**Zoom Meeting of The Urantia Book Fellowship**

Meeting of the General Council

April 17, 2021

A meeting of the General Council of the Urantia Book Fellowship took place on Zoom Saturday, April 17, 2021.

**The recorded version is available at**:
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1K-cBTrPDMs0ZSpbcdW5TnyyhZw71KtBV?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1K-cBTrPDMs0ZSpbcdW5TnyyhZw71KtBV?usp=sharing" \t "_blank)

You need to access the link from your firstname.lastname@urantiabook.org email.

President Geoff Theiss called the meeting to order at 8:10 PST

**1 . Toni Oyeyemi opened the meeting with a prayer, followed by worshipful silence.**

**2. Roll call:**

The following members were present, constituting a quorum:

Tom Allen Albert Einstein Lassiter

Dan Amyx (joined at 12:40 PST) Jena Lassiter

Lara Amyx Barbara Newsome

Sally Annabella Toni Oyeyemi (left at 4:00 PST)

Ted Blaney Michael Perrie

Larry Bowman Andrè Radatus

Douglas Burns (with brief absence) Brent St. Denis

Michael Challis Derek Samaras

Bobbie Dreier Steve Sawyer (joined at 9:20 PST)

Cabot Eudaley David Schlundt

John Hales Cristina Seaborn

David Kulieke Sue Snider Seccombe (with brief absesnce)

Cecelia Lampley Jill Strunk

John Lange Geoff Theiss (with brief absence)

Karen Larsen Paula Thompson

**Absent:** Jack Holloway, Diane Labrecque, Alvin Lockett, Mike Painter, Pablo Segovia, and Geoff Taylor.

**3. Approval of Agenda:**

The agenda was approved, after various changes suggested by Geoff Theiss, by unanimous consent.

**4. Approve Minutes of last meeting:**

Minutes of the GC Zoom meeting Saturday, February 20, 2021 were approved by unanimous consent.

**5. President’s Update for Second Quarter:**

\*Geoff thanked Derek Samaras, saying that he has really grown into his full-time administrative role with us. He cited expanding our Uversa Press presence on Amazon, significant contributions to the Social Media Committee, managing Pipeline of Light activities, EC support, and much more.

\*Geoff expressed gratitude for all of the Fellowship’s diverse and devoted team of volunteers. He said that, although we sometimes bump into each other, as a whole it feels like there is gathering momentum of real synergy. He said we are “lifting more as a team across all areas of the organization.” He acknowledge that much of the good work being done is “in secret” and he feels gratified to work with people working so hard and unselfishly.

\*Geoff mentioned a discussion about how to deal with tellers’ reports of GC votes. Judicial Chair Tom Allen researched the 12th Edition of Roberts’ Rules of Order, Newly Revised, which we are constitutionally bound to follow. It states: “45.40 The Tellers’ report is entered in full in the minutes, becoming a part of the official records of the organization. Under no circumstances may this be omitted in an election or in a vote on a critical motion out of a mistaken deference to the feelings of unsuccessful candidates or members of the losing side.” For example, even if a person receives no votes in an election, it needs to be reported. Acknowledging some people’s disagreement with this practice, he mentioned that the Constitution could be amended.

\*Geoff reported that, after a brief hiatus, quarterly meetings of the presidents from the Fellowship, The Foundation, and The UAI have resumed. The most recent was an opportunity to meet the new president of the UAI, Enrique Traver from Brazil, replacing Chris Wood after an eight-year term. Geoff expressed great admiration for both Enrique and Chris.

\*The EC approved the new Publications Policy, which is now posted on the website. He thanked Cristina Seaborn, Publications Chair, for her “heavy lifting” in accomplishing the finalized version.

\*Geoff asked Brent St. Denis, as interim coordinator, to report briefly on the success to date of The Second Miler Fund. Brent explained that 18 grants have been approved by the EC, averaging about $2,300 each. The launch phase, begun in the fall of 2020, is complete and transition to phase two is underway. Brent has been serving as the interim reviewer of applications and will be looking for 3-5 volunteers for a panel to help review the fifth batch of grant proposals and to help refine policies and procedures. At Brent’s request, Geoff will send an invitation to all GC members who want to volunteer.

