki's interest in developing this curriculum was nurtured during the many years she taught Sunday school. Vicki has a teaching degree in secondary education and is retired. Married for fifty years, Vicki and her husband, Bob, raised three children and have three grandchildren.



**BREAK 2:45–3:00 pm**

**3:00 pm: The High Ideal of Marriage (for Lowly Creatures)**

**By Ruthie Wilde Wenger and Brad Garner**

Marriage grows out of the inherent twofold nature of time and space, seeking harmony through a fundamentally antagonistic cooperation. As time and space is but a shadow of eternity, we wonder what *The Urantia Book* reveals about the higher patterns of ideal marriage from a top-down perspective? How can we adjust the facts of earthly marriage to the ideals of more heavenly partnerships? These are the questions we ask while exploring the significance of our Creator Son and Local Universe Mother Spirit, Adam and Eve, and anecdotally share how these realities are (or are not) reflected in our own marriage.



After an intense early adulthood career as a freelance cellist and music educator, Ruthie is shifting her focus to the home as a prospective parent and wife to Brad. She utilizes her experience as a musician and educator in ministry-motivated projects. Ruthie began studying *The Urantia Book* about 10 years ago, after a lifetime of exposure and engagement with local Arizona readers because of her parents. She is chair of Urantia Family Life and is currently a beta-testing student in UIU's inaugural Teacher Education Program. She co-produces the "Our Merried Life" podcast with her husband as a part of Symmetry of Soul.

Brad grew up with *The Urantia Book*; his mother and father raised him with it. He strives to apply it to his daily living—live the teachings—while trying to remain humble and avoiding any misdirected zeal. His professional background includes computer science and geologic science; he spent 15 years with a United States federal science agency authoring scientific publications and inaugurating changes on its websites. Brad is currently on staff at Urantia Foundation as their digital programs manager.

**BREAK 4:15–4:30 pm**

**4:30 pm: The Challenge of Family Conflicts**

**By Stephanie "Stevie" Shaefer**

Even Jesus had to deal with family conflicts! This presentation will focus on wisdom from *The Urantia Book*, along with personal experience, and the arts of listening, prayer, and forgiveness. What did Jesus teach and model in his life and family? What are the ideals of family life and the challenges that seem to arise in families today, especially around topics of faith and religion? Stevie will share examples learned in facilitating family problem solving, as well as cultural methods of family problem solving involving prayer and forgiveness, and an experiential forgiveness process. We will examine what is needed and what works.

Stevie has a PhD in psychology and is currently working as a marriage, child, and family counselor in private practice and a part-time elementary-school counselor. Residing in Alexandria, Virginia, she has enjoyed working as a former social worker in the migrant fields in South Florida, an elementary, middle, and high-school counselor, and a university professor of Intercultural and Interfaith Communication and Conflict Resolution in both Virginia and Hawaii.

Stevie was introduced to *The Urantia Book* while working on an interfaith festival in Honolulu in the late 1970s and has met many of her closest friends while participating in study groups and conferences.





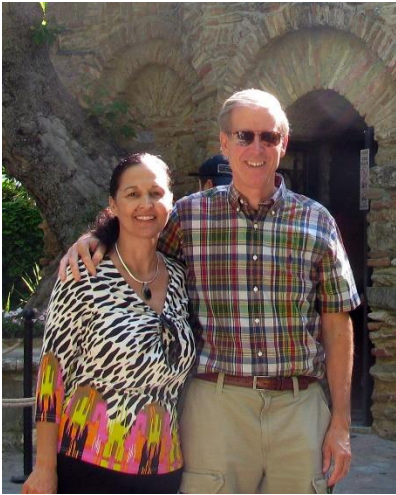
Saturday, June 15

10:00 am: Welcome

10:15 am: The Original Family: The Trinity

By Gard Jameson

The Trinity sets the bar for family function and expression, inspiring all levels of creature life to aspire to. Love, mercy, and ministry—truth, beauty, and goodness—justice, power, and sovereignty—these triads create a dynamic pattern for understanding the foundation of divine expression through family. To know God and become like God requires an experiential appreciation of divinity within the framework of the family. This presentation will look at the Trinity as the original pattern of family that has influenced all subsequent appreciations of family.



Gard bought a copy of *The Urantia Book* in 1972 while studying comparative religion at Stanford University. It was like no other book that he had been familiar with in either philosophy or religion.

After 25 years as a certified public accountant, Gard obtained a PhD in comparative religion. A published author, Gard has taught Chinese and Indian philosophy at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, for 20 years.

Gard has been a trustee of Urantia Foundation since 1998. He is co-founder of the Children's Advocacy Alliance, the Interfaith Council of Southern Nevada, the Nevada Community Foundation, and with his wife, Florence, Volunteers in Medicine of Southern Nevada. Gard launched Compassionate Las Vegas and serves on the boards of several other nonprofits.

BREAK 11:30–11:45 am

11:45 am: Uplifting Global Culture with the Family of God Symbolism

By Marvin Gawryn

What will it take for us, as leaders in the emerging Urantia movement, to have a transforming impact on global culture? How can we help usher our world into a long-awaited spiritual renaissance? “The people of another age will better understand the gospel . . . when it is presented in terms expressive of the family relationship.” 142:7.4 (1603.5)

We simply must find a compelling way to communicate and live the essential truths of the gospel. Only by living moment to moment, every day, in the nurturing relationships of the family of God, can we find what we so desperately need in the midst of our overwhelmingly complex world.

