Editor’s Note: The following is a personal reminiscence about the author’s friend and fellow trustee, Richard Keeler, who graduated to the mansion worlds in January. A biography published on the occasion of his retirement as a trustee can be found here, and the announcement of his passing can be found here.

Richard Keeler—my brother, my friend—graduated to the mansion worlds serene and at peace after having lived his sonship on Urantia in full consciousness of our Universal Father. He had a sincere desire to live the teachings of the revelation to which he devoted his life. In addition, he fulfilled his responsibilities as a trustee of Urantia Foundation, a position he accepted more than 30 years ago when heavy clouds of conflict were piling up on our Urantian community.

His exemplary strength of character and determination were matched only by his kindness and loyalty. He was a comrade on whom one could count, always in a good mood and ready to listen to you if you were having difficulties. What inspired me most was the sympathy and affection that emanated from him.

The people around him were attracted by his kindness, his sense of humor, his banjo music, and his natural charm. I remember once in 1997, while we were waiting with my wife Marlène in the main hall of the Mexico City airport, Richard threw his hat up, catching it on his head, while playing the banjo. A crowd of children gathered around him and began to dance in front of the amused parents. Those who knew him can imagine him singing “Alouette, gentille alouette…” while playing the banjo!

I met Richard for the first time in August 1988 during the chartering of the Urantia Association of Finland, and then at the castle of Montvillargenne where the CERDH (the first French association for readers) organized an international conference in 1989. Having just arrived from Sydney, Australia, he was so tired from his journey that he fell asleep in the elevator of our company’s offices. You can easily imagine the astonishment of my wife and coworkers when we discovered him asleep on an old mattress that happened to be there!

In those days he and I met very often, discussing matters of mutual concern with my father, Jacques Dupont and Marlène. On several occasions Seppo Kanerva from Finland, Philip Rolnick, and Martin Myers accompanied him. During these visits, we talked about the situation of the Foundation and the future of the French translation, which was being revised.

When he was staying with us in Blennes, he was particularly attentive to my mother-in-law, whom he affectionately called...
Mémé, and I know that she was very appreciative of his attention and loved him very much.

When I became a trustee in October 1995, I know he strongly supported my appointment. Those times were a heroic epoch during which a great effort was conducted to produce translations. Seppo, Richard, and I formatted the different translations in Blennes with great joy and feelings of satisfaction, working for the expansion of the revelation through the translations that we were preparing. At that time, file-to-print technology did not exist yet. I had purchased a complete set of equipment that enabled us to create films and prepare proofs for the printer. We also formatted the small vinyl cover book which made the The Urantia Book very affordable.

There were two special events in our friendship. The first was a 23-day trip to South America in 1997 with my wife and Bob Solone, during which we were able to meet readers from more than seven Spanish-speaking countries and Brazil.

We shared so many adventures together during this journey that it would be impossible to relate them all. We were in Colombia and were driving back from a dinner given by readers in a small town about 150 km (95 miles) from Bogotá. Crossing a dense forest, we came face-to-face with armed men who stopped us and forced us out of the car. They asked us for our papers. Richard handed over his passport, and realizing he was a "gringo," the soldier asked him to put his hands on the hood of the car and began to search him. Richard had fun saying "do not" and then "stop" then continuing to say "do not stop," as if he enjoyed it. The soldier got angry and went to his superior, who saw the scene and understood that Richard was joking. Finally, they let us go with some jokes. Afterwards, our guide explained to Richard that we were very lucky—the forest was full of FARC guerrillas.

The second event was his heart surgery in 2000 at the Georges-Pompidou Hospital in Paris, performed by Dr. Alain Frédéric Carpentier, known worldwide for his valve operations. The evening before his surgery, I was with him in the hospital room; he was a bit tense and anxious. I joked to relax the atmosphere by telling him that he was going to find himself on this side of the bridge, and in the opposite case he would wake up on the other side, alive forever. I visited him every day at the hospital and later, my mother-in-law cared for him with tenderness during his convalescence in Blennes.

My unfailing friendship for him was mutual: I loved him for himself, and he loved me for myself. These things are inexpressible in words because they are relationships of personalities, and I treasured the chance to have experienced them here on Urantia.

I know I’ll meet him again soon.

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### Noteworthy Decisions from the January 2019 Board of Trustees Meeting

2018 was a good year for Urantia Foundation, however there were also disappointments. Progress continued in community relations, education, fundraising, office management, internal financial management, translations and revisions, and especially the new Spanish revision. However, book sales and downloads were down.