\*Geoff mentioned another program being guided by Brent St. Denis: the Area Coordinator/Field Worker Program, which is in its fledgling state. Two new Area Coordinator/Field Workers have been accepted, one from the Dominican Republic and one from Spain, bringing the total to seven. Brent mentioned that the program channels energy and participation from stakeholders not formerly involved. He will keep the GC informed as the program evolves. David Schlundt suggested there could be a page on our website for updates in the AC/FW program.

**6. Ratification of Change in Committee Composition.**

By unanimous consent, Michael Perrie was substituted for Pamela Chaddock for a two year term on the Interfaith Committee.

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**7. Constitutional Amendment—Stagger Officer Elections:**

**Subject: Stagger Officer Elections**

**Presented by: Geoff Theiss Seconded by: Cristina Seaborn**

**Whereas** the original Fellowship constitution required all elections of departmental committee chairs and officers to be held at the Triennial Meeting of the General Council as defined in section 8.7; and

**Whereas** it is ambiguous as to whether elections of the members of service teams as framed in 11.3 can occur outside triennial meetings of the General Council; and

**Whereas** it is ambiguous as to whether Departmental Committee Chairs can be elected outside of triennial meetings of the general council, it is our current practice to only elect Departmental Committee Chairs at regular meetings of the General Council; and

**Whereas** at minimum 12 and upwards of 19 General Council vacancies can occur during any one set of TDA elections of General Councilors and the filling of General Council vacancies, resulting in potential disruption to the composition of the Executive Committee and the continuity of management of the affairs of the Fellowship; and

**Whereas** this significant turnover in the composition of the General Council coincides with the election of 6 of the 9 members of the Executive Committee as defined in “8.7c: Triennial Meeting of the General Council” and “11.3: Election and Term of Office of the Service Team Chair,” resulting in even further potential disruption to the Executive Committee and its continuity and function; and

**Whereas** the organization has experienced many instances of reinventing itself every three years at Triennial Meeting intervals for the challenges of continuity created by these very issues, resulting in the waste of hundreds to thousands of hours of volunteer contribution to the Fellowship; and

**Wherea**s the author thought this as good a time as any to clean up the unneeded and obsolete language in section 11.3; Now therefore be it

**Resolved** that the following constitutional amendment be considered to resolve the above issues:

DELETE ORANGE; ADD RED

**Section 8.7. Meetings:**

(a) Regular Meetings: Regular meetings of the General Council shall be held once each calendar year in which there is no Triennial Meeting of the General Council. Regular meetings shall be held at the headquarters of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP or at the place designated by the Executive Committee. The date and time of regular meetings shall be determined by the Executive Committee. Written notices shall be given to each Councilor at least fifteen (15) days prior to such meeting, stating therein the time and place of such meeting. Such notices may be delivered personally or may be sent by telegraph or by United States Mail addressed to the Councilor’s last known address. **Regular Meetings shall include necessary elections of the members of the Service Teams and the Departmental Committees. At the Regular Meeting of the General Council in 2022, the election of the office of Vice President will be held, and held at every Regular Meeting three years thereafter. At the Regular Meeting of the General Council in 2023, the election of the offices of Treasurer and Secretary-General will be held, and held at every Regular Meeting three years thereafter.**

(b) Special Meetings: Special meetings of the General Council may be called at any time by the Executive Committee or upon the written request of twelve (12) Councilors. Notice thereof shall be given as required in the case of regular meetings, but such notice shall also state the purpose or purposes for which such special meeting is called.

(c) Triennial Meetings: Immediately following the Triennial Delegate Assembly a meeting of the General Council, to be known as the Triennial Meeting, shall be held for the election of the ~~officers~~ **offices of President and Secretary** of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP **and as necessary** the members of the Service Teams and the Departmental Committees. The President and Secretary of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP shall preside at the Triennial Meeting, whether or not either of them is then a member of the General Council, until their successors have been elected and installed at such meeting. No notice of such meeting shall be required except that the twelve (12) newly elected Councilors shall be notified by telephone or telegraph.

