



Kathleen Swadling

### From the President

Welcome to the winter issue of the Arena for 2011 and I hope this year has been kind to you. Quite a few ANZURA sponsored projects have already been achieved this year and several are well underway. The annual National Study Day was held over the weekend of the 21st of May.

Paper 132: *The Sojourn in Rome* was read by readers who met in study groups around Australia, New Zealand and some other countries around the world. Thanks to all those study group hosts who opened their homes for this annual event. Plans are well under way now for this year's annual conference in Victoria which is being held 21-24 October. The theme will be "**Urantia Book — The Treasure Chest**". The registration brochure with all the relevant details has been mailed out. It can also be found on the website: [www.urantia-anzura.org](http://www.urantia-anzura.org)

ANZURA's Strategic Planning Committee met in Sydney in April to discuss dissemination plans. Late last year ANZURA purchased 300 Urantia Books from the UAI. (These books are from a stock that had been printed in India in 2000 and as they are old stock that can't be sold to the book trade they have been made available to the readership at cost price plus shipping costs.) At the recent meeting we decided to distribute these books in the following ways:

We will reserve 150 books for a new program called "Operation Contact". The objective is to target prominent individuals and groups including philosophical/religious type centres that appear to be progressive in their programs or who we think might be open minded enough to

take a look at *The Urantia Book*. One that came to light after some initial internet research was a website that appears to cater for individuals who are disillusioned with mainstream Christianity and are looking "outside of the box" in their spiritual quest — "believers in exile" so to speak. Trevor Swadling has agreed to lead this project and will continue to research the internet to find various groups and institutions who we feel may benefit from investigating *The Urantia Book*.

In addition we will supply active study groups with books (free of charge) for local outreach activities and offer individual readers books at \$10 each for their personal outreach. If you are interested in purchasing books please contact us on (02) 9970-6200 or email [anzura@urantia-anzura.org](mailto:anzura@urantia-anzura.org)

Another exciting project that's in the pipeline and was discussed at the meeting was a DVD that Nigel Nunn is producing. Nigel is an astrophysicist and a long time reader with an excellent scholarly grasp of the teachings in *The Urantia Book*. He has an eight minute introduction almost

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**from the President cont.**

completed. Nigel showed the group what he has already accomplished and as it was most impressive he was encouraged to continue working on it. Once completed it will serve as a well presented, inspiring introduction to *The Urantia Book* that can be used at presentations or as an accompaniment DVD to hand out with a gift book.

Representative Council News —The Representative Council [RC] is made up of the Presidents and Vice Presidents of National Urantia Associations — like ANZURA — which make up the Urantia Association International [UAI].

ANZURA's Vice President Robert Coenraads and myself as President have been participating in the on-line meetings of the RC. A resolution was recently passed for the UAI to work in partnership with Urantia Foundation and the Urantia Book Fellowship — another readership organisation — to provide an on-line Study Group Portal which will assist readers all over the world to find out where study groups are held. This is to enhance the fostering of study groups for the in-depth study of *The Urantia Book*. The idea is that study groups, if they wish, may register their group on this portal and thus be part of the global network of Urantia Book reader study groups.

Another resolution that was recently passed on the RC was one submitted by the United States Urantia Association [UAUS]. They proposed that UAI adopt a “UAI Policy Statement concerning the Channelling Phenomenon”. It reads:

Within certain groups of people reading *The Urantia Book*, there has developed a phenomenon labeled “channelling” or the “Teaching Mission.” Advocates of this phenomenon claim to be in touch with superhuman personalities, who sometimes have names taken from *The Urantia Book*. While UAI neither endorses, promotes, nor denies any individual's personal experiences, we must assure readers that neither UAI nor *The Urantia Book* has any connection with this phenomenon. UAI has taken great care over the years to ensure that *The Urantia Book* is not publicly identified with cultic, psychic, or occult groups and phenomena. The UAI, as an organization, does not sanction channelling activities at UAI sponsored functions, seminars, conferences or internet discussion groups. We believe that *The Urantia Book's* teachings should be unencumbered by public alliance with either New Age beliefs or traditional religions.

The Leadership Symposium that is being held in Chicago in July of this year is looming. The call went out for the participation of readers from all over the world who are interested in taking on teacher and leadership type rolls in their efforts to spread the teachings of *The Urantia Book* in their regions. Several Australian readers will be going and we look forward to hearing their reports on this unique event.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *The Arena*. ■

## New Zealand Corner

It's been an eventful year so far here in the Land of the Long White Cloud. Just when people were starting to recover from last year's earthquake, along came another, much bigger one, resulting in many deaths and injuries, and incredible damage. And in similar ways to the previous event, people responded with an even greater outpouring of community spirit. There were so many stories of individuals setting off to Christchurch to help in any way they could, and families here in Auckland opening their homes to 'refugees' to give them respite from the continual shaking and the scenes of devastation. Attendance at church services increased dramatically, as is often the way in such circumstances. One week after the event, the whole country stopped for 2 minutes' silence – an intensely emotional experience but very bonding.

