

## Letter to the Members of The Urantia Book Fellowship

August 30, 1999

From Janet Farrington Graham, President, The Urantia Book Fellowship

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Dear Friends,

During the first week of August in Vancouver B.C., over 900 loving souls experienced a family reunion filled with an outpouring of genuine friendship, enlightening scholarship, inspiring worship, and energizing entertainment. On behalf of all who attended IC99, I would like to thank the organizing team, the workshop leaders and plenary speakers, and the musicians and producers, every one of who committed their skills and abilities--and their valuable time--to create an experience that will forever exist as a treasured memory.

Although this memory will surely provide comfort during inevitable difficulties, the most valuable aspect of our time together was the opportunity to experience true brotherhood, and the influence of this unfailing love upon our children. The youth were aglow as they moved among us in bonded units of two or more; the teens were transformed by their midnight meetings in the rose garden with the young adults who shared with them a personal passion for the revelation. The harvest of these new relationships will sustain our community throughout the great struggle of revelation service to which we have each dedicated our lives.

As you can read in my [1999 Annual Report](#), The Fellowship has been transforming itself as well. We are fully committed to an embrace of the entire readership through an encompassing philosophy of service; we actively seek to meet the needs of each individual and group regardless of their interest in, or affiliation with, any other organization. To that end, the General Council, in the annual meeting following the conference, passed two resolutions that represent our vision of community.

The first resolution states: The General Council of The Fellowship supports the recommendation of the Millennium Initiative Committee (MI) to form a formal working alliance with the International Urantia Association (IUA).

The MI consists of twenty individuals associated with the IUA, The Fellowship and other organizations who agreed to meet and discuss potential ways in which

our two organizations could better work together. The committee proposed a formal working alliance, and although we understand that the council's decision does not activate this alliance, we look forward to hearing from the IUA regarding their interest in pursuing the MI recommendation. We envision cooperative outreach projects, shared educational resources and study group information, and other progressive initiatives that serve the community of readers. A copy of the MI recommendation is attached.

The second resolution states: Whereas questions have arisen within the readership concerning the attitude of The Fellowship towards the recent private publication of "The Life and Teachings of Jesus" as a separate book, the General Council hereby reaffirms The Fellowship's constitutional purpose, e.g. the study and dissemination of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.

The council also directed me to briefly review our recent history regarding the separate publication of Part IV. Our hope is that the membership of The Fellowship will better understand our consistent behavior regarding this issue. At the August 9, 1996 General Council meeting--during the time *The Urantia Book* was in the public domain and after we had completed our publication of the Uversa Press edition--a proposal for the publication of Part IV as a separate volume was debated.

During that meeting, a proposal was made by a councilor concerning publishing Part IV of *The Urantia Book* as a separate volume. The money for this project would be privately provided and would not come out of The Fellowship's budget. Another councilor indicated strong interest in this project. However each had different requests of the General Council: one was seeking our approval for acting as a private citizen to insure there would be no conflict-of-interest; the other was requesting the use of The Fellowship's new architecture for a Part IV publication.

The council was reminded that when *The Urantia Book* first went into the public domain, the council voted unanimously to protect and preserve the text inviolate; this project of publishing Part IV as a separate volume would conflict with that resolution. After discussion, the two councilors withdrew their request, stating that they needed time to rethink the project and the various opinions expressed to them.

The General Council feels it is very important for the membership, and the readership at large, to understand that The Fellowship, as an organization, does not pass judgment on the dissemination efforts of private individuals. In addition, the clause in our constitution that states The Fellowship will be "...ever obedient and subservient to the laws of this country..." relates to the activities of the organization, not to individual members. We would remind the community that in keeping with this constitutional requirement, The Fellowship immediately ceased printing and selling the Uversa Press edition of *The Urantia Book* when the copyright was returned upon appeal to Urantia Foundation in June of 1997.

We consider the Michael Foundation's publication of "Jesus -- A New Revelation" to be a private matter between the Michael Foundation and Urantia Foundation Trustees.