**Section 9.2. Election**: The officers shall be elected by the General Council from its membership at **Meetings of the General Council defined in Section 8.7.** ~~the Triennial Meeting of the General Council following the Triennial Delegate Assembly and~~ **Starting at the Triennial Meeting of the General Council in 2018 and ending at the Regular Meeting of the General Council in 2022, the office of Vice President shall hold office for a term of four (4) years and until their successor is duly elected and qualified. Starting at the Triennial Meeting of the General Council in 2018 and ending at the Regular Meeting of the General Council in 2023, the offices of the Treasurer and Secretary-General shall hold office for a term of five (5) years and until their successors are duly elected and qualified.**

Officers at all other times shall hold office for a term of three (3) years and until their successors are duly elected and qualified. The election of officers shall be by secret ballot from candidates nominated for each office by the Executive Committee and from the floor with the prior consent of the individuals nominated, and a candidate receiving a majority of the ballots cast shall be declared elected. Whenever it shall be necessary to cast more than one (1) ballot, the candidates for office shall be restricted in each succeeding ballot to the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the preceding ballot or, in case of a tie by three (3) or more candidates, then to the candidates so tied.

**Section 11.3 Election and Term of Office**: Each Service Team shall be composed of the Service Team Chair and the Chairs of the constituent Committees. The Chair of each Service Team shall be a Councilor elected by the General Council for a term of three (3) years. Each Service Team shall have a Secretary appointed by its Chair from among its members. ~~When initially elected at the summer 2018 General Council meeting, one Service Team Chair will be elected for a term of one (1) year, one Service Team Chair for a term of two (2) years, and one Service Team Chair for a term of three (3) years. Which Service Team Chair will be elected to which initial terms will be decided by the Executive Committee and announced at least 60 days prior to the 2018 Triennial General Council meeting~~

**In order to initiate the staggered elections of officers, some current terms will be extended to allow 1/3 of officers to be elected during each Triennial cycle from now on.**

**OFFICE TERM START DATE**

**Proposed:**

**President 3 years 2018**

**Vice President 4 years 2018**

**Secretary 3 years 2018**

**Secretary General 5 years 2018**

**Treasurer 5 years 2018**

**Proposed:**

**President 3 years 2021 TDA**

**Vice President 3 years 2022**

**Secretary 3 years 2021**

**Secretary General 3 years 2023**

**Treasurer 3 years 2023**

Other EC members:

The Service Team Chairs are already Constitutionally staggered, with a different Team Chair being elected for a three-year term every year.

World Wide Team Chair = 2021

Fellowship Team Chair = 2022

Media and Communications Chair = 2023

The Judicial Chair is elected on a six year cycle The current chair’s term will expire in 2022.

**Comments**:

\*With 18 seats coming up for election during this year’s TDA (half of the GC), having all officer positions also open could cause extreme disruption.

\*This change is needed for continuity of EC function; it is “pivotal to congruency and stability.” The EC is smaller three Team Chairs instead of all Committee Chairs, wo it is even more of an issue.

\*Concern was expressed about unforeseen consequences, along with the comment that we aren’t good at readdressing changes to see how well they are working.

\*Anyone can add a sunset proposal as an amendment to any constitutional amendment, if considered important.

David Schlundt facilitated a Red Cap secret ballot, and shared the chart of results. Twenty-seven eligible voters were present. A ¾ majority would be 21.

**Vote: 27 yes. THE MOTION PASSED.**

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**8. Second Quarter Program Updates by Service Team Chairs;**

**Introductory comments by Jena Lassiter and Geoff Theiss:**

Geoff explained that at the budget meeting last October the EC agreed to transition away from a ledger-based approach (with a focus on types of expenses) toward more of a program-based approach. A committment was made to quarterly reports of programs to keep the GC informed about the momentum of the project. So, instead of Committees sending written reports to the GC, program reports will be given at GC meetings.

Jena pointed out that some committee activities fall into different programs. The Program Planning Team (the three Service Team Chairs) meets every other Thursday and has been working on program planning and tracking. They have been getting help from the Organizational Guidance Committee regarding best steps forward.

