



Tidings

from Associations around Urantia

URANTIA ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

www.urantia-iaa.org

№ 4 ■ SEPTEMBER 2005



"Green Building" © Mario Caoile, Oregon

<i>Gaétan Charland</i>	President's Message	2
<i>Oscar Morales</i>	Colombia conference in San José	2
<i>Susana Palaia</i>	Brazil holds Second Annual Conference	4
<i>Susana Palaia</i>	Associação Urantia do Brasil celebrates Jesus' birthday	5
<i>Mary Tere Ortega</i>	Mexico meeting and Michael's birthday	5
<i>Meredith Van Woert</i>	Jesus at the Beach	6
<i>Marian Hughes</i>	HULA Remembrance	7
<i>Marian Hughes</i>	UAUS Conference Report	8
<i>Marian Hughes</i>	Ode to United Midwayers of Urantia (<i>Poem</i>)	10
<i>Benet Rutenberg</i>	Reflections on the UAUS Conference at Sea	11
<i>Gaétan Charland</i>	Sharing study group experience	15
<i>Rick Warren</i>	Home Dissemination?	16

President's Message

Dear Friends of UAI,

AS WE MOVE ALONG to acquire our autonomy, a big step has been taken that involved the participation of the membership at every level.

On the 29th of August 2005, the RC has adopted a resolution made by the Urantia Association of the United States president, Benet Rutenburg and seconded by Alain Cyr, vice-president of the Canadian Urantia Association. The adopted resolution states that IUA will be registered as International Urantia Association doing business as Urantia Association International (IUA dba UAI).

This adopted resolution will give the opportunity for every new association in the world to adopt a name that will have their first name "Urantia" if they so wish. It will also



respect the will of any association in any country that might want to use the original version to best fit their language structure. This newly chosen name will also help older associations adopt a new name that will be easy to manage in our growing community of readers worldwide.

The ISB will now be able to proceed further in the registration process of our association as a charitable organisation.

This announcement demonstrates clearly that the membership was instrumental in the process of deliberation and decision.

Gaetan Charland
President UAI

2005 August 12, 13, 14 & 15

Colombian National Conference in San José

OSCAR MORALES
Barranquilla, Colombia

LAST AUGUST 12TH AND DURING 4 days, in San José – Province of Caldas, in the very heart of Colombian Coffee Land, we had the Third National Conference of Readers of *The Urantia Book* in Colombia.

More than 50 participants attended from all parts of the country: Barranquilla, Medellín, Armenia, Pasto, Bogotá, Manizales, Pereira, and we also counted with the presence of our dear friend Gaétan Charland (President of UAI) who visited us with his beautiful wife Line St-Pierre from Canada.

What can I say? Ahhh.....We had 4 amazing days, full of brotherhood, companionship, and a lot of fun. Nobody wanted to return back home.

For a start, I will tell you that San José is a small town embedded in the crest of a mountain, at 1700 meters above sea level. It has approximately 5000 inhabitants, but the most

curious is that all of them, yes – just as you hear it – ALL OF THEM know about the existence of *The Urantia Book*. For years, a former Mayor and several members of the medical and administrative community of San José, which are readers of the Book and part of Eje Cafetero Urantia Association, have devoted to disseminate the teachings of the Book. It has been an edifying task, which at the beginning was performed silently as for a long time it was never revealed the origin of those teachings. But recently people started to realize that our charming little blue book was “the source” of so many good advices, stories and teachings, and above all, the source of so many actions, works, constructions and projects. In a country that has been so influenced by corruption, San José distinguishes itself for being a good example of transparent administration and an efficient use of resources, where its administrators really think of the people, for the people,



and to the people. The San José community has, as expected, overturned in support toward its administrators, and we saw all of this reflected when the whole town hosted with great hospitality, enthusiasm and warmth our National meeting of readers of *The Urantia Book*.

San José is surrounded by nature. Side by side of the mountain we can explore deep valleys, coffee plantations, green, green and more green...the landscape was really inspiring, and easily allowed us to reach a state of worship and contemplation of the Universal Father and His great Creation.

Conferences were all centered in the theme of Evolution. The quality of the conferences, fair to say, was extremely high. Many of us were literally with our mouths open and dribbling thanks to the impact that caused us the quality of the expositions. There was space for heated debate, questions and answers came and went all over the place after each presentation. Sometimes we even forgot it was time for lunch.

Each evening the organizers really thought about our spiritual comfort. Every day they had prepared something different. Dances and cultural shows typical of the region, a bonfire, the performance of an Award-winning Symphonic Band, the presentation of an Award-winning Dance Group exclusively brought from Manizales to amuse us with several dances from all over the country; everything was so moving that for some moments we let one or two tears slide over our cheeks. Gaetan and Line, being spectators for the first time of the folkloric culture of our country, felt greatly impressed. Line confessed later that she was so in love with our country, that she was seriously considering to live here. (laughs...)

After the cultural performances, we also had time for the social integration of all participants. Later each night, we gathered around the pool, under a wooden Kiosco, and heated by some drinks and with good music we submerged

in a process of mutual acquaintance, chatting a lot about our lives, our experiences, about our longings and projects for the future...such social gatherings also included interesting discussions about passages from *The Urantia Book*. Considering that many of the participants hadn't ever met face to face before, it was the perfect opportunity to strengthen friendship.

