

# URANTIA FOUNDATION'S NEWS ONLINE



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# IT'S THE SEASON OF GIVING

*By the Trustees of Urantia Foundation*

Urantia Foundation needs your help today!

Several generous donors will contribute \$220,000 if we can raise the same amount by December 31. Your matching gift will make it possible to cover the remaining 2018 operating expenses and to continue in 2019 the work of seeding *The Urantia Book* and its teachings globally.

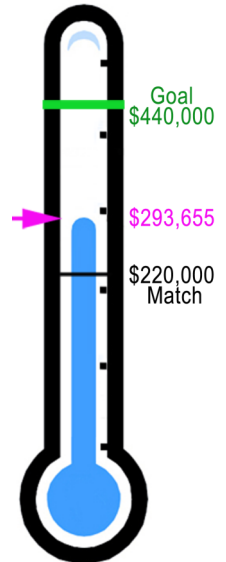
When you see the suffering in the world, the more you understand how vital it is to share *The Urantia Book's* message that we are all children of the same loving Heavenly Father. We each experience God's love as we love our fellows. Jesus made it clear that we are to love one another as he loves us, no matter a person's race, religion, gender, economic status, or nationality. Imagine how much joy people would feel if they only followed Jesus' instruction.

We are so grateful for your friendship and generosity in helping to further the dissemination of *The Urantia Book*. Your support enables the spiritually searching to discover and experience the profound light of the living truth that we have all come to embrace. Nothing is more

potent than these teachings to open the eyes of the spiritually blind while helping the world's people transition from our current secular age into a more cooperative era of spirituality. We are told that, "In this gigantic struggle between the secular and the spiritual, the religion of Jesus will eventually triumph." 195:4.5 (2075.3) Until then, however, there remains much work to be done.

Putting the gospel of love into action means serving one another. "With God the Father, sonship is the great relationship. With God the Supreme, achievement is the prerequisite to status—one must do something as well as be something." 115:0.1 (1260.1) Because we are partners in this grand endeavor, our acts of selfless service for the Urantia Revelation are one way of making our love for God and our commitment to his universe plan a reality in the world today.

Having experienced the benefit of these teachings, will you please consider working with us to provide peoples of the world with this same truth? If so, your donations to Urantia Foundation make it possible to translate *The Urantia Book* into many languages, print and globally distribute them, promote study groups, foster



outreach endeavors, manage urantia.org, operate the Urantia Book Internet School, maintain the historic headquarters in Chicago, and conduct educational seminars.

Friends, now is the time to act and help shine the beautiful light of these teachings to all the world! Please join with us in this endeavor and make your matching gift today.

[Click here to donate.](#)

With you in service,

The Trustees: Gard Jameson, Marilynn Kuliecke, Georges Michelson-Dupont, Mo Siegel, Judy Van Cleave

# NOTEWORTHY DECISIONS FROM THE OCTOBER 2018 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING



By Judy Van Cleave, trustee,  
Urantia Foundation, Idaho,  
United States

## Book Sales and Distribution

Tamara Strumfeld and Henk Mylanus, our European sales manager, reported on year-to-date book sales. At the end of Q3, book sales were down

about 13% and downloads from urantia.org were also down about 13%. The most significant reason for the decline was the exceptionally high sales of German books in 2017 that did not reoccur in 2018. The good news is that English sales are up slightly and Spanish sales are up 19%.

One thing is for certain—selling books in 2018 is difficult! Barnes & Noble is in serious financial trouble, and most other major brick-and-mortar bookstore chains are already out of business in the United States.

The board reviewed the pricing of the Foundation's e-books. The current price of the English e-book is \$4.99, but all other translations were priced at \$8.99. Amazon indicates that the best price range for an e-book is between \$2.00 and \$4.99, therefore, the

Trustees approved setting the price of all e-books at \$4.99. This decision means a major price reduction in the price of e-books for each translation.

## 2018 Budget

Our objective in 2018 is to raise \$700,000 in unrestricted donations, \$25,000 in restricted donations, and \$250,000 in restricted donations earmarked for future generations in the Revelation Bridge Fund. Assuming we have a successful year-end matching fundraising campaign, we feel positive about reaching the \$725,000 target for unrestricted and restricted donations. At this moment we have \$440,000 to raise between now and December 31.

We expect to be at or below the 2018 operating expense

budget of \$750,000 except for a onetime write-off of \$21,000 for old Hungarian books due to slow sales and aging inventory. These books are still in storage and are sellable, but good accounting practices require we write off slow-selling inventory based on an agreed-to formula. It will make no difference to our cash flow.