We now head into the final four months before the year 2000. During this time, I plan to engage in a season of communion and personal creative work, and to honestly evaluate the progress of the past, the prejudices still held in the present, and to envision a unity of purpose for the future. To prepare, I have been carefully reading the Jesus papers from beginning to end. It has been an enlightening and inspiring experience. There is no doubt in my mind that we can find answers to our complex material problems by contemplating the life and teachings of Jesus. I pray for the wisdom to comprehend the Master's ennobling truth, and for the courage with which this truth must be lived.

In fellowship,

Janet Farrington Graham

# The Urantia Book

## FELLOWSHIP

### Annual Report for the Charter Committee

**July 1999**

Ichak Adizes, author of *The Pursuit of Prime*, states that all organizations that have longevity are exemplified by the ability to reinvent themselves with discipline and innovation while never losing sight of those they serve. 1999 has been, for The Urantia Book Fellowship, a year of exploring whom we are as a group, defining why we exist and what we could/should be doing in the service of the Fifth Epochal Revelation to the peoples of Urantia.

The Charter Committee's future responsibilities are being redefined, clarified and refocused. This is an opportunity for the Charter Committee to more effectively serve the varied community of readers and believers of The Urantia Book.

In 1989, the Charter Committee's basic responsibility was establishing the requirements for society formation and verifying those applicant groups satisfactorily met such requirements. In the early 1990's, the Charter Committee became responsible for reviewing the member at large (MAL) applications and making recommendations to the Executive Committee, whose jurisdiction it is for approval of such members. Then in 1997, the Charter Committee created the Fellowship Associate status for groups who wanted to associate with the Fellowship but whom did not meet or desire the requirements for society formation. More changes came in 1998 with the simplification of Society Charter standards and resulted in a much-simplified standard Society Constitution.

1999 has furthered these changes with an emphasis on simplifying the process of individuals or groups supporting and participating with The Urantia Book Fellowship. A membership subcommittee was formed at the February 1999 General Council meeting and made three recommendations to the Executive Committee in April of 1999.

1. Revise and Open Up (simplify) the Criteria for the Formation of Societies
2. Create an Interest Groups Program
3. Revise Criteria for becoming a Member at Large

All three will effect the responsibilities and duties of the Charter Committee in varying ways, some of which still need to be determined.

The major changes in the formation of Societies are that the standard constitution for societies would be revised to be better aligned with constitutional thinking outside the US and that societies would not need to be geographically based, but could be web based or interest group based. They could also be formed by groups of members-at-large who are interested in participating in the governance of the organization.

The changes recommended for becoming and maintaining a member at large (MAL) status would be to make a minimum yearly donation. The amount of the yearly donation is not yet defined. Applicants would have an option to a yearly donation by applying for a scholarship, in which they provide their skills and abilities in lieu of a donation. Other options would be to apply as members of a current society, or to organize and create a new society, which meets the requirements of The Urantia Book Fellowship.

Additionally, members at large would not be required to read the entire book or asked to pledge their allegiance to the organization. The main requirement is a yearly donation and supplying their name, address, phone number and email address, all of which signify their active support of our organizational work.

The issue concerning elections to the General Council of The Urantia Book Fellowship has been discussed. The early consensus being those candidates will be known for their work within the Urantia community as well as their service in various committees and their activity in Special Interest Groups. Their application form to the GC will further amplify their qualifications for a seat on the General Council.

Discussion about society contribution to The Urantia Book Fellowship continues with a concept for the need of a minimal contribution by each society to maintain their active status. Active status would allow participation in TDA representation etc. At this time, there is not a clearly defined idea what a minimal contribution would or should be.

The Charter Committee worked on the Installation ceremony of the Vancouver Island Peoples Society of Readers of The Urantia Book scheduled for August 11, 1999. This is the 25th society to be organized in The Urantia Book Fellowship and has 23 founding members. We look forward to successful service to the revelation.