**A. Two X Two Membership Program by Dan Amyx:**

**(Presented at 12:45 when Dan arrived)**

Dan Amyx reminded us of the GC motion to arrange for all GC members, in pairs, to be connected as liaisons to specific Societies to reach out and field questions thus keeping Societies informed and discovering needs Societies. The intent is to create more cohesion within the Fellowship between the GC and the Societies. The teams will get together and share their information and the GC will respond in appropriate ways.

Dan will notify GC members which societies they will be paired with as liaisons. At the last GC meeting, Cristina shared a chart for GC members to volunteer for first and second choice of Society. She will send out the chart again if you haven’t yet chosen. If you don’t volunteer soon, Dan and his team will pair you with someone who has volunteered for a specific Society. The process will hopefully be in place before the EC Society Conclave on May 8.

Albert made the point that the Societies **ARE** part of the Fellowship, perhaps more even than the GC. It’s not that The **Fellowship** is talking to the Societies; it’s that the **Fellowship leadership** is talking to the Societies.

**B. Social Media Committee Update by Jena Lassiter:**

The committee was established last summer; Sean Privitera got the committee started and then, after having a baby and new priorities, left the GC. Current members are Jena Lassiter (Temporary Chair), Cristina Seaborn (Secretary), Karen Larsen, Pamela Keller, Sue Seccombe, and Derek Samaras.

The overall purpose of the committee is to engage the public, including those unfamiliar with or new to *The Urantia Book*. Social media is a dialogue, not just postings. The intent is to encourage return interaction. They are using a subset of 50 ways that Sue found to interact with people. Engagement with *The Urantia Book* would include finding new understandings of the teachings, finding new tools to foster study, and being inspired to apply these teachings in daily life. Engagement with The Fellowship and connection to other UB organizations is also part of the purpose.

In Phase I of the committees work, the focus has been on getting a footing in Facebook, with some presence on YouTube. Phase II will expand to other social media spaces as well.

Karen Larsen is stellar in updating the Facebook page “The Urantia Book Fellowship.” This page is in addition to “Friends of The Urantia Book Fellowship” (with 2,700 members). Jena expressed hope that the 2,700 members on “Friends of The Urantia Book Fellowship” will also “like” the new site, which has a different purpose. Karen recommended that we all sign in, “like it,” and invite our friends to join. She said engagement in the last month has really taken off. In the last 28 days 11,204 people have been reached. Post engagements are 3,086, and page likes are 143.

They are starting to stream live interviews into Facebook. Derek and Paula Thompson recently created a high quality livestreamed interview. Cristina can simultaneously livestream to Facebook and YouTube, and can have up to a ten-person panel. She uses StreamYard, because of its artistic capabilities and versatile features. The $20-a-month advanced version allows us to put our logo at the top.

More daily content to foster interaction is being added daily. Sue found a great calendar.

She also reached out to 48 volunteers who indicated an interest in social media on the Wild Apricot website. So far she has gotten a 10% response rate and they are adding four new members, although they have not yet attended a meeting. They are from four different countries.

Jena encourages prescreening of posts. When posts are submitted to the committee, Karen and Pamela will screen and post them. They can also be posted in different languages. The committee is considering creating a Spanish Facebook page.

Jena said they are sorting through metrics to see if what they are doing to create engagement is actually working. They are establishing a budget for driving traffic to the page and integrating ads with Google Ads to create traffic.

Gary Tongue and Derek are increasing the amount of professional, artistic content available through the Fellowship’s YouTube channel as well.

The full presentation is available at <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1u0p01VEC0nSgo6cD8GpUhRp0lKZOY5A91ERkGPyiZKo/edit#slide=id.gcdea5b1fc2_0_237>

**C. Standard Reference Text (SRT) Committee Presentation**

**by David Kulicke and Merritt Horn:**

David, who has been on the committee for six years, introduced the topic and turned it over to Merritt Horn, who has been on the committee from its inception in 2009.

Merritt explained that the committee began as a joint project with the Fellowship and the Foundation, to gain consensus on any changes to the original text.