The great unknown for 2018 was an unexpected property tax increase from the city of Chicago for Urantia Foundation Headquarters at 533 W. Diversey Parkway. The increase they levied this past year was abnormally high. We are currently in the process of appealing it and have reason to believe that there will be a successful outcome, bringing the taxes back in line with past years.

A special thanks go to Sherry Cathcart Chavis, Guy Perron, and Minoo for their outstanding work in

## Relevant Book Industry Information to Our Mission

How many new books are published in the United States every year?

There are somewhere between **600,000** and **1,000,000** books published every year in the United States alone. Many of those—perhaps as many as half or even more—are self-published. The relevancy of these statistics is the sheer number of new books each year competing for the shrinking brick-and-mortar shelf space. With Amazon and other online booksellers increasing their dominance in the world book market, we are learning how to help spiritual book shoppers find *The Urantia Book* in the vast and growing sea of published books.

The average book sells **3,000** copies in its lifetime. What a remarkable testament to the strength of the Urantia Revelation that a book published in 1955, which begins with a difficult-to-read Foreword, continues to sell so well. There are over 800,000 physical Urantia Books in circulation, and hundreds of thousands more have been downloaded. *The Urantia Book* is spreading and the text inviolate is protected.

developing a fundraising campaign this past fall that provided the funds necessary to enable the Foundation to send 600 Spanish books to many areas in Latin America where there is no established book distribution.

### 2019 Budget

October's board meeting was important because it was the annual budget meeting. The trustees reviewed the 2019 budget and adopted a resolution to approve a break-even budget annually. The effect is that Urantia Foundation will create a balanced budget each year. Expenditures must equal annual income, and no deficit spending is allowed except under dire circumstances. This policy protects the Revelation Bridge Fund and the Perpetual Printing Fund from being used to pay annual expenses.

We are on track for a productive 2019 even though some difficult belt tightening was required to balance the budget. This upcoming year comes with tougher than usual challenges because the financial markets appear risky, there are many important programs to fund, and costs continue to increase. We are prioritizing mission-critical programs that further spread the revelation throughout the world while maintaining the financial stability of Urantia Foundation. On the next world, we will be held accountable for how we spent our time on earth. On this world, when analyzing our budgets, we are accountable for how effectively we spend our time and donors' money.

### Investments

The Foundation's treasurer, Trustee Gard Jameson,

presented the investment results year to date. As always, we continue to invest the Foundation's funds in moderate-risk stocks, bonds, and money market funds.

### Translations

The board received the Translation Committee Report from Georges Michelson-Dupont and Marilyn Kulieke. The progress of the current simplified Chinese translation was discussed. The importance of securing a copy editor for this translation, along with the long-term need for a traditional Chinese translation, was presented. There will be a special fundraiser in 2019 to secure funds for this very important translation.

Thanks were expressed for the efforts of the Portuguese revision team, led by chief reviser Ms. Susana Hüttner Palaia. She has been a mothering presence to team members and is beloved by those who are working with her.

After many years of diligent hard work and thousands of volunteer hours, the long awaited Spanish revision of *El libro de Urantia* is moving towards completion. The arrival date for this significantly improved revision is in early 2020. You will be hearing a great deal about plans for the revision during 2019. Gaétan Charland and Víctor García-Bory, co-chairs of the Spanish Revision Launch Project, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the projected timeline and schedule for the rollout. Our deepest gratitude goes to the selfless team of revisers who

are dedicating many years of their lives to creating a higher-quality Spanish translation of *The Urantia Book*.

### Education

In September, Urantia Book Internet School (UBIS) unveiled a newly upgraded Moodle platform for students to register and take their online courses. During this fall trimester, thirteen courses were offered—seven in English, three in French, and three in Spanish.

It was also announced that the new executive director of UBIS will be Joanne Strobel. Congratulations Joanne! If you want an excellent educational Urantia Book experience, UBIS might be perfect for you. Please visit us at [ubis.urantia.org](http://ubis.urantia.org).

Claire Mylanus, Marta Elders, and Marilyn Kulieke gave an update on the agenda for the Cultural Symposium, scheduled for April 11-15, 2019, at Urantia Foundation. More about this event will be presented in January.

Gard Jameson reported on the progress of 1) the multi-organizational exploratory committee for the Center for Urantia Studies, 2) the History of *The Urantia Book* project, and 3) the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness seminar by Jeffrey Wattles that took place in early November.

### Outreach

The objective of the Outreach Committee is to partner with individuals and organizations in projects such as the Parliament of World's Religions, conferences, book shows, book placement programs, and the creation of Urantia Book-related materials.