The last day was Gaetan's Birthday... we secretly organized a serenade with Line, who taught us the "Happy Birthday" in French...and at midnight we threw the surprise to Gaetan, and singing in choir (with our hoarse and emotionally drunk voices) we congratulated him, and we all laughed and were happy. That night was the best of all nights.

The farewell at the fourth day was really sad. All delegations were getting ready to return back home, some did it by plane, some by bus or by car, others by *chiva*. For those of you who don't know what a chiva is, please look at the next picture.



I will not hide it, at the end, it was inevitable to be in tears. When you have been submerged in the Circuit of Love of the Universal Father so intensely, and you have consolidated such strong friendships, it is very hard to say good-bye to those who have been your brothers and sisters and who have shared with you such pleasant moments. The good thing is that we remain confident that our spirits will keep being in permanent communication, and today, more than ever, we live our lives with the conviction of recognizing ourselves truly brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of a same loving Universal Father.

As a close friend of mine [Juan Felipe] said to me days ago: Those moments will be printed with fire in my soul and in my heart.

I love you all so much.

Oscar Andres Morales

□

2005 July 15, 16 & 17

Brazil holds its second annual national meeting

Even without a printed Portuguese Urantia Book



SUSANA PALAIA

Secretary, Associação Urantia do Brasil

We held our second national meeting on July 15, 16 and 17th in Brasilia, the capital of Brazil. We were around 40 persons coming from several cities of Brazil.

The program was the following:

- History of Urantia: From cosmic sand to human race - by Elyr Silva
- Adam and Eve: The model city and the Eden gardens - by Frederico Galvão
- The era of Light and Life: a brilliant future - by Nemias Mol
- Jesus Christ: Son of God and Son of Man - by Rogerio Silva
- Thought Adjuster: God living in the human mind - by Gutenberg de Souza Carvalho
- To live: our first challenge (with emphasis on team work) - by Ricardo Ramos and Luiz Amorim

I am very happy to say that the dissemination of the revelation is progressing with wide steps here in Brazil, in spite of not having the Portuguese book

Group photo.

yet. We are in the final stage of the revision of the formatting of the book, which is scheduled to be printed within two months.

Next year, as Brazil is a very large country, we will realize only regional meetings and in 2007 we will organize a national meeting.

On Sunday, August 21st, we are gathering to commemorate Michael's birthday here at our place in Sao Paolo, having invited many readers of *The Urantia Book* for the occasion. □



One among several presentations

August 21st

Associação Urantia do Brasil celebrates Jesus' birthday

SUSANA PALAIA
São Paulo, Brasil

Sunday, August 21 we celebrated Michael/Jesus' birthday at our place in São Paulo. We were 33 readers and 4 children. Rogério Reis opened the meeting and Andrea Rossi made a short introduction reading some lines about Jesus and two prayers written by Luiz.

All participants received a short text about Jesus' teachings and read it saying some words about themselves, how they got in touch with *The Urantia Book* and what it represents in their lives.

All the time a selected music was played at the background. Vidal França played guitar and his wife Mazé sang a song about Jesus; then Andrea asked everybody to get familiar with each other as Jesus was interested in knowing people more closely, while some snacks and fruit juices were served.

Gabriel brought some paintings of his inspired by *The Urantia Book* to complete the environment. It was indeed a very inspiring, love and joyful meeting.

More pictures and video clip on the UAI website:

www.urantia-iaa.org/photos/



August 21st

Mexico's planning meeting & Michael's birthday party

MARY TERE ORTEGA
President AUM

Members of Association Urantia Mexico met August 21 to start planning for the 2008 International UAI Conference which we will be hosting.

We observed Michael's birthday with Santiago Kneeland making an inspiring presentation on "Jesus' Faith." Santiago was also elected to the office of Membership Chair of AUM. □



August 21st

Jesus At the Beach

MEREDITH VAN WOERT
Southwest Urantia Readers Family
(SURF)

WE MET JESUS AT THE BEACH Sunday, August 21st, for his birthday. I hope he enjoyed watching us eat the kosher hot dogs we barbecued (and served with mustard, catsup and relish). Glorious salads of chopped veggies, chopped lettuce, pastas and bits of all kinds of tasty flavorings and dressings were served, and olives, artichokes, fruit, and more. Someone came with salmon kabobs and beef kabobs! Wow! What a meal! We had cookies and cheesecake for dessert. Mmmm. Great food!

We never plan the meal. We never make food assignments for these reader get-togethers. People bring something they



Larry Neff grilling salmon at beach party

want to share and it always comes out balanced. Well, one time, I confess, everyone brought salads, but on the whole... I marvel at the beauty of the food on the table. How is it that we have just the right amount and kind of everything?

Karen and I planted our flag in the sand early in the morning and we spread out blankets to claim a place. People and food began to arrive around noon. Larry brought a table and tablecloth. We ate together. We visited with people we hadn't seen for a long time and met some new readers. John and Steve made a labyrinth in the sand. Mario and Larry played their guitars. Some went to the water for a swim. It was mostly a day of talking and mingling. I observed groups of twos and threes engaged in conversations. Twenty of us came out for the day.