Marvin stumbled upon *The Urantia Book* 57 years ago while working at a metaphysical book shop in Los Angeles. It has shaped his entire adult life.

He has participated in and led study groups weekly for 50 years, presented workshops, and served in leadership roles with the Urantia Book Fellowship and other service organizations. He serves on the Standard Reference Text Committee and is a member of Urantia University's Board of Directors. He hosts an online worship service every Sunday.



The author of *Reaching High: The Psychology of Spiritual Living*, Marvin is semi-retired after 30 years in practice as a family therapist. He is the executive director of the Interfaith Council of Southern Nevada and is president of the Family of God Fellowship. Marvin and Francyl have two daughters and are blessed with two grandchildren.

## LUNCH 1:00–1:30 pm

### 1:30 pm: Encouraging Spiritual Curiosity in Children

#### By Angie Thurston and Chuck Thurston

How do you raise a spiritually curious child? What in your childhood encouraged your own spiritual curiosity and growth?

This session will explore principles and practices for cultivating spiritual curiosity in children. We will look at ways to welcome God into the home; cultivate wonder; model a personal relationship with God; create a culture of truth, beauty, and goodness; and introduce the concepts of infinity and eternity. We will share stories from our parenting experiences, along with stories from *The Urantia Book*, especially from the Jesus Papers.



Angie's three-year-old son, Orion, is her inspiration for exploring the themes in this workshop. Her parents did a great job cultivating their children's spiritual curiosity, and she wants to do the same for Orion. Angie and her husband are both spirit-centered in their lives, but with different belief systems. That means more opportunity to be creative in how they approach a spiritual home life.

In her professional work as executive director of Sacred Design Lab, Angie supports people who are grappling with questions of spirituality and community. She is an active student of *The Urantia Book*, and her most consistent personal practice is to take time every day to go inward and spend time with God.

Chuck began his study of *The Urantia Book* in the mid-1970s. After exploring many other sources of spiritual insight, its teachings marked the beginning of a new and profoundly life-changing growth in understanding of the nature of God and the meaning of our existence. Over the years he has been closely involved with the international community of students of *The Urantia Book*, and more recently has been working with Derek Samaras on the production of Urantia Book Network video podcasts on a variety of topics. Chuck and Claire, Angie's parents, were inspired by the book's teachings about home and family life. They were grateful for this wonderful guidance as they raised their three children.

## BREAK 2:45–3:00 pm

### 3:00 pm: In Spite of Ourselves: The Wood Family and Urantia

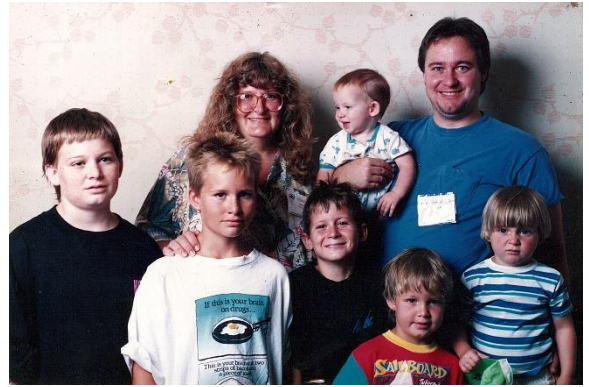
#### By the Wood Brothers

Six brothers from America's heartland—Kansas City—were raised in a Urantia household. What are the odds that all six of them now study *The Urantia Book*?

Today they are all at various stages of middle age, incorporating the teachings into their respective families. This presentation will feature the brothers, each giving their own perspective on how a defiant family came to accept cosmic truths and together exploring any collective wisdom that might be useful to other parents. Viewer discretion is advised.

The Wood brothers—Seth, Chris, Noah, Joel, Mark, and “baby Matthew”—were raised with a Friday night study group in their home. They are currently spread out from the beaches of old Mexico to the wilds of Wisconsin, from the mountains of New Mexico to the Missouri side of Kansas City.

But they remain united in their love of the big blue book and a desire to avoid bringing shame to the Urantia community.



**BREAK 4:15–4:30 pm**

**4:30 pm: Wrap-Up with Audience**



Join emcees Bill and Share for a live and interactive session with the audience. This will be an opportunity to share some personal stories or to follow-up with questions that may have gone unanswered.

Add to the fun by uploading a picture of your younger self or your family to your Zoom profile! We were all once young, innocent, and blissfully unaware of what lay ahead and how we would handle life’s challenges. Fortunately, we have *The Urantia Book* and our fellow readers to assist us in all phases of family life, including establishing a home, rearing children, and ongoing parenting and grandparenting.

Urantia Foundation is grateful to Dr. Ralph Zehr, whose 2022 UBIS course, *The Family and Home—Mankind’s Greatest Human Achievement*, inspired this symposium. Ralph wrote:

“It is difficult to overemphasize the significance of the role of the home and family in society and civilization in general. The individual family units are the building blocks of a civilization.

“Families do not live and die, they continue, generation after generation, as permanent sociological rivers, providing a channel through which human values, social achievements and religious insights pass on to nourish and energize future civilizations and on into the eras of light and life.

“By fostering functional, love dominated, and spiritually fragrant families that produce service oriented, well-adjusted, and loyal citizens, homes are contributing immensely to the cultural progress on our world.”



Recordings of each presentation will be available on the Foundation’s YouTube channel, with links posted on [urantia.org](http://urantia.org) sometime in July.

Thank you for supporting Urantia Foundation!

Questions? [joanne@urantia.org](mailto:joanne@urantia.org)