Urantia Foundation is one of four organizations that provided funding and staffing for a booth at the Parliament of World's Religions from November 1 to 7. Joanne Strobel, Cristina Seaborn, Minoo, Gary Tonge, Alain Cyr, and the Parliament Organizing Committee did an amazing job preparing for the event. Over 70 Urantia Book readers attended the Parliament, many of whom worked at the Urantia Book booth.

During Q3, 600 Urantia Books were sent to Latin America as a part of an Outreach Committee project. These books are being used for various book fairs and other outreach efforts in Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, and Peru. Many thanks to everyone who generously donated to make this happen!

### Community Relations

The presidents of Urantia Association International, the Urantia Book Fellowship, and Urantia Foundation met via videoconferencing during Q3. All three presidents want and will work toward positive and cooperative actions between the organizations.

Urantia Foundation and the Urantia Society of Greater New York are planning to meet and discuss translations. With both organizations translating and distributing translations in the Korean and Russian languages, we hope to better understand each other's purposes, quality control processes, and long-term plans, and to discuss readers' experiences with multiple translations in a country.

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# UBIS GETS A MAKEOVER



By Joanne Strobel, Urantia Foundation, Illinois, United States

Urantia Book Internet School (UBIS) enjoyed its twentieth anniversary this past year. From humble beginnings as an email correspondence school, back when the Internet was still considered fairly advanced technology, UBIS has grown into and out of a series of websites. The newest one, a major upgrade from our previous site, uses a platform called Moodle.

It's a funny sounding name, isn't it? Moodle stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. As well as being a memorable acronym, the name was chosen because of the dictionary definition of moodle: verb

1. To dawdle aimlessly, to idle time away.
2. The process of lazily meandering through something, doing things as it occurs.
3. An enjoyable tinkering that may lead to insight and creativity.

While the true etymology is unknown, there are instances of prior usage, both attributed

to George Bernard Shaw. In 1921 he wrote, "That old one who saw you out of your shell has gone off to muddle about doing nothing" (*Back to Methuselah*, p. 251).

And in 1928: "Napoleon often muddled about for a week at a time doing nothing but play with his children or read trash or waste his time helplessly." (*The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*, p.328)

Far from aimless, Moodle is an example of a Learning Management System, or LMS, which delivers and manages all types of content such as courses, documents, and video. In the area of higher education, platforms like Moodle offer colleges and universities a variety of distance learning functions that not only fit the teaching philosophy of UBIS, namely, facilitated self-learning, but also offer a discussion forum, and the ability to gather statistics and analyze performance.

In the spirit of definition number three, students and teacher-facilitators are able to access virtual classrooms at their leisure, with no prescribed meeting times. Courses follow a weekly format, allowing for plenty of time to read the assigned Urantia Book papers and respond to several thought-provoking questions. Alternate weeks are spent sharing insights, discussing various interpretations of facts, meanings, and values, and getting to know their fellow agondonters. But I digress.

For the past year we had discussed the possibility of a fresher look for UBIS. Even though the desire for an upgrade was driven by appearance, there were also important technical factors to

consider, including better support for today's mobile phones and tablets. While most of us in the United States enjoy reliable and high-speed Internet service, that is not always the case in other countries. For this reason many of our international students take courses using smartphones instead of a computer.

Although Moodle had released a number of new versions since we first began using it in 2014, Michael Zehr, our UBIS web administrator, soon realized that Moodle is not known for ease of upgrade. This presented a choice: continue to try to change and modify our current system, or undertake the major task of a full upgrade. We began the summer hiatus attempting the former. But it became increasingly clear that the newer tools we needed, including mobile responsiveness and multi-language capability, were simply not compatible with our five-year-old version of Moodle. The decision was made to proceed with a full upgrade. So next we needed to find a trained Moodle programmer.

We began searching on a site called Upwork. There we found Goldie Jordan, a young lady who works as an LMS Technical Analyst at Southern University-Baton Rouge (SUBR), in the Division of Information Technology. Goldie was also a freelance web designer with a passion for coding and design. She declared herself to be efficient and speedy, which was important since by this point we had only four weeks left until September registration opened. She also had the necessary skills to describe to a layperson like me exactly what was involved.

Do we refashion the current suit of clothing or do we tailor-make brand-new, couture attire? Not only did she advise us to do the latter, we also needed a new mannequin to wear the clothes (Joanne-speak for a new server).