In our Eternal Father's service,

Robert Burns, Chair  
Larry Bowman, Secretary  
Robert Bruyn  
Dale Szejnberg  
Bob Arkens  
John Causland

# President's Annual Report to the General Council, Society Presidents and Members of *The Urantia Book* Fellowship

Janet Farrington Graham

August 1999

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During the past year we have committed significant resources to the staging of our International Conference in Vancouver, B.C. Dozens of Fellowship and IUA members, and unaffiliated readers have invested countless hours working side by side for a single goal: To bring together a thousand *Urantia Book* readers from around the world. For three years this dedicated team has combed our community for new approaches to study and dissemination of the book and its teachings; for new creative expressions of personal religious experience; for unique and uplifting entertainment by professionals dedicated to the revelation. For three years these readers have set aside organizational differences and embraced each other as teammates and friends. How can such a diverse group work so closely together? And why does The Fellowship value this experience so highly that it becomes the main focus of our organizational efforts during the year preceding every international conference?

There is one statement that can answer both questions: Unity of Purpose.

The only way a diverse group can work together in relative harmony is by recognizing the uniqueness of each individual and the strength of their contribution to the whole. Imagine what kind of conference we would have if every member of the planning team held the same interests and opinions. Imagine how similar each workshop and worship would be if uniformity prevailed. But the purpose of an international conference such as the one staged every three years is to showcase our differences, to experiment with new ideas, to expand our horizons as a community. The planning team knows this intuitively, and so accepts the unique contributions of each member without complaint. "Let's try it!" becomes the battle cry of the creatively committed. How does such a team work in harmony? With a unity of purpose, and a willingness to build upon the strength of diversity.

The Fellowship recognizes the value of such a project. Considering how difficult our social history has been through the years, an international conference seems to be a shining light in our community experience. It is worth the investment in time and money to stage an event that illuminates unity of purpose among a thousand people for an entire week. We come together ready and willing to share ideas, opinions, visions; we come together hungry to celebrate our differences and our similarities, to embrace each other with sincerity and

love.

During the past year we have also endeavored to restructure our membership policies and plans to reflect our growing understanding of diversity, and the role it plays in revelation service. We began this discussion of diversity following several cataclysmic events that served to divide the reader community into political camps. We began this discussion of diversity when we realized that assuming a position along partisan lines was inconsistent with the goals of a fraternal organization committed to serving the entire community. We began this discussion when we realized unity was not uniformity and diversity could not be embraced in degrees.

The transition from holding an established political position to seeking an embrace of the whole has been a challenging journey for our organization during the past year, and we are just beginning to test the waters of our resolve. Regardless of pressure, I believe we should not choose sides in battles that set one brother against another, or the community itself against any organization. Nor should we issue statements supporting one political position over another. How can we? If The Fellowship truly seeks to serve the whole, to embrace unity without uniformity, to facilitate the expressions of diversity among the readership, we must hold steadfast to our organizational vision. We must serve all those who seek to study, socialize, and disseminate the FER regardless of political positions or personal religious expressions.

"Jesus prayed for unity among his followers, but he did not desire uniformity. Sin creates a dead level of evil inertia, but righteousness nourishes the creative spirit of individual experience in the living realities of eternal truth and in the progressive communion of the divine spirits of the Father and the Son. In the spiritual fellowship of the believer-son with the divine Father there can never be doctrinal finality and sectarian superiority of group consciousness." 182:1.8

I imagine a time when the revelation will increasingly capture hearts in the east as well as the west. I imagine a time when the revelation will free the imagination of those bound by the fetters of various evolutionary religions. I imagine a time when our members will be so unlike ourselves, so culturally diverse, we will struggle endlessly to understand their unique perspectives and still be required to accept without question that they, too, answer the Father's call. There is only one way an organization dedicated to planetary service in the unfolding of a revelation can function successfully in the midst of such truth: with a unity of purpose able to encompass the whole.

This organizational unity of purpose cannot be defined by partisan political views and still be encompassing; it cannot be framed by specific spiritual practices and meet the personal needs of each believer-son. We have come to understand that an organizational unity of purpose is best expressed as a broad philosophy of service, a commitment to help coordinate the work of community members as they gather to study, worship, and serve the

revelation together.