Are we becoming more God-conscious? Are New Zealanders turning to God, however they might conceive of him, in these times of trouble? Only time will tell, but I am reminded of the words that Jesus spoke to the disciples on the way to Gethsemane; “You should not be perturbed by famines or earthquakes;” ( p. 1913). He goes on to refer to their 'steadfastness in the gospel of the kingdom'. The enormous comfort and inner security offered by the knowledge of God's love and overall plan for us all is a gift beyond price in times such as these, and hopefully all believers, no matter what form their belief takes, will take every opportunity to share this knowledge with people who are distressed and overwhelmed by the insecurity of the ground beneath their feet.

We readers in Auckland are looking forward to the National Study Day, and wish all participants a stimulating time of study and fellowship, which, like the 2 minutes' silence, will serve to unite us in our search for greater wisdom, understanding and the opportunity to serve those in need.

Marion Steward [joemarion@xtra.co.nz](mailto:joemarion@xtra.co.nz) ■



## Annual National Conference 2011 Lake Dewar Lodge, Myrnriong, VIC

~ Urantia Book The Treasure Chest ~



Lake Dewar Lodge YMCA, Garrards Lane, Myrnriong, showing main building, lake and grounds.

### The purpose of life and goal of existence—heaven and earth revealed

This year's ANZURA conference will explore the treasure chest of revealed truth to be found in *The Urantia Book*. Everyone who opens the chest discovers their own Urantia Book Treasures.

Love and understanding, insight and life-changing knowledge, are unlocked from its pages.

Uncover your own precious pearls of wisdom and jewels of self-discovery.

Come and share your gems with us:

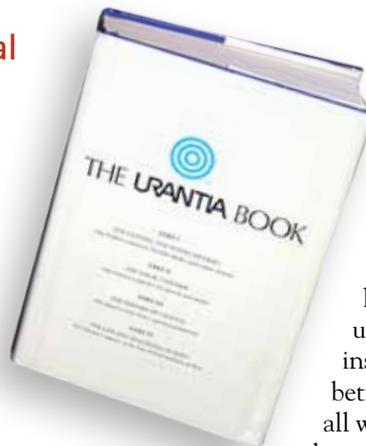
- Participants are invited to bring along their treasures and share them in an interactive show and tell.
- Amongst the allotted main presentations, prepared brief presentations, of 5 to 10 minutes, from willing participants, are welcome.

Through shared experiences of living we will give substance to the transformative power of truth discovered in *The Urantia Book*. How we too can ...embrace thought gems and superior concepts of Jesus' teachings... [Paper 121:8, page 1343:2] emphasis added.

With love,

Ian Esmore ■

For further information please contact: ANZURA  
Ph: (02) 9970 6200 or email [anzura@urantia-anzura.org](mailto:anzura@urantia-anzura.org)



In all that we experience on a planet whirling through infinite space—all our dreams, resultant joy and success, to all the horrors that mankind can inflict on himself, other species and the earth itself—in all our wandering, squandering, aimless waste and wanton destruction, to all that we can grasp, hold in our hands, hang on to and possess, to the noble, uplifting efforts of those who inspire and are inspired to create and live a wholesome and better life—there is a meaning and purpose in all we do. There is an over-arching and merciful love that penetrates to the core of our existence, life is an eternal adventure transcending into an awe-inspiring life to come. The answer to who we are and where we are going, why we are here and what yet we are to become, is within us—truly the treasure of the ages. *The Urantia Book*, holds within its pages, pearls of wisdom, gems of understanding, seeds of love. This Conference is a special time for we fellow travellers to share that which is precious.

While you live and toil with this mortal coil, rest assured on the treasures of personal growth—love and understanding.

**Venue**—We are blessed with a venue set amongst the gum trees. The modern architectural curved form gives the impression of a space ship for our cosmic conference this year. The Lake Dewar Lodge has a large conference room and lounge area overlooking the lake, a kitchen, dining room, and several smaller rooms that will be used for study group discussions. Accommodation is all on-site with beds for more than 100 attendees in a variety of configurations. There are also en-suite rooms in apartments nearby and a house for a family. We'll do our best to provide attendees with requested accommodation. Note, bed linen is supplied.