At last we sat in a circle for a remembrance supper. John passed around a loaf of bread and each pulled off a piece. Phil went around to pour grape juice for each of us. John said a few words about the occasion. We partook of the bread and the juice. Others spoke of Jesus. We savored his presence and the life he lived among us. We savored the presence of the people who came from far away and from near to meet Jesus with us on this remembrance day at the beach! □

August 21st

HULA Remembrance Gathering

MARIAN ELLANORA HUGHES
President HULA

ON AUG 21ST fifteen UB readers comprised of UAIers and old and new UB friends gathered at a charming restaurant in the town of Waimea at the foothills of Kohala Mtn. on the Big Island of Hawaii to celebrate Michael's mortal bestowal on 606. After a delicious and affordable brunch the group adjourned down the road to the home of Matt and Marian Hughes for study group. A lively discussion and reading ensued.

Marian Fieldson gave a short lesson on The Bestowals of Michael. Everyone shared in the reading and discussion of Morontia Mota and what it means to be an Agondonter.

The intellectual session was followed by group worship, remembrance moment, and a power point



Study group: Harry, Rob, Marian and Gaston

presentation that the Hughes' showed at the recent UAUS conference. We talked a little bit about having a regional conference cruising around the Hawaiian

Islands, now that two new ships are making this trip weekly. The meeting lasted from 11:00 AM until 6:00 PM. Some readers had to drive over 120 miles roundtrip to attend this event, but all felt that the content and fellowship was well worth the drive. I was happy to announce that thanks to all the wonderful contributions from our HULA membership and the many other UAUS conference participants, we have raised \$1,000 for the Portuguese Translation Printing Fund.

I am proud to be the representative of such a long lasting and enthusiastic group. □

In Our Father's service,
Marian



Study circle. More pictures at:

<http://community.webshots.com/album/431254647zJqcux>

2005 August 2 – 8

UAUS Conference Report

MARIAN ELLANORA HUGHES
Kamuela, Hawaii

THE 2005 UAUS CONFERENCE started the evening of Aug 2 at the lovely Pelican restaurant in the French quarter of New Orleans. There was a lot of excitement as old friends greeted each other. Marian Hughes of the Hawaii Urantia Local Association, who was the conference coordinator, presented everyone with beautiful fresh orchid leis from Hawaii. This is the traditional greeting when one arrives in the Islands. It was her desire to bring the flavors of Hawaii to us, and we were all thrilled to receive such a special gift. Many of us stayed up late talking into the night.

On the following day we had a very productive UAUS business meeting at our Hotel Monteleone. There was a very harmonious atmosphere in the room. HULA was presented with their first UAI banner. They were the first national UAI to form in the early 90's before banners were presented to the organizations. Marian was grateful to receive the banner from Cathy Jones. After the meeting we all rushed over to the famous Arnaud's restaurant, where more conference participants joined us. Besides the delicious food, after dining we were all captivated by the amazing Mardi-Gras costume museum upstairs, where we gazed on gowns and head pieces fit for royalty.

A large group then went out to hear a great jazz band perform at the Preservation Hall.

We had the morning free to shop and see the sights of New Orleans before we embarked on the Carnival Sensation. After yet another delicious group dinner on board, Matthew Hughes led off the first session with an extraordinary lecture



Jane Ploetz's mixed media workshop about structure of the universe



Pals: Jan Bernard of Nevada and Judy Van Cleave from Idaho

on Hubble's latest 10 discoveries and how they fit into *The Urantia Book* cosmology. This was followed by dancing to a rock and roll band and later a star gazing on the upper deck. It was a long day and most of us fell into bed exhausted but intellectually and spiritually energized.

On Friday morning, teacher extraordinaire, Jane Ploetz conducted an interactive workshop about the structure of the universe titled, "Where You Are and Who Can You Trust." Using different sizes of wooden beads, string, balloons, and a variety of other household items, Jane used the inquiry approach to guide the participants through the complexity of how matter and energy are arranged in the cosmos. She then proceeded to explain how after the system level all personalities have proved trustworthy and never enter into rebellion against the universe government.

After a short break, Matt and Marian presented a talk and slide show about Evolution using images gathered from the Internet and passages from *The Urantia Book*. Their talk was presented in two parts. Part One highlights included physical evolution of the planet, life implantation, and evolution of the plant and animal species culminating with the arrival of Andon and Fonta. Part Two dealt with human evolution from the days of Anton and Fonta, the migration of the races (highlighting the races that made up the Mayan culture and civilization).

Friday was formal night. We posed for a group shot on the ship staircase. (See photo next page).

On Saturday morning, our ship docked in beautiful Cozumel, Mexico. We boarded an air conditioned bus under the expert guidance of Brad, an American living in Cozumel and a long time UB reader. After a short 20 minute ride to the middle of the island, we arrived at the San Gervasio ruins. The ruins date to 100 BC. Details about the site can be found at <http://www.mayasites.com/gervasio.html>.