Operating expenses were under budget even with an unexpected $29,411 property tax increase from the City of Chicago. The appraisal value tripled over the last three years, which drove the taxes from about $19,000 to $97,000 in 2019. A lot of investigative work has been done to uncover why, and we expect the tax bill to return to the amount of past years.

**Books**

It sounds overly commercial to judge Urantia Foundation’s success as an organization on book sales and downloads. After all, the crowds who followed Jesus ebbed and flowed throughout his ministry. The difference between then and now is that most people in Palestine had heard Jesus speak or knew of his teachings. Today, since so few have heard of The Urantia Book, the few tangible measurements of seeding the revelation are book sales and downloads.

In 2018, approximately 18,000 books were sold and 82,460 books were downloaded from www.urantia.org. There were close to 24,000 downloads from the Apple app. Book
sales in English, Spanish, and French were up, but these were offset by lower sales in German, Russian, and Portuguese. We are asking ourselves what we can do in 2019 to improve global sales.

No matter how difficult it is to globally distribute a backlisted book from 1955, that’s our job. We do this work with joy and dedication.

Digital technology has changed the face of book distribution. Whether it is eBooks, apps, social media, videos, or websites, the digital distribution of The Urantia Book offers the most significant opportunities for outreach. Urantia Foundation’s team is expanding its technology skills to meet this growing demand. We are working on a few projects that will optimize digital outreach.

Fundraising

Urantia Foundation surpassed its annual fundraising goals in 2018. Unrestricted donations were $731,330, and restricted donations totaled $81,767. A large part of the restricted donations came from the Latin American gift book program and funding to support the creation of a history book. The Revelation Bridge Fund also hit its goal and received $288,632 from estates.

Community Relations

Urantia Foundation remains fervent in its efforts to serve with others who advance the revelation into the world. We are partnering with UAI, the Fellowship, and individuals by supporting conferences, book fairs, book placement, and outreach efforts.

Translations and Revisions

The biggest news in 2018 was the progress made on the Spanish revision. When finalized in 2020, the revision will replace the Latin American and European editions. In the coming months, more will be shared about Urantia Foundation’s quality processes that have been used to create this outstanding revision.

Highlights from 2018

- Stayed under budget.
- Exceeded the fundraising goals for unrestricted, restricted, and estate funds.
- Made progress on the Greek, Japanese, Chinese, and Hebrew translations.
- Made significant progress on the Spanish and Portuguese revisions.
- Initiated the Spanish Revision Rollout Plan.
- Gifted 600 Spanish books in Latin America.
- Upgraded the UBIS website.
- Presented 36 UBIS courses including 9 in Spanish and 9 in French.
- Licensed three new UAI Associations (Peru, Ecuador, and Costa Rica).
- With Eric Cosh, filmed a tour of Urantia Foundation that can be viewed on urantia.org.
- Published the 2017 Annual Report.
- Extended leases for the coach house and third-floor apartments.
- Took legal measures to roll back the Chicago property tax increase.
- Established the Outreach Committee.
- Facilitated logistics for the April 2019 Cultural Symposium.
- Launched the 2019 Science Symposium II.
- Hosted 10 events at 533 (BOT meetings, UBIS board, Urantia Book Fellowship EC, Women’s Retreat, Center for Urantia Studies).
- Published Danish and Farsi websites with electronic translations.
- Improved urantia.org.
- Started an Instagram account.
- Kept our global trademarks updated and monitored their use.
- Met with the Fellowship Executive Committee to discuss the effects of competing translations. The result was the Fellowship’s promise to contact Urantia Foundation before they endorse a competing translation.
- Lowered our Russian book price to increase sales in Russia.
- Handled day-to-day reader service requests.
- Continued to upgrade the library at Urantia Foundation.

Goals for 2019


2) Donations: Raise $700,000 in unrestricted donations, $40,000 in restricted donations, and $250,000 in estate donations earmarked for future generations.

3) Budget: Stay at or below our $846,000 operating expense budget and $100,000 capital budget (unless book sales increase beyond expectations). Break even with income and expenses.

4) Taxes: Reduce the property tax for 533 Diversey from $97,000 to under $35,000.

5) Translations and Revisions: Move the Spanish Revision Rollout Plan forward. Continue progress on all in-process translations and revisions.

6) Education: Spread the teachings of the revelation holding the Cultural Symposium in April 2019. Make progress with UBIS by continuous improvement of its systems.

7) Electronic Media: Provide new content for the English, Spanish, and Portuguese websites. Continue to grow our social media platforms as well.

8) The Future: Create a new five-year plan for Urantia Foundation that includes succession planning for the organization.

