

Urantia Family Life Committee (UFL)

Adjunct to Youth and Young Adult Committee

Mid-year 2020 Report - Fellowship

Presented by Anthony Finstad - chair

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Committee members:

Sara Blackstock

Riula Deotto

Richard Daunt

Tom & Marie Vasile

Vicki Arkens

Ruthie Wenger

Brief history:

The most current version of the Urantia Family Life Committee was formed as an adjunct under the Youth and Young Adult Committee (YaYA) during it's first full year as a standing committee in 2012. There was an obvious need to have more focus on the "youth" portion of that charter since the primary energy was being directed to the "young adults" who were actively gathering and organizing in new and exciting ways. This adjunct committee was first led by Janet Graham followed by Sara Blackstock (both long time Fellowship advocates for families) and now it's currently chaired by me, Anthony Finstad, former chair of YaYA. We submit an annual budget request to the Fellowship through the YaYA Committee and have received a budget of approx. \$500 to \$1,000 per year.

The Urantia Family Life Committee's first involvement with an International Conference was held in 2014 at Amherst, MA. At this event we set up a large tent at the crossroads on the campus grounds. We cared for children with fun activities, guest visitors in various UB costumes, provided a Thought Adjuster ceremony and also encouraged the Truthseekers (later teen aged conference attendees who have been organized by an independent non-profit group that have been actively serving the Fellowship since 1999) to stay on site at night and interact with a light program of talks, music, and socials that featured the YaYA's (younger

adults) functioning in a mentorship role. We feel this model was successful and we also used it at IC'17 in Denver. We are very involved with the joint efforts of Urantia Global Experience 2020. I did a site visit, rented a large tent, had a large passenger van, and booked several outdoor activities ... before Covid-19 shut us all down. You can read about what we were going to provide here: [https:// urantiaglobalexperience.com/youth-and-family/](https://urantiaglobalexperience.com/youth-and-family/)

The Urantia Family Life Committee created it's own website about six years ago thanks to Richard Daunt's lead: www.urantiafamilylife.org We've migrated many of the earlier family life writings, from Julia Fenderson, Sara Blackstock, Janet Graham, and others onto this site. We occasionally feature new posts but it's primary service has been to act as a resource for parents. We received permission to upload Mary Ebben Livingston's book entitled *A Young Child's Guide to The Urantia Book* and we hope to receive permission to provide an electronic version of *Tales of Joshua* and *A Family Meeting Handbook* by Robert Slagle. We also have FaceBook page.

New this year is a "Kids Zoom Class" that was developed and is run by an age group of approx. 7-12 year olds. Marie Vasile is our lead "adult" who has done a great job of laying low, helping as needed, and letting the kids run their agenda. These are all kids familiar with the UB and their questions and comments are very reflective of big picture thing! Very exciting development as a result of our quarantine times.

Vicki Arkens has created a weekly children's curriculum entitled *Through the Year with The Urantia Book*. Her wonderful contributions can be found on our Family Life website as well as her own: www.urantiayear.blogspot.com

The other point of emphasis about the UFL Team is our continuing focus on maintaining a committee that has leadership from the Fellowship and UAI. Both Marie and Tom Vasile have been active members of the Urantia Family Life Committee and both are current officers in the Los Angeles charter of Urantia Association United States (UAUS). This effort to feature joint organizations on a committee was the outworking of a resolution passed by the Fellowship in response to the *Transition to UNITY Proposal* (February 2017) in which the focus was primarily on greater organizational collaboration such as consolidated committee functions. I believe we've

done a good job of that with this committee. All of us on the committee (eight of us now) believe there's no reason to have multiple family life committees serving our community. To this end, the UAI officially approved this joint effort (winter 2020) and has recognized our committee as also serving their family needs. There is one Urantia Family Life committee. This is progress.

The one project we are currently working on and are nearing sending out via both organizations email listserv is an email entitled Urantia Family Life Survey. It was delayed do to the conference being cancelled because several of the questions pertained directly to the conference experience, so we're rewriting it and will send it out latter this fall. The results of this survey will be shared with UAI, Urantia Foundation, and the Fellowship.

As you can see, we're an active committee of devoted readers who care greatly about our children and the future of this revelation. We have been meeting via Zoom on the third Tuesday of each month and when a conference planning is nearing "show time" we meet more often as need. This is an open meeting and you are all welcome to join.

In closing, I'd like to better introduce our wonderful committee:

Sara Blackstock (CA) really the matriarch of this committee, long time proponent to having a family life committee. She is the creator and lead volunteer for the Jerusalem Marketplace for serval of the Fellowship's International Conferences, which included Flagstaff (IC'96) where there was over 80 children & teens in attendance.

Riula Deotto (FL) Brazilian born and raised and the mother of two beautiful children, Solonia and Gabriel. Riula and William (who also joins our call on occasions) are both highly active the Florida community and bring that active parenting perspective to this committee.

Richard Daunt (NJ) New Zealand born and raised and the father of two awesome boys, David and Brendon, Richard currently resides with his family in New Jersey and is super involved with the Fellowship's website development.

Tom & Marie Vasile (CA) are both longtime UB readers who are currently hosting a online study group, Los Angeles area leaders of the UAI association, and have valuable experience in family and grief counseling. They are the parents of an adult son who is now in his 20's.

Vicki Arkens (WI) along with her husband, Bob, they have been core leaders within several Urantia organizations and have helped lead multiple family gatherings in the Midwestern region for many years now. Vicki puts out a weekly children's curriculum *Through the Year with The Urantia Book* (explained above) and has been a youth leader within their community church.

Ruth Wenger (AZ) our newest member of the committee, Ruth brings a young adult perspective that we're excited to have on our team. She was raised with the Urantia Book and its teachings, an accomplished musician (cellist) she is currently living in the Phoenix area.

Anthony Finstad (OR) current chair of the committee, raised two girls and grandfather of three, now residing in Bend, Oregon, with his wife Jackie Koury.

Urantia Family Life Committee

3rd Tuesday of every month — everyone is welcome to join us