We were given a tour of the ruins by a Mayan guide. He had a wonderful sense of the Mayan culture and emphasized several important points. The Mayans believed in one god that oversaw the work of many sub-deities. They were also very in tune with the mathematical rhythms of nature. The temple was built to conform to the timing of the moon and the sun and also included elements that incorporated the number of days in the human gestation period.

The website contains the following information:

San Gervasio was a site dedicated to the Mayan goddess Ixchel, deity of midwifery, fertility, medicine and weaving. Many women from the inland Mayan settlements made the pilgrimage here to Ixchel's shrine at some point in their lifetime. A graceful arch protects an altar on a *sacbe* (ancient road) leading into the ceremonial center. Many statues to Ixchel were found here. It is believed that a large ceramic image of Ixchel delivered oracles spoken by a hidden priestess for pilgrims with questions.

The arch mentioned in this description is the same arch that you can see in the pictures that we sent to you on www.webshots.com

Pictures of the arch can also be found at this website:

<http://www.mayasites.com/gervasio.html>

After leaving the ruins, the bus visited a beach on the windward side of the island where several of our group enjoyed snorkeling and body surfing for one hour. We then went back into the main town and had lunch at a restaurant above the Cozumel Museum. Details about the museum are mentioned at this website:

<http://www.cometocozumel.com/english/what-to-see.asp>

Cozumel Museum - Beautiful museum on the water front, displays the opulent history of Cozumel, along with exhibits of the island's ecosystems. Temporary exhibits are also shown, and there is a restaurant with a beautiful view on the second floor terrace, we had one long table there. (See *photo page 13*).

The service was great and the food was excellent. A favorite appetizer was the delicious homemade taco soup.

Native beverages were enjoyed by many. The rest of the day was devoted to shopping. Cozumel is a great place to pick up Mexican pottery and other crafts. All in all everyone wished that we had more time in Mexico. It was really a treat to connect with Brad and his partner Annie. They both did a great job getting all the arrangements completed for our Cozumel shore excursion especially after the hurricane wiped out some of the roads and last minute plans had to be made.

On Sunday, the group was treated to a wonderful presentation called *Living With The Urantia Book* by Cathy Jones. Cathy shared many of the practical day-to-day lessons

that she has learned from "living" *The Urantia Book* for the past 27 years.

Will Sherwood followed with a synthesis of modern ideas about brain chemistry and how they relate to free will and the quality of our thoughts.

In the afternoon session, a contest was held. Interested participants shared their ideas for what they could do as a project to advance the planet toward

light and life, if each of them were a midwayer. Marian Hughes concluded

the conference with awards of baskets of Hawaiian coffee, nuts and candy to the best ideas. Jane Ploetz's suggestion for an International Peace Choir won the contest. Her presentation included various forms of singing and simultaneous Urantia readings. She accompanied the group with her key board.

Later in the evening, our last night together, Marian, Jane, Rhonda Richardson, and Maramis Chofani read the *Lorica of St. Patrick*. Marian then read "An Ode to the Midwayers," a poem she wrote especially for the conference. (See *poem next page*). The Hughes' presented an Imovie of beautiful pictures and photos synchronized to some very inspirational music led the Pilgrim. This was designed to be spiritual eye and ear candy. A remembrance moment was then held to remember Michael.

Many were moved to tears as they wished each other aloha. Fond memories were built up in our minds and souls and we were all grateful for this experience of Cruising with the Midwayers to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the original Urantia book in 1955. □



Formal Friday night, on the ship's staircase

Ode to the United Midwayers of Urantia

Oh to you, our unperceived and dedicated Midway Creatures of Urantia.
Oh to you, immortal planetary citizenry,
our invisible, electrically energized elder cousins.
Not quite man, not quite angel, midway between two realms are thee.

Oh to you, our unseen and unsung heroes of eons past and future,
Forever uplifting our material, mental and spiritual lives.
Wisely improving the ways of your animal origin brethren.
Oh 'tis sad only the dark one, Beelzebub, is remembered by name and deed.
Ah, but Peter's prison door we know you opened wide and free.

Oh to you, five hundred thousand year old veterans who know whereof you speak
When warning mortals to abide themselves in patience,
And the Father's will to always seek.

Oh to you, rebellion tested faithful band,
Anchored here till distant days of light and life.

Oh to you, loyal primary core, phenomenal offspring of the corporeal staff.

Oh to you, secondary division, grandsons and daughters of Adamsonite descent.
Long has your combined ministry kept truth alive through ages dark and dim.

Oh to your determined association's, indispensable assistance
Rendered to angels and destiny reservists alike.