Decisions and Information from the January 2019 Board Meeting

1. Board Reports: The board reviewed: a) a report from the president and the executive director, b) a financial and an investments report from the treasurer, and c) reports from the
following committees: Book, Education, Governance and Nominating, Finance, Fundraising, Outreach, and Translations.

Proposals and discussions were held regarding new book formats and secondary works that will facilitate the distribution of The Urantia Book. A number of new ideas are being studied and implemented.

2. Education Committee: UBIS board members reported on the progress of the school. New improvements in the courses have increased the experiential integration of the teachings. By enhancing the training program for facilitators, students will experience team teaching and group collaboration. Bruce Johnson volunteered to mentor first-time facilitators and take part in their classes. These changes should attract new students.

Gard Jameson reported that Ralph Zebr would conduct a Science Symposium in November 2019. The symposium, held at the Foundation, will be live-streamed by Gaëtan Charland. For those who love science, you’ll want to hear presentations on the ultimaton, quantum physics, and the expansion of the universe.

Claire Mylanus, Marta Elders, and Marilynn Kulieke previewed the purpose and agenda of the upcoming Cultural Symposium. The event happens on April 11-15, 2019, at Urantia Foundation. Twelve attendees from five continents will share their views about their country’s readiness for the revelation. Said Claire, “Accommodating the cultural continuum of civilization on the planet should help Urantia Foundation in understanding and facilitating the teachings in various countries and cultures.”

3. Outreach in the Philippines: The board heard Belen Asidao explain the work that she and her husband, Eugene, have accomplished in the Philippines. They began seven years ago by seeding Urantia Books and establishing study groups.

In 2015, they placed books in the northern part of the Philippines with the help of Urantia Foundation. During their six-month trip in 2018, they visited study groups throughout the country. In the next four to five years, they’ll train teachers who are capable of hosting conferences and facilitating study groups. In the next seven to ten years, they plan to translate the book into Tagalog. We are grateful for their pioneering efforts in the Philippines!
In that spirit we felt it fitting that John’s last words should be the first words of this new secondary work from the Jesus papers: The Untold Story of Jesus: A Modern Biography from The Urantia Book.

Growth and Development

This tale began 11 years ago as Mo and Jennifer Siegel began commissioning renowned Christian artists to paint scenes from the midwayer narrative. Their vision was to bring to life stories and settings lost to the world until these days of the fifth epochal revelation.

Acquisitions continued over the next nine years until the collection numbered over 40 paintings. Work also began on a book to showcase the works along with corresponding stories from the papers. The goal was to make this modern biography of Jesus accessible to God-seeking souls the world over.

Arduous editing produced a manuscript of well under a quarter of Part IV with a working title of “Great Jesus Stories.” To further refine it, we assembled an editing team representing over three centuries of combined study of the papers: MaryJo Garascia, Jim English, David Kantor, Stuart Kerr, Lucretia Schanfarber. Whether this speaks to a great scholarly storehouse or merely old editors is left up to the reader.

The team worked over the past two years and delivered the following:

• A master document to preserve a replete record of the editing process.
• A manuscript organized into 12 chapters based on the arc of major phases in the Master’s life.
• Literary devices such as sidebars and chapter openings to paraphrase and condense text.
• Front and back matter.
• Classic art and licensed paintings for familiar stories and teachings.

Another 10 or so paintings were commissioned during this period, not only for untold stories, but to accurately portray scenes that have been historically misrepresented. In this context, it should be noted that any image of Jesus carries a built-in handicap in that it may not fit the viewer’s preconceived notion of what he looked like. We provided artists with relevant information from the papers on lineage and background, but in the end, they painted their own soulful interpretations. We respected their creative license for, as we know, “The high mission of any art . . . is to foreshadow a higher universe reality, to crystallize the emotions of time into the thought of eternity.” 48:7.23 (557.7)

Production

As time came to produce the book, we hired a world-class independent publishing team that produced many of Scholastic and National Geographic’s finest books. The team consisted of a designer, production manager, editor, proofreader, art archivist, indexer, and cartographer. Over the next year we designed a book that would do justice to the art as well as to this enthralling narrative of Jesus we all know and love. It was to be small enough to fit in a backpack, have the readability of a hardcover novel, and incorporate luxury features, all rolled into a polished design.

Yet another review of the art netted improvements and a few more commissions, giving us 106 paintings. The greatest challenge was to effectively arrange art and stories into a cohesive whole. Graphic motifs were established for form and function. Elements like pull quotes, sidebars, and illustrated boxes add visual interest and are essential for effective page layout. We commissioned three maps, including a two-page spread charting the Master’s three years of travels. An exhaustive index was the final touch.