The Lake Dewar Lodge offers a range of recreational activities, including bush walks, tennis, kayaking, archery to name a few.

**Catering**—The Centre provides lunch and dinner every day as well as self-serve breakfast. In addition, tea, coffee and other refreshments will be available throughout the day.

**Excursion**—Sunday afternoon excursion from conference centre with loop thru Wombat State park via Greendale to Blackwood to Trentham to Daylesford. Tour allows for a short stop in historic Blackwood and longer stop in scenic Daylesford.

**Cost**—Full conference \$350 — includes 3 nights accommodation plus all meals. Alcoholic beverages will be available but you will be asked to contribute to the cost if you wish to partake.

Daily Rate \$80 — includes both lunch and dinner.

Daily Rate \$50 — includes only lunch.

There is in the mind of God a plan which embraces every creature of all his vast domains, and this plan is an eternal purpose of boundless opportunity, unlimited progress, and endless life. And the infinite treasures of such a matchless career are yours for the striving! [Paper 32:5, page 365:3] emphasis added



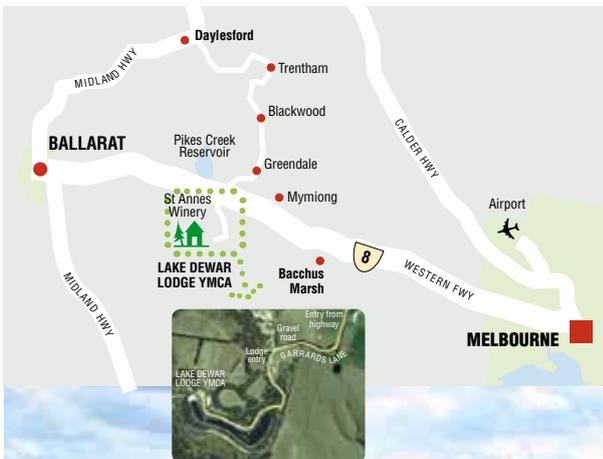
Many break-out areas for group sessions.



Comfortable bedrooms with views onto the lake.



Well lit spacious dining area



The lake Dewar Lodge main building with its sweeping roof and landscaped surrounds.

We're very grateful to the Victorian Urantia Team who is organising the conference in the Daylesford region (near Ballarat). See map on previous page or the mailed out brochure for further information and registration details. Contact ANZURA if you need a brochure. We hope that many of you will be able to join us and help uncover your own pearls of wisdom and jewels of self-discovery. Come and share your gems with us! ■

## The National Study Day

Each year ANZURA arranges a National Study Day to provide an opportunity for readers to participate in a study group in their region and to read the same paper on the same day. This year study groups met over the weekend of 21<sup>st</sup> May to study Paper 132: The Sojourn at Rome – a treasure trove all in itself.

Truth cannot be defined with words, only by living. Truth is always more than knowledge. Knowledge pertains to things observed, but truth transcends such purely material levels in that it consorts with wisdom and embraces such imponderables as human experience, even spiritual and living realities. Knowledge originates in science; wisdom, in true philosophy; truth, in the religious experience of spiritual living. Knowledge deals with facts; wisdom, with relationships; truth, with reality values.

[Paper 132:3, page1459:2]

Again we invited the international readership to join us on this weekend to study the same paper from *The Urantia Book*. It's uplifting to know that such unifying connections are possible for us readers who are spread far and wide across Australia and New Zealand—indeed the whole oceanic region—and even the entire globe.

Study Group Hosts who agreed to conduct a meeting were contacted and they in turn invited readers in their group to participate. Online study was facilitated via the

UAI Forum—at <http://Urantia-uai.org/forums>—trust you had an interesting, uplifting and enjoyable day.

Following are some brief reports from some of the groups that took part.

### Auckland, New Zealand

*Marion Steward*

On the National Study, it was good to remember that Jesus said, “where two or three believers are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them” (p.1763). Just three readers in Auckland got together to study paper 132 The Sojourn at Rome, but we had a very good study session. All three of us had been to Rome, so this added a great sense of recognition, as we had walked where Jesus had walked. We enjoyed a very stimulating discussion. The section on Good and Evil, in particular, posed several challenging ideas regarding the purpose of evil in the world, and the need to constantly make ‘personal decisions of choice’ based on an ‘always progressing’ capacity to recognise truth and goodness. We realised again how important faith and prayer are to guide and encourage us on our own journey, and enjoyed the knowledge that many fellow readers round the world were exploring these powerful words at the same time.