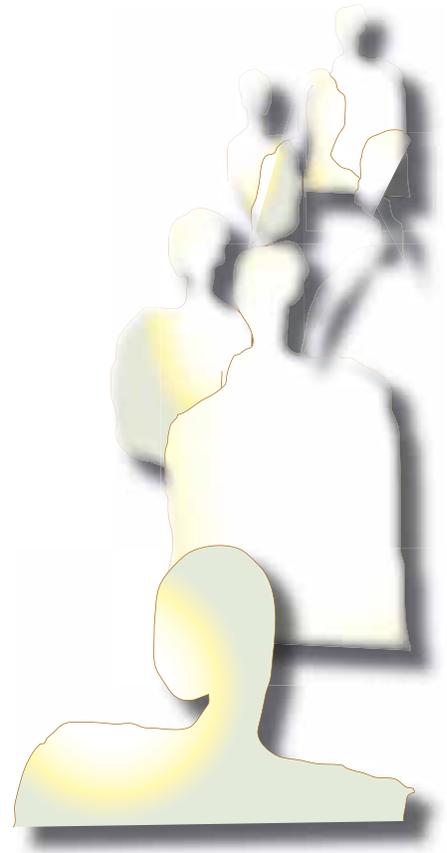
Oh to you, unique creature whose definitive powers can control the things of time and space, including
beasts of the realm and contact personalities.

Oh to you, record keepers and librarians of the planet
Assuring nothing true, beautiful, and good is ever lost to the march of time.

Oh praise to your order whose petition birthed our precious revelation,
From whence we learned of you and our Father's magnificent ascension plan.

We humbly offer thanks to thee for changing our short mortal lives
On 606, of Satania,
One beloved, beautiful, big, blue book at a time.

—Marian Ellanora Hughes
Hawaii Urantia Local Association



Reflections on the UAUS Conference at Sea

BENET RUTENBERG
President UAUS

New Orleans

IT IS NOW THREE WEEKS since John and Jane Ploetz and I met by chance in the Carosel Bar of the Hotel Monteleone in New Orleans. After walking around in the early evening we presented ourselves to the Maitre D' at NOLA. This is Emeril's first restaurant after completing his sojourn at Commander's Palace, our goal for the next night. I was attracted to it without knowing who or when but because the logo was an azure blue hypnotic circle of sorts as it appeared in the rain that afternoon. The stuffy Maitre D' was resistant to our request for a table just after nine pm. Politely it was stated that "Ginger said if we came at nine we would get right in." In we went. A lovely dinner and the first rekindling of Urantian friendship for us at this event.

John promised to awaken me for breakfast and did just that. It's 6:45, what time is it in your room? We were kept in by an intense downpour but enjoyed the first of many conversations that seem to just materialize when we avail ourselves of the experience. Donning an umbrella, my first task was to work with the garage attendant to attempt to



Judy, Benet and David presiding over UAUS meeting

dry out my trunk where I had left the plug off my cooler for 200 miles in the heat of the south. So here we are, 94 degrees, rain, near 100% humidity and me wondering how anything could ever dry out in this soup they call air. Breath in breath out, wax on wax off. I left it up to the experts and went for one of two extended walks that day exploring the French Quarter and battlements along the Mississippi River. As I swam through the air my contemplations took me to the UAUS CLP Annual Meeting the next day. I was nervous and not well prepared. My assurance came in the form of our Rock of Gibraltar UAUS Secretary, Judy Van Cleve, who had it all put together. I knew too, that our UAUS Treasurer, David Linthicum was also ready as there had been consistent communications these last few months. Oh, here is one of those restaurants on the list from my friend at home who was kind enough to organize my caloric intake and social rendezvous. It was just the beginning of feeling looked out for... Oysters, no man, you make your own cocktail sauce here! Alrighty then. Back to the hotel and thoughts of a shower but what's the point, I was having one continuous shower already.

Next I was planning to go to the Garden District on one of those trolleys— "Where you from anyhow, these are streetcars, don't call 'em anythin else!" The liquid breeze was not refreshing as we rolled along St. Charles a few miles to the west. Off the streetcar and walking and walking and walking. What beautiful



Participants including the Zehrs of New York and Nicholas from Connecticut

homes, mostly before 1880. Lovely gardens. OK it's been over two hours, what's this, a coffee shop? Inside it's 68 degrees and the frozen lemonade is cooling my insides, the freeze in my head a minor inconvenience. I stay until one minute before the flu sets in and its back to the streetcar. Back at the hotel, what a great showerhead...there is a difference between water and air.

Our reservation is at 7:30PM at Commander's Palace—someplace everyone should go once—Jane looks lovely in her gown and John and I looked like southern gentlemen in our now soaking through suits. Sah, if ya can't stands the heat stays out of the kitchen, oh this is the sidewalk. The Maitre D' had no sense of humor. A wonderful dinner. What kind of "special" place is this? (this is an inside joke that some will get).

We're walking back to the streetcar. It's ten o'clock and the streetcar is open for business. Jane had a seat while John and I stood. After one stop there is a voice behind me. It sounds intolerant. It's invading my wonderfully satisfied mood. It's saying, SIR WOULD YOU MOVE! Pardon, are you speaking to me? Yeah I am—your butt is in my face... Isn't that special. Not wanting to start an international incident, though we did think of several things which could easily have accomplished this, OK ma'am, sorry ma'am, we'll just move to the back of the streetcar and stand next to someone else who is hot and sticky. I looked at John, who was smiling, and said for him to move his narrow backside to the back of the streetcar. Did we just pass a day care center, never mind. Later, as we walked down Bourbon Street, one of the young people was heard to say, hey Mom, its kinda loose down here! This is the night that many Urantians were baptized with the music of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. Primitive digs and soul satisfying music. Back at the hotel it's time for bed. Are those my feet? They look huge!