It is interesting to note that these publishing professionals exhibited a sincere respect for the manuscript, both as a literary work and as spiritual truth. Whether they believed the Jesus papers or not we do not know, but it was always treated with gravitas.

As a secondary work, this book now follows the Urantia Papers as the latest feature of the progressive evolution of human society. It took the brilliant writing of the midwayer commission, 35 artists, and thousands of hours of work from 29 contributors to make it happen.

We have received advance copies and heard positive reviews from spiritually seeking people. It is a perfect gateway book for family and friends who are spiritually hungry but not ready for The Urantia Book. It will be available in early May. Click here to pre-order the book at Amazon. In the meantime, we invite you to preview the book here (PDF), here and here.

The pages in this book are rife with passages declaring the world ripe for a revival of the true religion of Jesus. Though the dissemination of the revelation itself has been staid and measured, we can shout Jesus from the rooftops.
Global Cultural Symposium at Urantia Foundation

By Marta Elders, associate trustee, Urantia Foundation, Connecticut, United States

Editor’s Note: Claire Mylanus, chair of the symposium, Marta Elders, and Marilynn Kulieke have been planning this gathering over the past few years in order to support the international efforts of Urantia Foundation. We are grateful for the time and energy of the participants for bringing to life this momentous occasion!

The Education Committee of Urantia Foundation is pleased to announce a cultural symposium to be held at the Foundation from April 11 to 15.

Men and women from different countries will gather to share their research, personal perspectives, and unique understanding of their native culture and environment.

The purpose of the symposium is to help the trustees and staff of Urantia Foundation to better understand and appreciate the opportunities—and the challenges—for advancing the teachings of The Urantia Book and making the book itself available in their native countries.

Each participant has been invited to give a presentation about cultural aspects such as spiritual beliefs, religion, the political climate, the status of women and the family, educational opportunities, art, and philosophy. Participants will focus on the following topics, each of which has been illuminated and guided by quotes from The Urantia Book.

Religious Development
- Modern religion
- Prevailing belief system
- Attitudes toward religion and spirituality
- Organized and non-denominational religions and other spiritual beliefs
- Personal religion

Current, Past, and Future Culture
- Evolution of culture
- The importance of the family
- The value of women
- The status of education (science, philosophy, and religion)

Dissemination and Possible Advancement of The Urantia Book
- Possibilities in making The Urantia Book available and embraced
- Urantia Foundation support and service
- Group study options in the country

We are thrilled to host our brothers and sisters from other parts of the planet as they come together to share their experiences with the fifth epochal revelation and to more deeply discern its potential in the world.

This event will be live-streamed, so please consider joining us online. This is the link for the online streaming channel: http://www.ustream.tv/channel/5XYG5r0qWB. Please mark your calendar!

All times listed below are Central Daylight Time (CDT), USA:

12 April 9AM
Ade Awoyinka
Nigeria

12 April 11AM
Khatukhira Bernard
Uganda

12 April 2PM
Sandra Burga-Cisneros
Peru

12 April 4PM
Enrique Traver
Brazil

13 April 9AM
Nugroho Widi
Indonesia
The UBIS Experience: Behind the Scenes

By Michael Zehr, UBIS Website Administrator, Florida, United States

Editor’s Note: To learn more about UBIS, please click here. If you have any questions please contact the school’s director, Joanne, at joanne@urantia.org.

Many of you are familiar with the Urantia Book Internet School (UBIS) as students and have seen the public side of it. But today I would like to welcome you to a behind-the-scenes tour of our school.

UBIS operates on a trimester basis, meaning courses are offered three times a year. There is a lot of activity that goes on before we open our virtual doors. It is no exaggeration to say that the life of a typical UBIS course can begin a full year before it is offered.

For several months prior to each trimester, teacher-facilitators (TFs) submit their courses to the Course Review Committee, a group of seasoned TFs who volunteer to read the assigned papers and study questions to ensure adherence to our unique non-interpretive teaching philosophy.

When approved, courses are posted on urantia.org in their respective languages of English, French, and Spanish (Portuguese when available), along with important dates and links to the UBIS site. Email announcements in these languages are then sent to thousands of readers around the world.

Once the courses have been posted on urantia.org, this signals a number of activities on my end. I create an empty framework for each course by setting up the 10 weekly blocks of designated activities. The TFs are then able to “fill in the blanks” by uploading their personalized course materials.

Once the course frameworks are finished and I contact each TF to let them know his or her template is available, I then schedule video training for new TFs and refreshers for those who haven’t facilitated in a while. Finally, I proceed to set up the online registration.