### Hamilton, New Zealand

*Ben Ahu*

The group gathering was made up of readers that have studied the Book for a few years although are yet to complete it, with also one invited person who is interested and found our gathering enlightening. He has studied the Bible and found our voluntary approach to study un-intimidating, un-imposing, digestible and enjoyable. He intends getting his own copy.



*Sydney Study Group at the Narrabeen home of hosts the Swadlings, Trevor (2nd from right), Kathleen (2nd from left).*

We have all gathered together on a few occasions discussing the book in general but not for intense study, so it was a comfortable setting. We aim to provide an uplifting environment. I know of two other family readers that have also completed the book but were not present, living out of the region. Since 1989, I have introduced the Book to a large number of family and friends whom all have their own copy and we intend on making it part of our way of life. We understand its intensiveness and that it takes Time and Space to read, absorb and reflect.

It is overwhelming for first readers and we structure our introduction and gatherings for their free absorption and comfort, as did the Master with questions and answers. But we do let the Book speak for itself. I myself can read the Book freely having completed it in 1994.



*Argentina Study Group at the home of host Carlos Rubinsky (front left).*

## Buenos Ares, Argentina

*Carlos Rubinsky and the Southern Cone Study Group*

Our meeting was GREAT !!! Everyone in attendance recognized the importance and value of this Paper! It was a great pick, Congratulations !! We did enjoy a lot the reading and discussion.... although many questions that came up along the reading remained unanswered.... so we remain looking forward for another in depth study session.

## Sydney, Australia

*Kathleen Swadling*

The Sydney Study Group hosted a study group for the National Study Day at the home of Trevor and Kathleen Swadling in Narrabeen. Readers came from the local environs of Sydney, the Central Coast and Newcastle. Rita Schaad agreed to host this year's study day and began with a wonderful Power Point presentation that showed maps and paintings of the Roman Empire

around the Mediterranean region during the times of Jesus. She'd discovered this beautiful collection in an old Biblical book and put together a story of the places Jesus travelled on his journey to Rome with Ganid and Gonod.

The reading of the paper *The Sojourn at Rome* couldn't help but stimulate lots of interest and discussion. One of the most impressive aspects was Jesus' skill in his personal ministry before he embarked on his public ministry phase of his earthly career where he sought out potential future leaders and quietly went about preparing them for the reception of his teachings that were to come to Rome much later. The natural way he befriended these people and was able to discern their potential for receiving his teachings, and then fostering them over a six month period is simply fascinating. And to see how thirty of these people selected and "trained" (unbeknownst to them) became pivotal in the later spread of Christianity when it came to Rome was a true stroke of genius on the part of a true Master. What an inspiration his life is to us!

After a fulfilling day of reading and socialising we stretched our legs at took a stroll along the Narrabeen lake shore and engaged in in-depth conversations with one another as *Urantia Book* readers are prone to do. Needless to say another treasure filled day was had by all.

## Towamba, NSW

*Towamba Study Group*

The Towamba Study Group—all three members—met and read paper 132, *The Sojourn at Rome*.

We were struck by the forethought displayed by Jesus in undertaking this series of educational sessions with the various religious leaders in Rome, and by the fact that it was one of the three most significant factors in the spread of Christianity. And we were amused by the irony of Nabon attempting to convert Jesus, while he was himself being prepared for conversion to the coming religion about Jesus.

We noted how once again, the revelators emphasise the positive technique of Jesus' method of teaching, ignoring error and building on whatever truth could be found in the doctrine in question until the error was dissipated. This is one of the several times that this point is made in the papers.

We enjoyed reading about the advice Jesus gave to the rich man, advice as sound today as it was then, but needed to caution ourselves that Jesus put great emphasis on the fact that his advice applied only to that man, and was not to be misused by others to coerce other men into complying with the program.

We finished by wondering about Ganid, and why he does not seem to be prominent in history.

## Canberra, ACT

Vern Verass

This year our small Canberra group teamed up with the local branch of the *Theosophical Society* to share our study of Paper 132. We met at the home of the president of the local branch, where Nigel Nunn, Grahame Crookham and myself facilitated the study. Before beginning, we played a 9 minute DVD, Part 1 of a multimedia introduction to the Urantia papers that Nigel is working on. This was enjoyed by all in our group of nine, helping to put *The Urantia Book* in context for those not so familiar with it.

After explaining the purpose of our Study Day, we began our reading of "*The Sojourn at Rome*". Our fellow students remarked on this new account of Jesus' activities, noting how reasonable it was that such a unique individual would wish to meet and explore truth with as many people as he could. The account of Nabon trying to recruit Jesus as a Mithraic teacher struck a chord in us all. Nabon was able to perceive and receive so much from Jesus that he himself could become an influential teacher of the good news. Jesus had chosen well.