It's Wednesday. The meeting day. While the UAUS board will continue we now have the near impossible task of replacing our secretary Judy. So I thank her here and now saying, I wish I could have worked with you longer, I would learn so much more. The meeting came off with good participation and general good will. Business was done. I am grateful to all who attended and encourage our membership to continue and grow in involvement. The name Urantia Association International will be put before the RC upon my return. We will accomplish the decisions of our members. We adjourned and all convened at Arnaud's for another wonderful meal.

One of our number had been connected with this restaurant as a child because her family had owned it. It felt so good to be there with all these people, our people, our family, us. Those who came only for the meetings and some R&R went their way the next day. Hey, I am one of those. I am going to leave and take a slow ride home.

Maybe I'll drive the Natchez Trace and see where history took place. There are no rooms on the ship even if I could go. Well, I did bring my passport. Then there was Gary, all the way from London, and Matt and Marian, all the way from Hawaii. If we can get through the travel agent there will be space. Marian, in her robe mind you, is on the phone or should I say on hold, we

took turns being on hold. Then we hung up and called back and were put on hold again. Ah! I'm not going home and the Natchez Trace will wait another day. I am on the boat and this experience is beginning all over again. The blessings had not set in just yet. I remain thankful.

Then again this business of letting God bring us to our life is what it is all about. If I stay out of the way then maybe I can truly follow him.

Cruising

THE CABIN I WAS TO stay in was termed a three-bedroom. Sounds spacious. There were three though we could not prove that in court. The concern over the space and then the steward, the steward's boss, the purser, the purser's boss and the Hotel Manager were all less helpful than they would have been if they had wanted to be helpful. I calmed Gary down, Gary calmed me down, we calmed each other down some more and then retired for the first meal aboard ship. Letting things take their course it was our housekeeping person who was most special. Her name was Brenda. She was from South Africa and was Japanese by descent. She was caring, gentle and full of grace by choice. When all others offered us only to get off the boat in Cozumel where a partial refund and a plane ticket back to New Orleans would be waiting, Brenda fixed the problem and cleaned up after the two "now" Verandah Deck Sons who narrowly avoided going into rebellion the first hour on the boat. Hey I just got on this thing. Where is the air conditioning? It's not working all that well but don't look at us like that or we will give you a partial refund and put you on a plane back to New Orleans with all the other sniveling

people who paid for this privilege. We were not alone. And with dinner and the beginning of the conference sessions it was let go. We were learning, we were getting our character built and we will have a story to tell. I cannot thank Gary, Marian and Matt enough for making a way for the experience that was really just beginning to unfold.

The opening ceremonies brought us all together and told us of what we would do. Each day at meals Marian treated us to a parchment made lovely and loving with ribbon which taught us and fed our souls as we dined on sumptuous meals served to us in our group of tables. Each day brought a different seating arrangement so that we all shared each other's company. The children accompanying us were all sweet delight and I wondered why my parents never took us on a cruise. Though denial creeps in, could it be that we did not behave as these young people did? So I am still a child and receiving the blessing of being on this cruise to share in growth of the Father's will and the order of life. Gary lovingly challenged us to find someone on the cruise to share the book or the teachings with. We accepted. Just pick one of the faces pressed up against the glass of our meeting room. What's going on in there? Something special. Near the end of the Captain's dinner, one special friend said something deeply meaningful which served to bring me all the way on the cruise. I hadn't realized, until that moment, that I wasn't all of the way there yet. Like a rubber band returning to shape so had I. Many thanks.

That day Marian treated us to a visual presentation and Matt did a computer presentation that helped us see the universe. Matt took many of us up on the forward deck where darkness allowed us to see an 85% clear sky, many constellations, and the featured event—a meteor shower. Every several minutes in a certain portion of the sky a "shooting star" would appear, as predicted. With great clarity and entertaining quality Matt had taken us through a computer presentation and now real sky. There were most of us up on that deck and a few onlookers made curious by the spirited



Lunch on the second floor terrace of a restaurant in Cozumel. Front row: Maramis, Hilvania, Gary and Benet at the end of table.

participation of this big group of kids who were just fascinated by all that was transpiring. As the hour wore on, we followed the green laser, which seemed to reach all the way to the stars, around the sky. I should have been in my car looking for a motel somewhere in Mississippi, but through the blessings and love of friends, I was in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico with the awareness of all these blessings still arriving.

We awoke in Cozumel, Mexico. After the necessary steps to disembark, we walked the long pier and through the dock village shops, restaurants and attractions. We met our friend from Cozumel and boarded the air-conditioned bus for the Mayan ruins of the ancient fertility goddess.