We have launched several new programs that are designed to facilitate service and study among our growing body of readers and believers. We have prepared welcoming kits that explain our new programs, and we encourage everyone to review the materials, share them with friends, and join our expanding network of revelation explorers. Our Internet services have grown exponentially in the past year. We offer opportunities for readers to gain information and brainstorm together, and to share their visions and projects with the global community. We will continue working with the interfaith community, sponsoring in-depth topical studies via the Wrightwood series, designing publications that stimulate the imagination, offering services to children and families as they socialize their religion together.

And I hope we will continue to participate in every available forum for the exploration of unity within our community, both as an organization and as individuals. We understand more today than we did yesterday, but we still have a long way to go. We must recreate our selves, our organization, and our community to fully reflect the Master's teaching if we are to successfully share this revelation with the world.

At *The Urantia Book* Fellowship we are working to take the Master's mission to heart: "Whosoever would become great in my Father's kingdom shall become a minister to all; and whosoever would be first among you, let him become the server of his brethren."

And we are learning to live his encompassing vision: "Whosoever will, let him come."

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A service of  
[\*The Urantia Book Fellowship\*](#)

## 1999 Domestic Extension Committee Report

Paula Thompson

1999 was a great year for DEC. With the work of our dedicated committee and hundreds of volunteers we introduced the Urantia teachings to thousands of individuals, helped distribute hundreds of gift books, produced the Study Group Directory, and initiated a new project to bring Urantia Book readers together and create study groups.

### **Booth Outreach**

In 1999 we did 12 shows in 12 cities, including: San Francisco, Baltimore, Ft. Lauderdale, Denver, Spokane, Minneapolis, Sacramento, Phoenix, Austin, Chicago, New York, and Atlanta.

There is a considerable amount of work that goes into creating these events. Before the show, there is a need to coordinate with show producers (booking booth space, securing electricity, shipping materials, and applying for speaking opportunities), make travel arrangements for the facilitator, and coordinate with a local UB community liaison who lines up volunteers for the booth and arranges accommodations and transportation for the facilitator. During the show the facilitator, always a trained DEC member, arrives one day early for booth set up and training, and is there to provide expertise and continuity for the entire event (about 30 hours in a three day weekend). After the show there is an accounting to be made of literature distributed as well as mailing list updates. DEC members agree that this work is of vital importance for UB promotion as well as training teachers and leaders. It should be obvious that these efforts involve a great deal of participation and support by local reader communities, without which, this outreach would be impossible.

Heartfelt thanks goes to the tireless efforts of committee members LuAnn Harney, Robin Jorgensen, and Mary Ebben for giving up one or more weekends to facilitate expos in 1999, and special thanks to ad hoc member Maria Downing who learned the ropes. May our Heavenly Father richly bless each and every one of you!

The following literature was distributed at these shows:

Soft Back UB: 224

Hard Back UB: 13

Spanish UB: 18

UB Excerpt Brochures: 4,378

Life After Death Magazine: 167

M. Sprunger Brochures: 900

Concordex: 10

Fellowship Brochures: 600

Study Group Directories: 600

In addition, we made personal contact with hundreds of people who signed our mailing list, provided over 120 Urantians with the opportunity to serve as outreach volunteers (many paid travel and accommodation expenses to do so) and exposed the book to well over 100,000 potential seekers.

Sadly, because of budget cuts we had to limit the amount of shows we did in 1999 and will do even less in 2000. This is a shame because these Expos are the only project our Fellowship sponsors on a regular basis that provides hands on local community participation. If these were not popular or deemed of value by local Urantia communities, we would not have people asking us to come back and be willing to volunteer for them year after year.