The lessons on wealth were appreciated as we read of the rich Stoic. While Jesus stressed that this was personal advice for this one particular rich man, his clear analysis of the responsibilities of wealth remains deeply relevant to all who seek to apply a code of ethics to material gain.

But what Jesus had to say about the Buddha, Gautama Siddhartha, created much interest. Theosophists traditionally hold the Buddha in high regard, yet here was Jesus, the actual creator and foster father of Gautama's ascending soul, calling the experience of this world-influencing teacher "**tragic**". This opened the door for an extraordinary discussion, but our time together that day came to an end.

Our Canberra group look forward to continuing our interaction with such like-minded souls!

## Melbourne, Vic

Bevan-Rhys James

We arranged to ring around list of people provided by Rita and received 2 responses from interested people we do not generally see. The meeting was held at our house (Adriana and I) on the Study Day. Paper 132 was enjoyed concerning not only for the wisdom and knowledge imparted in its pages, but also the ground work laid by Jesus in Rome, that he was wise and insightful such that he not only impressed the local wise-guys/philosophers, he so thoroughly did this that his wisdom and insight was lasting, leading to an opening of acceptance of the later Christian mission and faith. He had time to astutely observe others and formed an in depth understanding of human life and human beings from different walks of life. Despite his rest period he continued to be instrumental in changing lives around him especially Marcus who took over from Peter as the preacher who replaced Peter. The advice to the rich man and wise employment and understanding of wealth is still fresh advice even today. It's always a pleasure to sit down and read, discuss, discourse on who we are and how better to do it by the masterful example of Jesus. ■



## Why Study Groups?

Kathleen Swadling

It has long been a popular practice among many Urantia Book readers to come together on a regular basis in the friendly and informal atmosphere of people's homes to study *The Urantia Book*. The local informal study group is considered by many to be one of the most effective ways of spreading the Urantia revelation at the grass roots level. People who have either been hosting or attending study groups for many years will agree that the value of studying and fraternising with fellow students of *The Urantia Book* is priceless.

After the writing of *The Urantia Book* was completed, the Revelators finally gave the Contact Commissioners the green light to publish the book in the early 1950's. They also gave them a set of instructions, one of which is known as the "Publication Mandate". Here is an extract from that mandate regarding their advice on study groups (emphasis mine):

"You must learn to possess your souls in patience. You are in association with a revelation of truth which is a part of the natural evolution of religion on this world. Over-rapid growth would be suicidal. The book is being given to those who are ready for it long before the day of its worldwide mission. **Thousands of study groups must be brought into existence and the book must be translated into many tongues. Thus will the book be in readiness when the battle for man's liberty is finally won and the world is once more made safe for the religion of Jesus and the freedom of mankind.**"

The wisdom and value of this instruction has been verified over and over again by many readers who are committed to hosting study groups.

My husband Trevor and I have been hosting a study group in our home in Sydney since 1981. In those 30 years we have seen dozens and dozens of readers come and go through the group. Some have attended regularly for several years then move on as their lives change, some come and attend for a short time while they explore the book, some come from long distances and only attend now again because of travel constraints. Sometimes the group thrives with numbers up around 10 or



*Urantia logo as a banner depicting the three persons of Trinity Deity—Father, Son, Spirit.*

more, other times only 2 or 3 turn up. Occasionally no one shows up. Once in the early days we had only 1 regular attendee for 3 whole years! However we had vowed to keep the group going – we believed in its value and felt it was a way we could serve our fellow students of the book by providing a regular meeting place.

Our method for getting started was that we would simply provide the time and place for meetings, let the reader referral networks of the Urantia organisations such as Urantia Foundation and the UAI know that we hold a group, list the group in the phone book and then wait for people to contact us. It was bit like “the act is ours, the consequence is God’s”. We had no control over who came, no control over numbers, but with determination and commitment and a firm belief in the value of this kind of service, we just kept the doors open and responded accordingly.

Although hosting a study group is not always easy and has its challenges, as we look back over the years and think of all the wonderful souls we’ve met and all of the beautiful friendships formed which we would not have had the opportunity to do if we hadn’t been

hosting a study group, we are so grateful that we held firm in our resolve to keep the group going—come what may. The rewards have been priceless and we know many readers have appreciated the fact that they could attend a study group and fraternize with fellow readers.