It was reported that Mayan women would submit once in their lifetime to these rights. This, even if they had to paddle from the mainland. It was hard enough to see let alone paddle a canoe by oneself for that experience. Our Mayan guide was, well, Mayan. He had a unique staccato way of speaking and was very logical and ordered in all that he spoke. As we

walked and talked, I can hear him saying, "The temple has four sides. Why does it have four sides? The four points of the compass—North, South, East and West. It has seven steps, Why does it have seven steps? For times seven is 28. Twenty eight days in the cycle of the moon. All the calendar is based on the moon. And the Mayan people did not



have many gods, they have one God above all others. We do not take human sacrifice like the Aztec. We believe in one God just like you.” He went on to tell how they captured the rain in cisterns carved out of solid rock and how the city was laid out according to the compass.

“Hwhy do de tourists cruise for only four days? Hwon day at sea then hwon day in Cozumel then hwon day at sea and den they go off de boat. Hwhy do they go off the boat, because de cruise ship take all de money that why they get off the boat... Hwhy do the Urantia

Peoples act so Happy?” Because they share their hearts and souls realizing the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. What a beautiful man.

We are back on the bus and heading to the beach. Some are swimming, some are on the beach. Looking up from the water I see two buses. Why are there two buses? The first bus is broken. I ask the new driver, how soon is he going to leave. In just a few minutes. But we have all our stuff. He shrugs his shoulders as if to say, that is not my problem. Jean and I start moving everyone’s stuff and I tell the man who is sitting down while I am standing over him and looking decidedly down at him, “this bus does not move until we move everything, yes?” “Si!! Bueno senior.” We are on the bus and return to town having a lovely luncheon on the balcony de Museo under the awning. The lunch and continued friendship is heart warming.

If we were half as persistent as the humidity we would get to paradise in half the time! Gary, Greg and I walk about two miles along the busy market place telling hopeful merchants NO. Not because we are mean. Because Greg is looking for a hooded blanket type shirt. We saw everything, shoes, shirts, dresses, gowns, knives, tools, motorcycles, bicycles, jewelry, more jewelry but nowhere did we see a monkey wrench. Good thing as we did not need one. We find the shirt. Memories.

Into a taxi and back to the boat to find out that we have to go through the duty free—a quarter mile long gauntlet of hands that close around your wallet—unless we pay a rick shaw. That was his name. Who knew? (Warning: some literary license taken in the production of these memoirs).

Then there was the dancing. About half of us commandeered the dance floor all four nights. On the last night we found ourselves in the back lounge. As I looked at the room there were over three hundred pumped up spectators

waiting for their favorite vocalist to don the microphone and sing Karaoke. (Translated from the Japanese literally means, “Breath from Oklahoma” kidding)



The members of UAUS Conference at Sea held the land in front of the bar. We all prepared as Gary, wearing my big dark sunglasses (that my kids make fun of because they aren’t cool) takes the stage and does a rousing version of Roy Orbison’s “Only the Lonely” Our trip is nearly fulfilled. One more trip to the dance floor and it is finished. What has happened

here is we experienced such togetherness. There is not a person on the cruise that did not touch my life in a positive way. I was blessed with having a conversation with each person in our program. More than just talking. It foreshadows what will certainly come as we advance the worlds of Mansonia and Morontia. Onward and upward and yes, inward. A few weeks out it is difficult to remember each moment. What is not difficult to remember is the momentousness of these interactions, the expressions, the love and the joy of being together.

The whole cruise is special but within that are some special moments with some individuals that must remain within me. I hope they know. I hope each person on this experience knows how much it meant to me to be there when it was not originally planned that way, at least not by me. Then again this business of letting God bring us to our life is what it is all about. If I stay out of the way then maybe I can truly follow him. I offer my profound thanks to everyone who shared their time, energy and love. I especially thank Marian and Matt for their flawless arrangement of this experience and their inspiring presentations. I thank John and Jane Ploetz for their skilled presentations which got us up out of our seats and out of our thoughts to participate. The magic Jane worked to produce the first ever Morontia Tabernacle Choir will go down in the annals of music as a timeless miracle.

As the last presentation ended Sunday evening, stories of the people we touched on the boat were shared. Comments from our group moved everyone to tears. As we hugged, every one, I hold in my heart very special moments and feelings for my brothers and sisters, each one of us lifted up in this knowledge and feeling of love that is the Father’s plan, now and for all eternity. □

With Gratitude and Humility, Benet Rutenberg

Sharing study group experience

GAÉTAN CHARLAND'S RESPONSE TO A POST
BY ALFRED TURNBO ON THE UAI LIST
22 August 2005

Dear Alfred,

I read your post and felt your heart trying to find answers that many of us have asked and pondered. The revelators told us to create thousands of study groups and train leaders and teachers. I believe this is where lies the answers to our questions.

During the last few years I have attended many different study groups and am hosting two myself. I have from those shared experiences learned many things and today I can say that the study groups that I host are producing great benefits.

There are probably many ways for having good, productive and spiritually oriented study groups and it would be of great benefit to all if everyone that hosts a study group would share their positive experiences.

So I will share mine with you.