She hit the ground running, scrutinizing the former site to make note of current customizations. She performed the initial server setups, recommended and installed the latest Moodle version, and transferred data from the old server to the new. All of the student profiles, including course history, were maintained and migrated. As that progressed, our small team of three worked diligently to complete the configuration. Michael couldn't simply copy and paste text from the old site, so entirely new programming was required. Once the style of the new clothes, or "theme," was selected, work began in earnest to configure, customize, and translate the site into French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

The new and improved UBIS makeover debuted on Monday, September 16, opening day of the 2018-2019 academic year. By Wednesday, 300 users had logged in and more than 150 requests for course enrollment had been registered. Thirteen courses in three languages are currently being offered on a site that now looks attractive, modern, and user friendly, and which accommodates phones and tablets as well as computers.

Best of all, we now have two separate sites, a "testing" site for Michael to try out future upgrades and the actual "production" site where he implements those changes.



You are not logged in. (Login)

English - United States (en\_us) ▾

- Login
- Home
- About
- Rules & Procedures
- Teacher Facilitators
- Basic Curriculum Plan
- The URANTIA Book
- Help

- Home
- Main menu
- Site news
  - About UBIS
  - Rules and Procedures
  - Teacher Facilitators
  - Basic Curriculum Plan
  - Help
  - Règles et procédures
  - Enseignants animateurs (TF)
  - Plan d'un curriculum de base
  - Normas y procedimientos
  - Profesores/Facilitadores



URANTIA Book Internet School - Founded 1999

UBIS was founded in 1999 for the purpose of helping students around the world study The Urantia Book together in the comfort, convenience and safety of a virtual classroom. Courses are given in small classes under the guidance of an experienced teacher facilitator (TF), using a question and response technique. All classroom responses and discussions are strictly confidential. Responses to questions become a springboard for further discussion.

Registration runs April 7 - 20

To register for a course, please click on "Help" in the menu above or [click here](#).

Welcome, Bienvenue, Bienvenidos

To change languages click the drop box above. If you need to create an account, click below.

Pour changer de langue cliquez sur la liste ci-dessus. Si vous devez créer un compte, cliquez ci-dessous.

Para cambiar el idioma, hagan clic en el desplegable de arriba. Si necesitan crear una cuenta, hagan clic en el enlace de abajo.

Forgot your password? Click on "lost password" below. Having technical difficulties? Send email to [zsslearning@gmail.com](mailto:zsslearning@gmail.com) otherwise click on the name of your course to enter the classroom.

We went from drab . . .

- UBIS
  - HOME
  - ABOUT ▾
  - TOOLS ▾
  - READ ▾
  - LINKS ▾
  - English (en) ▾
- You are not logged in. (Log in)

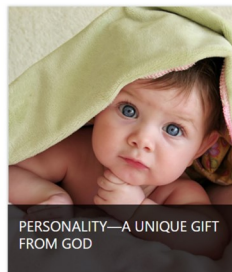


Welcome to UBIS

To fab!

- UBIS
  - HOME
  - ABOUT ▾
  - TOOLS ▾
  - READ ▾
  - LINKS ▾
  - English (en) ▾
- Joanne Strobel

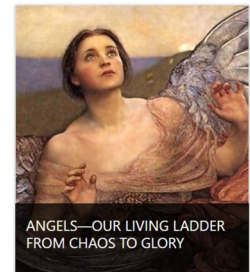
- Home
- Dashboard
- Calendar
- Private files
- My courses
- Board Meeting
- Site administration



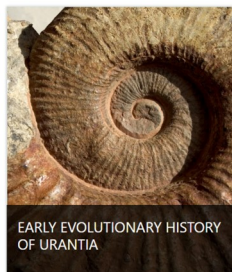
PERSONALITY—A UNIQUE GIFT FROM GOD



JESUS' 19 MORONTIA APPEARANCES AND THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH



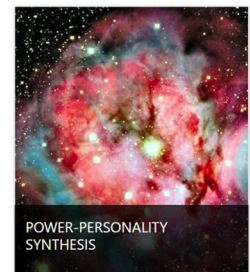
ANGELS—OUR LIVING LADDER FROM CHAOS TO GLORY



EARLY EVOLUTIONARY HISTORY OF URANTIA



THE INNER LIFE



POWER-PERSONALITY SYNTHESIS

Students enjoy seeing pictorial representations of their online course themes.

Our Moodle site looks better than ever, students and teacher-facilitators are thrilled, and the UBIS board can relax in knowing that our site should function beautifully for the next six years!