The Revelators advised us to form thousands of study groups. There are study groups like ours all over the world but I doubt if we’ve even hit the one thousand mark yet. The only way the number of study groups can grow is for individual readers to make up their minds to host one—even if there are no other readers in their area. Once that decision has been made and the study group—or potential group—has been listed on the study group circuit, then readers travelling or moving into the area looking for other readers in certain areas can find out if there’s a study group nearby.

If any of this has hit a chord and you would like to start up a study group, or if you are simply looking to attend a study group, listing a group or finding out where the groups are has just become a whole lot easier with the creation of a new Study Group Portal website. We can now list our study groups on this portal so others can easily find us. See the announcement below. If you already host a group please consider registering and listing your group on this portal.

### Announcing the Study Group Portal

The leaders of Urantia Foundation, Urantia Association International and *The Urantia Book* Fellowship are very pleased to announce an historic achievement in cooperative service to our community. After two years of design, testing, and enthusiastic support from teams representing our three organizations, the Study Group

Home | Find a Study Group | About Study Groups | Register your Study Group | Study Aids and Resources

**STUDY GROUP PORTAL**  
*for readers of The Urantia Book*

Home | Find a Study Group | About Study Groups | Register your Study Group | Study Aids and Resources

*Welcome*  
*Bienvenue*  
*Bienvenidos*

An online resource sponsored and supported by:

URANTIA FOUNDATION | The Urantia Book Fellowship | URANTIA ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

Please visit the official websites of these non-profit organizations for complete information about their respective purposes and activities

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*Home page of the Study Group portal.*



*A relaxed and friendly environment conducive to study.*

Portal is now operational. An unprecedented joint sponsorship has been forged as we affirm that nearly everything of real value to the Urantia community has taken origin within study groups, including *The Urantia Book* itself, born of the original study group: The Forum.

A comprehensive database of study groups supported by the major organizations has been a cherished ideal for many years, but the vision took hold during Urantia Foundation's Internet Strategic Meeting in the fall of 2008. This gathering drew more than a dozen tech savvy leaders, some who were affiliated with reader groups and some who were not. The model of an interactive study group website found unanimous appeal and Scott Brooks, representing UAI as its Webmaster, agreed to design and lead the project.

The Study Group Portal was built to foster the creation and growth of study groups. But as an Internet resource, the Portal is something new—a voluntary listing guide that's always accessible for hosts to update, and a referral service that's always available to readers searching for a study group. As hosts sign in and the database grows, those who want to study in a group setting will be able to search for one where they live or as they travel. With an interface and user protocol similar to social networking sites, the Portal is easy to navigate.

The Portal also houses an online library of study aids for *The Urantia Book*, including the new UAI Study Group Guide. These educational resources will tutor students in their comprehension of the teachings and help study groups flourish by sharing successful models and experiences. The site will soon feature multiple translations, making it truly a worldwide service.

If you currently host a study group that is focused on *The Urantia Book*, open to all readers and is apolitical, please list it now by visiting:

<http://UrantiaStudyGroup.org>

Beta testing has been completed so the Study Group Portal is now open to serve the Urantia community. However, it's still new and if you encounter technical problems or have other questions, please contact the administrator. Also, study aids with proven value are needed to expand the library so please submit them. ■

## Robert Canning – In Memoriam



Going through the photos I took at ANZURA Conferences I can see Bob over and over again — laughing, engaged with others — year after year.

Let me go through the long list!

1983 first ever gathering of Urantia Book readers in Australia — in someone's backyard in Narrabeen. Others followed, some in Melbourne, one in Noosa QLD and 1988 The first International Conference at Robertson in the NSW southern Highlands

For me the first conference in Canberra 1991 was an exciting event as you can very well imagine. Seeing so many people who have found the same intriguing Book as I have some years earlier was just a thrill; I was full of questions but mostly — full of love towards everyone.

The photos are of bad quality (no digital then!) so I can't recognise or remember Bob in any of them, but then 1992 we were at Elanora Heights on the Northern Beaches of Sydney. There Bob was amongst a mixed group of readers from all over Australia and even New Zealand. Then came Melbourne in 1993 — my first ever trip to that City, Gold Coast QLD 1994, a small group travelled and gathered in New Zealand 1995. Blackfriars Monastery in Canberra 1996, Point Piper Retreat in Sydney 1997, Surfers QLD in 1998, Kallista VIC in 1999, Canberra — again at the Blackfriars 2000 — the Millennium Conference. In 2001 we stayed at the holiday park at Narrabeen, 2002 saw us in Caloundra QLD and 2003 back in Melbourne, 2004 was another year in Canberra, this time at the Goolabri resort. In 2005 we skipped a turn because were busy with preparations for the International conference — held at the Women's College of the Sydney University in 2006. 2007 it was once again Melbourne's turn to host — and what a fantastic venue this was at the Edmund Rice Centre in Lower Plenty. 2008 Canberra attracted a small group of new and old readers as in 2009 at Narrabeen, whereas 2010 saw us for the first time at the very beautiful Blackmans Bay south of Hobart in Tasmania

Quite a record, won't you agree, taking turns in many of the major centres in Australia.