We meet every week, same day, same place, for a session of two hours. We are usually 6 to 8 people and we start the session with a two-minute silent meditation or prayer. We usually go through the two-hour session without a break and only socialize at the end. We keep things simple—just coffee, tea and cookies. We read sequentially. Because we have new readers; everyone reads one or two paragraphs. After one has read, the person has to explain to the others what he/she has understood of their reading and what relation does it have spiritually and how it can be applied to help their daily living. When that person speaks, no one is allowed to speak, comment, argue or criticize. After he/she has finished speaking, other participants are invited to share what they understood by supplementing and enhancing what the previous people said and shared. There are never any arguments or criticism. We strongly encourage participants to build on what others have shared and augment the value of truth, beauty and goodness.

The principle behind this is to use the same technique as Jesus did, by listening and always enhancing the portion of truth that is present in the mind of others. It helps people gain confidence and feel better in the group, they learn to share what they understand and feel, they have to find ways to apply their new understanding of the knowledge they gained to



their daily living and no one is monopolizing the session.

We also encourage participants to share any life experiences that relate to what we are reading in order to focus our minds on the importance of integrating the teachings in our life. We have two goals: to learn intellectually and spiritually. We also rotate the person that is in charge of the session in order to promote leadership. We also found that when participants are encouraged to share their ideas after they read one paragraph or two at a time, it helps them acquire communication skills and confidence.

More spiritually, when participants make genuine and sincere efforts to read and understand intellectually and spiritually what they read by explaining to the others their comprehension of the text and the truth it contains; it helps the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth to work effectively in that individual's mind and the minds of the others in the group.

Hope this piece of shared information will help you augment confidence in our mission.

Comment from Brazil

August 24, 2005

Dear Gaétan,

Your message came in at the right moment. I read it at our meeting yesterday when we had 14 people reading *The Urantia Book*, Paper 132, and we were discussing how to use Jesus' teachings in our present world. We have some young people participating in our group and they have many, many questions about the will of God versus the situation of our planet at the present moment.

I will translate your message in Portuguese and distribute it to the other groups—it gives us a good direction how to help people to better understand the teachings and utilize them for their inner growth.

Thanks with love, Susana Palaia

□

Home Dissemination?

RICK WARREN

Lone Star Urantia Association

THE DOORBELL RANG one afternoon last month. It was the Mormons kids. I say kids, they call themselves “Elders” though they couldn’t be much older than 21. A fruitful sect the Mormons. Family centric, loyal, sober, sincere, dedicated, hardworking, and somewhat open to new revelations...maybe. Can you believe these two young men worked for years and saved their money so they could move from Utah to north central Texas to rent an apartment and go out on daily bicycle rides? No matter the weather they knock on doors, mostly to have them slammed in their faces.

I invited them in, offered some ice water. It must have been 100°F outside, they were soaked in perspiration. We sat and talked pleasantly about the common touchstone of Jesus that we followers of the Master share. They were quite open and asked about my path. I spoke frankly of the UB, even showed them a copy. They seemed a bit interested, to my surprise. Anyway, we talked about God, life and people, how it all relates in the light of Jesus. I told them how much Mormons deserve admiration for their devotion to God and family. After ten minutes of

The copy of the UB I showed them happened to be a spare, but it hadn’t occurred to me until that moment they might actually accept it if I offered. So I did, and they accepted!

talking about our respective paths, they decided to depart and continue their circle around my block. We shook hands, exchanged names and wished each other a warm farewell. Then unexpectedly one of them said, “...maybe we’ll come back by for more

water.” I heard myself saying, “Sure, I’ll put your glasses in the freezer so they’ll be really cold”. They waved bye heading for my neighbor’s door.

In an hour or so they rang the bell again and we returned to the living room chairs, under the air conditioner. They were truly soaked to the bone by now. I brought out the icy water and some bananas. We talked more about the UB and about Mormonism. The copy of the UB I showed them happened to be a spare, but it hadn’t occurred to me until that moment they might actually accept it if I offered. So I did, and they accepted! With genuine gratitude and curiosity. They looked it over as we talked even more deeply about God and his awesome creation and our respective roles in it. It was a meeting very beautiful in spontaneity, tone and mutual respect.

Hope I see those two again, good kids they are. In fact, the whole of the oncoming generation is itself awesome. It is obvious in so many young faces of the Urantia community, and elsewhere. □

TIDINGS

from associations around Urantia

Tidings is a monthly publication of Urantia Association International, whose mission is to foster study of *The Urantia Book* and to disseminate its teachings. UAI supports Urantia Foundation.

The Urantia Book online:

<http://www.urantia.org/papers/index.html>

You may submit articles about *The Urantia Book*, news about your association, stories, photos and poems to the editor. All articles are subject to revision. **Submissions limited to 1400 words**, about two pages with a photo or graphic image.

Deadline: **By the 15th of every month**

Editor: Cathy Jones, cthjon@aol.com

Spanish Translation: Olga López, olga.lopez@ya.com

Layout & design: M. Caoile

Archives: www.urantia-iaa.org/tidings/

NOTE

Thanks to **Olga Lopez**, president of Urantia Association of Spain, Tidings may now be read in Spanish. — *Cathy Jones, Editor*

COVER:

“Green Building” oil on wood painting by Mario Caoile, Portland, Oregon.

📧 For variety, we shall have a different image on the cover for every issue. Artists, illustrators and other creative types are encouraged to submit images for possible use on the cover. Send your images to admin@urantia-iaa.org.