# OUR EXPERIENCES AT THE 2018 PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS



By Alain Cyr, Québec, Canada, and Nathen Jansen, British Columbia, Canada

*Editor's Note: The Parliament of the World's Religions, which takes place every three years, was held November 1–7 in Toronto, Canada. The Urantia Book booth was staffed by many readers from Canada, the United States, and elsewhere. Two booth volunteers share their comments.*

## Reactions from Alain Cyr

I was told that some 72 Urantia Book readers were present at this event. I guess

they all passed by our booth at some point in time, but I did lose count of them all throughout the happening. I'm sure that this was because I was too busy just appreciating the numerous smiling faces of the people present, passers-by, and the many I encountered and fraternized with in this huge Metro Toronto Convention Centre. I enjoyed the contact of their open and seeking souls; people were thirsty for world peace!

This message was particularly felt within the global *call for unity* that was highlighted within presentations and plenaries (at least in the ones I recalled attending, although there were too many for me to recount them all!). What particularly hit me, though, was this interfaith phenomenon that is experiencing growth globally. There is an increasing willingness to collaborate. People of all faiths are gathering here and there on Urantia to foster joint-venture projects on behalf of social progress. This is quite encouraging! The Most Highs can only delight in such happenings—as *they rule in the kingdoms of men* (and women of course).

As in previous events such as this prestigious one, Urantia organizations were faithfully supportive in co-sponsoring the costs inherent to our lovely Urantia Book booth. And as Canadians, we were honored by the presence of all who contributed by participating in person.



## Reflections from Nathen Jansen

As a participant at the Parliament of the World's Religions 2018, I found myself reflecting on a mind simulation of what it might *feel* like to be at a future Urantia conference where 7,500 personalities were in attendance. "The Promise of Inclusion, the Power of Love" was this year's theme.

The single most compelling experience I had was observing the unity that was shared in religious diversity, there being over two hundred of the world's great religions represented at the conference. At the Urantia Book booth, 72 comrades endlessly took turns sharing our understanding of true religion with individuals passing by, including many discussions on the ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness. I believe that most came away with good thoughts about what was said of the teachings in *The Urantia Book*. I heard a few people say that they had heard of the book; some of them picked up printed information or bought one of the books.

During the event there was a full lunchtime meal called "Langar" offered almost daily to all 7,500 people at the conference. This meal, including dessert squares and masala chai tea, was provided by the Sikh community of Toronto. (Langar, from a word meaning "kitchen," is a centuries-old tradition, now practiced all over the world, of a free meal, always vegetarian, that is served to all, without distinction of religion, caste, gender, economic status, or



ethnicity.) This offering was served with much joy by the Sikh adherents, all wearing bright yellow headdresses, a color typically worn for religious occasions. The Sikh version of the golden rule is truly a good example. In the words of the 10th guru of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib, "I am a stranger to no one; and

no one is a stranger to me, I am a friend to all."

The Parliament's program schedule was filled with events almost beyond count, all pursuing understanding, reconciliation, and global transformation. The next Parliament of the World's Religions will be in three years,

dates and place yet to be announced. I would encourage the Urantia community at large to attend the event, which may be a highlight of their lifetime, an opportunity to experience this dynamic, service-motivated, worldwide interfaith movement.

So it went for seven days under one roof—getting to know one another's beliefs about God, our Universal Father, and building a harmonious foundation for a more peaceful and friendlier worldwide interfaith community with His mortal sons and daughters.

## DANCING WITH GOD: THE FIFTH ANNUAL WOMEN'S RETREAT



By Line St-Pierre, associate trustee emeritus, Québec, Canada, and Jodi Niggemann, South Dakota, United States

*Editor's Note: The fifth annual women's retreat, held September 13–16, at 533 W. Diversey Parkway in Chicago, was titled "Dancing with God—Courageously Living His Love." In addition to the four facilitators, there were 10 participants from as far away as South Africa. The facilitators express the mission of the retreats as "To enhance the status of being a woman dedicated to spiritual growth, intellectual advancement, and moral progress," and the vision as "To touch women's hearts by exploring the dignity*

*of being Daughters of God by honoring their value and importance, and by co-operating with the divine spirit within to bring forth the beautiful harvest of the fruits of the spirit."*

### Report from Line St-Pierre

The second floor of 533 was blessed with prayers, laughter, and tears by participants in the Dancing with God retreat, facilitated by Carrie Prentice, Doreen Heyne, Katharina Becker, and Line St-Pierre—the "Daughters of God" team.