Without this fine opportunity each year to meet up with Urantia Book readers — and travel the country in the process — you could not get to nurture that fellowship so desirable by many readers and get to know someone a bit better.

By 1996 I had an idea of what to expect from such gatherings. Like many of my Urantian friends, this is the only holiday in the year for me. I planned and travelled with a light heart and was ready for all good things to come my way!



Canberra 1996 – Robert Canning, sitting centre

Bob appeared with a small cask of Port on the first evening and invited me to help him enjoy it. So in the evenings that followed I would fill up a glass at his Port-barrel — and no doubt there were others lining up for this auspicious audience — and we would freely talk about all sorts of things, life as it was and as it is — or what his latest interest in *The Urantia Book* was and how he understood it.

In the following years it all became a bit of a joke and I would remind him, along the general correspondence, to not forget the Port — and he never did!

It must have been one evening in '96 when he did a rendition of 'Albert and the Lion' by Merriott Edgar — all delivered in perfect midlands dialect. It went on and on and everyone was holding their sides with laughter. He obliged some years later and delighted us once more with this poem. (To refresh your memory, just Google the poem's title and you can transport back to that memorable evening.)

Another year he gave me a couple of string puzzles he made himself — you know — a piece of wood, some holes and beads and string — all arranged somehow and inviting you to undo the whole thing. Well, it still eludes me — I'll take them along to this year's conference so you can see for yourself!!

But this was Bob — challenging his mind to think outside the traditional frame.

It was not all fun of course — attending an ANZURA conference is very engaging and stimulating. As it says in Paper 99 — *Social Problems of Religion* — as a group of Religionists we concern ourselves with Religion at these events because we appreciate that:-

It is the business of religion to create, sustain, and inspire such a cosmic loyalty in the individual citizen as will direct him to the achievement of success in the advancement of all these difficult but desirable social services. [Paper 99:3, page 1089:8]

and

It is a fact that religion does not grow unless it is disciplined by constructive criticism, amplified by philosophy, purified by science, and nourished by loyal fellowship. [Paper 99:3, page 1088:8]

I like to think that Bob attended these gatherings alongside other Urantia Book Students to do just that — exercise constructive criticism and nourish loyal fellowship. He was one of the 'wise elder Statesmen' of our Group. No need for big words and long winding indulgences — but a mind ticking over in a peculiar unique way and his contributions were like rare gems.

I wish... to have inquired a bit more into his thinking, I wish to have asked him really good questions.

We sat next to each other in the front row at the International Conference in Sydney — the last one he attended. He wore dark glasses — his eyesight had suffered much in recent years — but he was 'all ears'. Can't remember how, but the subject of his earlier occupation as a pilot came up and he promised to send me a story about an experience he had. I received 'High flight' some time afterwards.

This too was Bob — pondering the mysterious!

We emailed sparingly — reading became ever harder for him, even with the bigger script display on the computer screen.

He told me often how lucky and content he was to live with one of his daughters and her family — he seemed to have had everything he needed.

Robert Canning passed over into the next stage of the eternal adventure on 2 January 2011. He is leaving a country and a world in great disastrous and climatic turmoil — he won't miss that. He is also leaving a gap in our ANZURA Family — while missing his presence we can only aspire to take his inquiring spirit as an example while we keep his friendship treasured — till we meet again over yonder.

Rita Schaad, February 2011 ■

## "HIGH FLIGHT"

(A nineteen year old fighter pilot, Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, No 412 Squadron RCAF, wrote these words on the back of a letter which he sent to his parents during WWII.)

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth,  
 Danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings:  
 Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth  
 Of sun-split clouds – and done a hundred things  
 You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and  
 swung  
 High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there  
 I've chased the shouting wind along and flung  
 My eager craft through footless halls of air.  
 Up, up the long delirious burning blue  
 I've topped the wing-swept heights with easy grace,  
 Where never lark, or even eagle, flew;  
 And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
 The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
 Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

Whenever I read or hear that poem my thoughts flash back to late 1941. I was one of a group of RAF 'sprog's in Lakeland, Florida, a US Army Air Corps Base, as USAAF was known in those days. We had been sent there to do basic flying training, despite the fact that America was still a 'neutral' country.