Messages on the UBIS site are updated to inform website viewers of impending dates and to welcome potential students. Every course is posted with a graphic and a brief description so that students can peruse them while waiting for registration to open.

By this point, four weeks have passed and it is registration week. During this highly active period I assist the registrar and continue to help TFs as needed. When courses are full, I turn off the enroll option and update the messages on the enrollment pages.

When the courses finally begin, I help students with logins, passwords, and occasional enrollment updates, all the while continuing to monitor the site. Every Monday a new weekly section becomes visible to the students through the magic of editing tools.

As we approach the final week, there is a little extra setup required to provide Certificates of Completion, as well as a Student Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ). These SEQs, while not mandatory, provide useful feedback so we can continue to make improvements.

After the goodbyes are said, my work continues. Wrap-up includes downloading and tabulating the SEQ responses—and I assure you that I read every single comment. Then I close out the courses and remove them from the current/active course list. The messages on the Foundation’s website and the UBIS site are updated one more time.

On the Saturday following each trimester, I participate in follow-up meetings with TFs and UBIS board members.

Not only does this cycle repeat three times a year, we do it in three or four languages!

I hope you enjoyed this behind-the-scenes look at our school. The enrollment period for the next trimester starts on April 15. We look forward to hearing from you then!
What The Urantia Book Means to Me

By Simonas Jurgionis, Vilnius, Lithuania

All my life I have been interested in spirituality and my own personal search for truth. My journey has included various types of Buddhism, Hare Krishna, Catholicism, Shamanism, etc. In all of them, I found something that attracted me—something that I felt was true. But I also felt that something was missing in every one of them. The only thing I was certain of is that there must be some higher power that created us and this world, and that we are not some cosmic coincidence. The rest of the picture in my mind was a total mess, with bits and pieces from various religions and spiritual teachers.

Luckily for me, I had an advanced teacher (a PhD in philosophy) in my family. He has been very helpful as a guide in my spiritual search. He never directed me in any way, but just gave me advice about every topic in which I was interested at the time. He was a watcher and adviser of my journey.

In 2016, I saw The Urantia Book on his table. He said that if I wanted to know the truth, this is the book I should read. I bought it immediately, but it took me almost a year from that point to finish reading it. We Lithuanians are lucky to have it in our own language—otherwise it might be too challenging.

When I started to read The Urantia Book, I was both stunned and transformed. I had never felt so peaceful and sure. This was what I had been waiting for all my life! All my thoughts about myself, others, our planet, the cosmos, God, Jesus, and spirituality in general changed completely. I had never felt so grateful in my life. To be sure that you are a true child of God, who created this enormous universe, is something beyond words. How amazing to be sure—even though there is an unimaginably long journey in front of us—that at some point in eternity we will reach the shores of Paradise. These certainties started to change my life, and I still feel the impact of this book (or more precisely, the truth which I found within it) each and every day.

Being introduced to The Urantia Book is the best thing that has happened in my life. It totally changed my understanding of every possible aspect of life—not only spiritual ones but also concepts about my pursuits, family, values, etc. I believe that one day I will become a father, and by having these concepts I will be able to give much more to this child than I could without these teachings. The same could be said for my wife and my parents.

What an unbelievable adventure is in front of me (what most of us call life), and I am grateful for every opportunity and lesson. Also, I feel a huge responsibility as a cosmic citizen to be worthy of this gift and to do everything I can to help those who are not so lucky in their spiritual searches or everyday struggles. I am still very far from what I believe I can and must achieve. But knowing that a part of our Father lives within every one of us makes everything possible.

Greek and Hebrew Now Available Online!

We are excited to announce that the Greek and Hebrew translations are now available online at urantia.org/el and urantia.org/he respectively.

Our translation teams would love to hear feedback on these works. Please help spread the word to any readers you know, encourage them to read the translations, and send feedback to Tamara Strumfeld at tamara@urantia.org. Thank you!
The Urantia Book Fellowship’s Summer Study Session 2019

The Urantia Book Fellowship's Summer Study Session 2019 will be held from June 27 to 30, at Techny Towers in Northbrook, Illinois. This year’s theme is “Experiencing God’s Presence.”

It will be preceded by a two-day spiritual retreat, “Getting to Know Our Spiritual Parents,” which begins on Tuesday evening, June 25, and a Society Conclave during the day on June 27.

Registration for the main session as well as pre- and post-events is open online at www.regonline.com/urantia_fellowship_SSS19.

There was so little of the professional, the well-planned, or the premeditated in the Master's earthly ministry. He dispensed health and scattered happiness naturally and gracefully as he journeyed through life. It was literally true, "He went about doing good."

The Urantia Book, 171:7.9 (1875.4)