As *The Urantia Book* reminds us, "Man does not unite with the Supreme and submerge his personal identity, but the universe repercussions of the experience of all men do thus form a part of the divine experiencing of the Supreme. 'The act is ours, the consequences God's.'" 117:5.5 (1286.3)

Among our group of 14 women, we had the immense pleasure of hosting a guest who came from South Africa to literally "see if Urantia Foundation was real." How delighted she was to find out that not only was the Foundation real, but many

students of this revelation were courageously living God's love around them in the world even amidst challenges and life crises, which was the sub-theme of the retreat.

Throughout the weekend, we experienced transformation through the Spirit, united in spiritual essence for our eternal destiny.

In our spiritual circle of trust, we reflected on and shared who we are as women, what our gifts are, and what we can contribute individually and as a group, confident that we are doing the right thing to share and spread the revelation. Here is how some of the participants in this sacred circle expressed their appreciation for the growth and connection they experienced:

"The Daughters of God Retreat for Women connected women who have endured pain, sacrifices, and life experiences which allowed us to grow closer to God, know His voice, and share the wisdom we learned and are still learning in order to assist other women."

"Reopening wounds for real closure, breaking silence

about heart-held stories, and seeking what God has to offer are part of the Sacred Circle where women bare their souls and detach themselves from what is not working in their lives in order to go back to their communities with different perspectives, new ways of doing something for the Supreme."

"Every year brings its share of joy and progress. We come for ourselves and we uplift each other, which has a ripple effect that guides our every step while we are Dancing with God."

The Daughters of God group 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](mailto:line.stpierre@gmail.com).





### Reflections by Jodi Niggemann on her experience

I left the women's retreat with a mixture of exhaustion and renewal of spirit. My soul was full and sore, having been stretched, maneuvered, and reformed. I had taken in the stories of other women whose wounds, pains, problems, and concerns echoed my own. I understood them, I cried my own tears for them, and I prayed with them for better days. I had taken in their smiles and their laughter, their stories of love and family, and I prayed with them for more days of this ahead. I had taken in a unique experience of sharing, listening, growing, unfolding, and unseen awareness that will linger in my conscious and unconscious self for many days to come.

My personal breakthroughs that weekend allowed me to leave 533 W. Diversey Parkway with a greater capacity to shine my love out to the world as I acquired an inner glow that felt palpable. I left a lighter, brighter, more confident version of myself, which God didn't hesitate in rewarding—quickly.

It was on the plane heading home to South Dakota that I found myself sitting next to an older man, a Vietnam veteran,

of bright spirit and warm heart. Our conversation began even before buckling seat belts, as the thread of God and spiritual living embraced us in a cocoon of safe sharing. We offered stories and knowledge to each other, which turned out to be vital for each other's next steps in life. We exchanged hope, inspiration, and information that we both needed to continue our current work, God's work, on earth.

To say my love for this man was almost instant is not a far stretch. The moment I looked into his eyes, really looked, I knew I was speaking from my light directly into his, and his light was speaking back into

mine. When the plane landed, I felt disappointed to leave him and say goodbye. I knew our instant friendship wasn't over, but just a beginning to something greater. I saw him briefly again the next day, and we had lunch together the day after that. My heart has grown three sizes from meeting this beautiful man. Together we've inspired each other to move forward in places where we perhaps felt stuck: for him—writing his third book; for me—helping support a dear young man without parents in his efforts to get into college.

I don't know how God intends to weave our lives together in the future, but for now I am

content, as I just had a most remarkable **dance with God where I courageously lived his love**, and for that I am most grateful. I truly thank the women of the retreat, God, my Thought Adjuster, and all the spirits that move us to do what's right, without hesitation and without getting in our own way. I am a lighthouse, shining bright into the darkness to light the way for others to see home. May we all find this light within ourselves, for when everyone in the world comes to shine this way, we will finally see the true brilliance of God revealed.



*Back:* Doreen Heyne, Katharina Becker, Joanne Strobel

*Middle:* Karen Woodbury, Patricia Hall, Theresa Hall

*Front:* Mary Huggins, Theresa Schumann, Carolyn Prentice, Cheryl Glicker, Jodi Niggemann, Line St-Pierre

“I am a lighthouse, shining bright into the darkness to light the way for others to see home.”



# SEEDING *THE URANTIA BOOK* IN ROMANIA



By Timothy Minasian, New Hampshire, United States

*Editor's Note: In this story, an American reader tells of his recent trip to donate a book to the National Library of Romania.*

In October of this year, I flew from Boston to Bucharest, Romania, for eight days to visit a British friend I knew from living in the same residential compound when I worked in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Peter and I remained in contact over the years, and when he and his wife, Angela, invited me to visit them in Bucharest, I readily accepted and began planning the trip. Moreover, I figured my trip to Romania would provide an excellent opportunity to donate a copy of *The Urantia Book* to the National Library of Romania.