Our Primary Training aircraft was the Stearman, a bi-plane with open cockpit and a radial engine. I had gone solo, after three hours dual, and was practicing 'circuits and bumps', or, more correctly, take-offs and landings. For the uninitiated, this meant taking off, climbing out to a thousand feet, turning left at right angles to the runway, or flight strip, flying a short distance, then turning left again, downwind, left again cross wind and descending to turn onto the approach to land.

Flying on the long downwind leg required little concentration, apart from maintaining height, and one was relatively free to relax a little and enjoy the ride.

In the open cockpit of a biplane one hears not only the sound of the wind over one's goggles and helmet but also the thrumming of the struts and stays supporting the wings. I had noticed the sounds before but on one particular occasion they became curiously musical. Suddenly there was a choir producing wordless music such as I had never heard before.

From that incident on, whenever I flew the Stearman, and had time to relax a little, I heard that chorus. I could even make out the harmonies, though I didn't know what that meant in those days. Maybe I'll get to hear that choir again, one day. ■



## Introducing *The Urantia Book*

Nigel Nunn

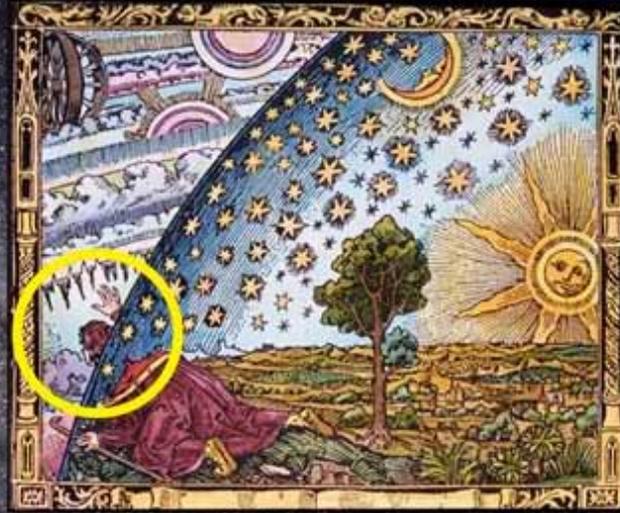


As students of *The Urantia Book*, we eventually bump into the question: "how do I introduce this to others?" Is it a religious document? Scientific? Philosophical? It covers all bases, so trying to put it into some familiar category seems not quite right. It redefines what it means to be human. It sets up for us a new context in which to think. It helps us to see ourselves as we are seen. How to explain this to family and friends, let alone our busy and sceptical 21st century fellows?

Here's a link to Part 1 of my current attempt:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nqi60VpoMCU> ■





*... how we are "salvaged from death"*



## THE "UB ENDEAVOUR"

The UB Endeavour is an ANZURA initiative for the purpose of raising funds for the Australian office of Urantia Foundation and its associated system of book supply throughout Australia and New Zealand. In order to achieve self-sufficiency without raising the price of the book too much, our goal is to raise \$10,000 a year. This covers all the necessary administrative and operations costs as well as keeping the Foundation registered as a non-profit organisation with the government authorities so we may continue to conduct business in the book trade.

To insure continuity of income, we encourage regular small donations. Therefore we ask readers to consider joining the "dollar-a day" brigade by donating, on a perpetual basis \$1 a day (or \$30 per month).

If you would like to assist with the promotion and distribution of The Urantia Book in our region by con-

tributing to the UB Endeavour, please either fill out the tear off contribution form below and return it with your contribution to:

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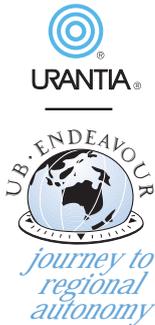
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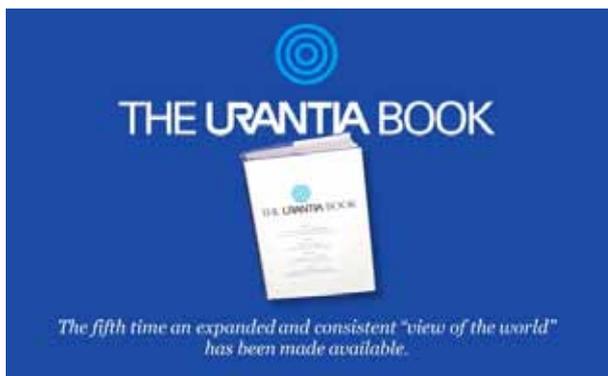
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[Paper 107:4, page 1181.3] ■

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