### **Uversa Book Distribution**

With the help of Jesusonian Foundation, Domestic Extension shipped 158 Uversa Press books to numerous individuals, represented by the following breakdown:

Youth Book Program: 38

International Gifts: 18

FLOWERS: 25

Societies: 65

Prisoners: 10

Website: 1

Library/Institution: 1

### **Work With Other Fellowship Committees**

Domestic Extension helped IFC distribute the following gift foreign language Urantia Books internationally:

Spanish: 36

Russian: 4

French: 6

Finnish: 1

Domestic Extension helped Fraternal Relations at the Parliament of The Worlds Religions in December by providing the booth, a facilitator, and all the literature that was distributed there, including securing the 70 Uversa Press books (previously sent for Norman Ingram's outreach) that were placed in religious libraries all over the world from there.

### **The 1999 – 2000 Study Group Directory**

The directory was completed in time for distribution at IC99, as well as being mailed to every study group that listed in the directory including international groups. As always, each group listed receives several copies for their own use. The directory is a huge DEC project every year, which includes at least three mailings to study groups to get their input. Study group input is essential to the accuracy of the directory. Committee member LuAnn Harney deserves our deep appreciation for providing this loving service and hard work for the past four years.

### **Public Introductions & Workshops**

Members of Domestic Extension Committee did several public introductions to the Urantia Book in 1999. Notably, two were given at Whole Life Expos and one to the UFO conference in Mesquite Nevada. All in all, over 200 people we introduced to the remarkable teachings of The Urantia Book in this way.

### **Creating New Study Groups**

Over the years it has become apparent to us that certain areas have a good number of readers yet do not have a study group. We concluded that it could be because they don't

know about each other. In addition we have met many individuals who would like to host a study group in their area. They often call us for names of readers, and although we can't give them the names of individuals, we can and do send out a letter on their behalf to every name we have in that area. In one case we had a gentleman in Oklahoma who wanted to start a group. He composed a letter of introduction, which we sent out to about six UB readers who live nearby him. He now hosts a wonderful study group of 12.

The Study Group Directory includes a category called "Will Host." This category represents individuals in a given area who have no study group but would be willing to host one. In every area where we have a "Will Host" listing, we are sending out letters to other readers in that area to let them know that a study group opportunity exists. DEC members Doreen Heyne and LuAnn Harney are working together on this effort. We'll let you know how it goes.

It is our hope that in the very near future (perhaps even with the 2000 – 2001 directory) we will be able to send one copy to every person on the mailing list. This seems to be the best way to let people know of study groups in their area, increasing participation in existing groups while creating new ones.

### **Annual Meeting**

The members of DEC met during IC99. We discussed current projects and new possibilities. We discussed the possibility of the Fellowship sending the best of our conference speakers and presenters to local communities. In other words, a sort of "Fellowship Speaker's Bureau" that sends individual presenters to local communities to present topics of interest to Urantia Book students. DEC member Brian Smith graciously offered to promote and host the first one in Southern California. It was later determined that this type of project falls more into the realm and function of Education Committee. Ed Com agreed to work with DEC on this project and funds were allocated for it. The Executive Committee felt it was important to give cities with Fellowship Societies the first opportunity to host such events. Nothing has happened with this project yet, but we hope it will soon.

We have also discussed creative ways to advertise the UB. One idea is to run a simple and compelling quote from the book that has universal appeal to most people. This could be done with a cost effective display ad that includes our web address and toll free number at the bottom. Fred Harris' study group recently ran similar ads in a Florida newspaper, but the ads included only the quote and its source (The UB) not a phone number. Apparently, enough people called the newspaper to find out about the book that the newspaper called the Study Group to ask permission to give out their phone number. Doreen Heyne has researched the cost of such ads in various publications and we hope to try this out before the end of the year. More about that in future reports.

As always, it is a pleasure to be able to do this work on behalf of The Urantia Book Fellowship. We look forward to increased opportunities to serve. I extend warm praise and deep appreciation to the unselfish service of the following members of Domestic Extension Committee:

LuAnn Harney

Robin Jorgensen

Doreen Heyne

Mary Ebben

Brian Smith

Maria Downing (ad hoc)

In faith and friendship,

Paula Thompson, Chair

Domestic Extension Committee