I'd done something similar in 1995 when I traveled to Russia and donated my personal copy of the book to the Russian State Library in Moscow. I got to speak with the Director of Foreign Book Donations, who spoke perfect English. My personal book was a 1955 first printing. (Upon reflection, I wish I'd kept that book due to its sentimental value and donated a newer

book.) The director could see that *The Urantia Book* was a quality piece and asked some very probing questions regarding its nature. I knew I had to answer very carefully: At that time many American evangelical groups were in Russia proselytizing their form of Christianity, and there was beginning to be a backlash by the Russian people and the Russian Orthodox Church. So, when the director asked what the book was about, I replied it was about metaphysics, geology, the nature of the universe, religion, and other subjects. Broadly speaking, I knew the Russians are very interested in the metaphysical, so I chose to highlight that aspect of *The Urantia Book*. It seemed to work in Moscow, so I decided to use the same approach in Bucharest.

During the summer of 2018 I spoke with Tamara Strumfeld at Urantia Foundation and asked if there were any Romanian readers I could contact during my trip. She put me in touch with Marcel Tudoran, a teacher in the Romanian province of Transylvania and a devoted Urantia Book reader. We tried to coordinate a meet and greet while I was there, but our individual schedules didn't allow it.

The faith is strong with Marcel, and he has helped the Foundation with the Romanian translation. However, he seems frustrated with the lack of progress in the dissemination and acceptance of *The Urantia Book* in

Romania, which is a majority Christian country dominated by the Romanian Orthodox Church. Marcel suggested I donate a book to the Patriarchate of the church, and I considered the suggestion, but I wasn't mentally prepared for such an interaction. From my reading of Romanian history and from what I observed while I was there, I don't think it would've been well received by the senior priests in the Romanian Orthodox patriarchy anyway.

Instead, I donated a book to the National Library of Romania, an impressive, modern structure of glass and steel. Peter and I presented ourselves to the receptionist in the lobby and said we wished to donate a book. She called the Director of Foreign Book Donations, who met us in the lobby. The director walked us down the hall and into a large room filled with books stacked high on long tables, where three ladies were classifying and cataloguing books donated by foreigners. It looked like a big job. The

director requested I fill in the necessary form for donations and when I saw the box to indicate who the author(s) were, I paused. We Urantia Book readers know that *The Urantia Book* has multiple authors who are non-terrestrials, but try and explain that to a Director of Foreign Book Donations. And so, I just wrote "Urantia Foundation" as the author. The act of donation seemed a bit anticlimactic after all the preparation, but who knows who will eventually find the book, begin reading, and take it to heart.

I enjoyed my trip to Romania and came away with positive feelings for the people and the country in general. I believe that Romania has a strong potential to be a prosperous and peaceful country. This is why it is so important to engage in seeding *The Urantia Book* everywhere in the world, including smaller countries and those with a turbulent history. It's for the future.



# WHAT *THE URANTIA BOOK* MEANS TO ME



By Moustapha N'Diaye, Dakar, Senegal

For as long as I can remember—as is probably true for most men and women—I have always asked myself questions, consciously or unconsciously, about explanations of things and phenomena around me. It was mostly about natural phenomena, especially when they attained frightening proportions, like storms. The same questions arose in other forms every time I learned that an old person I knew had just died. The death of a young person seemed even more terrible.

As I grew up and finished learning to read and write, I was interested in deciphering everything around me, especially things that I did not understand, or rather that I understood in my own way. Topics of interest were: psychology, esotericism, occultism, God, religion, hermeticism, theosophy, divine sciences, and sacred arts. There took form in my developing mind, as early as primary school, an interest in understanding the answers to the scientific questions of “how,” and to the more difficult questions of “why.”

However, it was not really a conscious quest—at least not yet. It continued during my high school years in a military academy in the city of Saint Louis, located 270 kilometers (167 miles) from the city of Dakar, where I was born and grew up. After graduating in 1975, I pursued engineering studies in Lyon, France. This time there emerged a real questioning of the order of science and the very purpose of life.

During the five years I spent in France, I read hundreds of works in the esoteric bookshops of Lyon, some in their entirety and some in part. I realized very quickly that most of these books went in circles with no outcomes. So when I visited home in Senegal and discovered that my father had started a study circle, I eagerly participated. Their study took the form of questions and answers on all subjects, without exception. This circle was composed of about 50 people, young academics for the most part, with women in the majority, who were meeting every Saturday afternoon in the home where I grew up.

I soon realized that the answers given to the various questions were far more satisfying to my mind and made me more conscious of my soul, than all that I had acquired from reading all those books.

In 1981, a very personal and highly impressive experience helped me change my approach to the understanding of living reality. In fact, this

experience—a response to a very personal prayer—made me clearly understand that God is not outside of us, but within us. This experience also made me understand that when we pray to God within, His answers come through the world outside of us.

That year, the study circle decided to seek a direct and structured teaching and replaced the forum of questions and answers on Saturday afternoons. Since then, the group has had a structured teaching format and has provided spiritual education to several hundred people, mostly of Muslim faith (Senegal being a predominantly Muslim country), but also to some Christians. We are currently on the third batch of students who have become teachers themselves.

We came to realize that we owed this intellectual and spiritual clarity, coordinated with our personalities, to an intelligent implementation of the truths of *The Urantia Book*, adapted to our cultural and social setting. Our teacher had



Assane Diagne, Ndiawar Ndiaye, Salimata Bamba Diagne, Line St- Pierre, Gaétan Charland, Amadou Diagne, Moustapha Ndiaye, Guy Perron, Cheikh Ndiaye, Lamine Ndour, Khatabe Ndiaye.



received the first French translation, *La Cosmogonie d'Urantia*, in the sixties from the translator, Jacques Weiss. In 1998, at the request of our study group, I phoned Urantia Foundation. Because I spoke French, my call was redirected to Trustee Georges Michelson-Dupont in France, and so our link was established with the Urantia movement.

The first face-to-face contact with readers outside our group took place in December 1998. Georges connected us with Norman Ingram, who was distributing English copies of *The Urantia Book* in English-speaking African countries. He needed a contact in Senegal (a

French-speaking country) to pick up the books that were shipped from the port of Marseille to the port of Dakar. Norman had planned to stay two or three days in Dakar before continuing his drive to South Africa, but ended up staying in my home for almost a month. That is how we received our first Urantia Books in English.

Looking back, I now realize that through all this adventure characterized by an early interest in reading all kinds of religious literature, my Thought Adjuster was preparing me for the progressive and ever-expanding expression of God in my spiritual growth. I could

not have fully appreciated the value of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* if I had not followed this chaotic path in my personal search. I now see that *The Urantia Book* is much more than just another religious book. *The Urantia Book* is a prodigious and indispensable "toolbox" for future teachers, whatever the human framework in which they must operate. It presents, with authority and wisdom, the heart of all human religious traditions that recognize the inner life and the Thought Adjuster.

The book also provides, in a human sense, an ideal framework for all human

thought that is not strictly religious but is responsive to truth, as is all normal thought by creation. Finally, it has allowed me to see for myself how much the spiritual sharing with other people of the manifestations of our personal faith, however different and even divergent, is possible—when it is founded on the sincerity of the personal search, on the truths of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, and on the love of God that is illustrated so perfectly by the life in the flesh of the Master Son of our local universe.

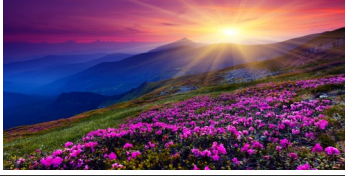
# Announcements

## URANTIA FOUNDATION'S NEW INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

Urantia Foundation is excited to announce that we have started an Instagram account! You can see daily posts of the goings-on in our office in Chicago and worldwide. With increased activity among Urantia Book readers around the globe, Instagram allows us to stay connected.

Instagram is a social networking app made for sharing photos and videos. It is available for free on iOS and Android devices—simply download the app and create an account. It can also be accessed on the web from a computer. When you post a photo or video on Instagram, it will be displayed on your profile. Other users who follow you will see your posts in their own feed. Likewise, you'll see posts from other users whom you choose to follow. It's the perfect way to engage with your community!

Follow [@urantiafoundation](https://www.instagram.com/urantiafoundation) ( [www.instagram.com/urantiafoundation](https://www.instagram.com/urantiafoundation) ) and encourage your friends to follow us and help us further seed *The Urantia Book* and its teachings around the world.



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We are excited to announce that the Farsi translation is now available online at [urantia.org/fa](http://urantia.org/fa). Our Farsi team would love to hear feedback on this work. Please help spread the word to any readers you know, encourage them to visit the site, and send feedback to Tamara Strumfeld at [tamara@urantia.org](mailto:tamara@urantia.org). Thank you!



The real universe  
is friendly  
to every child  
of the  
eternal God.

*The Urantia Book,*  
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