Merritt pointed out that they found occasional obvious typos. Although the original printing went through exhaustive editing, even when it was published, the understanding was that some small mistakes could slip through the editing process.

The Foundation regularly gets suggestions for changes from readers. Since 2009, the committee has been updating their findings every three years or so. They just completed the last group of changes. The first group was before the fourth Foundation printing. At that time it was mostly things the Fellowship had already decided to change in their text and it created alignment between the two publications. Merritt pointed out that virtually all decisions of the committee (over 400) have been unanimous, although there has been a variety of personalities from both organizations.

They have always had a very conservative approach. The committee restricts their changes simply to typo errors that can be explained by something like a missed keystroke. They don’t get into text interpretations, unless typographical in nature. However, they have begun tracking other than typographical concerns, with their comments, in case they get reconsidered at a later date.

One decision they have made is that they will not change archaic language. They do not consider it their job to keep the language current. If you research in Webster’s International Dictionary from the time of the first printing, some language that seems overly formal, or even odd, will be seen to have been perfect for the time. David Kulicke made the point that if you break down some of the very long sentences, they make even more sense, which is not true of most authors.

Changes are documented on the Urantia Foundation website, with explanations of changes made and those decided against. The Uversa Press Fellowship printing is a Standard Reference Text and Appendix 1 explains changes made from the 1955 first printing. At every point where The Uversa press edition differs from the 1955 printing, a dagger symbol is inserted between the columns and the change is documented in the appendix.

Geoff Theiss set himself an action item to send the GC a link to the latest list of changes.

**9. Stepping Stones Presentation by Jena Lassiter:**

Members: Jena Lassiter (Chair), Albert Lassiter (Secretary), Tom Vasile, Marie Vasile, Bill Cooper, Kaye Cooper, Aprilhelen LovesYou, and Paula Thompson. Michael Perrie and Douglas Burns were on the committee for the first six months before schedules changed.

The Stepping Stones project has been ongoing since spring of 2020. The main purpose is to create engagement and fellowship with people who click on focused Google Ads which Jena creates under the grant from Google which gives us free ads. (We have $40,000 a month of free Google Ads to use; the typical amount for a business is $500.)

In the last 30 days, there were 16,000 new site visitors via Google Ads. Most, about 65%, are under age 44. However, the average visitation is 30 seconds, currently, when the ad leads to our primary website and leads them right into *The Urantia Book*.

With input from data created by the Organizational Guidance Committee, the Stepping Stones Committee decides what audience they are trying to attract and what will engage and retain their interest. Albert has considerable experience in user personas and how people think and how to maximize website participation using that information.

For example, some user personas are: UB Newbie, General; UB Newbie, Anti-Church; and UB Newbie, God-Knowing. The group recognizes the sensitive nature of website exploration. If people come in and they are minimally interested, having been tickled by an ad, if they get past initial mild interest and are not repulsed in any way, they may move into the phase of openly exploring and may stay on the website longer and be inclined to return.

So instead of all Google Ad clicks leading directly to the main website, the committee is developing “landing pads” that focus on the values and meanings in *The Urantia Book*, and create an easy-to-follow flow that enables people to choose which topics they are interested in if they want to do deeper.

The committee can access Google Analytics to determine which ads and which landing pads achieve the longest retention on the website.

Sue made the point that the key thing about website retention is relevance, so the best structure is to begin with broad concepts narrowing down to more narrow concepts.

A key feature of the project is to create interaction early on, rather than just presenting something to read. When people start to engage, spiritual growth happens. Creating fellowship creates growth. Links appear on the landing pad to move beyond initial images and words. The option to join moderated chats on specific topics is an example. Jena has accepted a free membership in a relatively new company, Junto, as a desirable platform for groups. Moderators are trained to listen and stay with concepts rather than leading with *The Urantia Book* specifically.

Training is available so moderators know how to truly listen and support loving interactions, to positively represent the Fellowship. Urantia University International may be involved in the training of moderators.

Several committee members are creating material about which they are passionate.

Topics being worked on currently are family, grief, spiritual growth, spiritual conversations, life purpose (Why are we here?), and life after death. One way you can get involved is to share your personal experience. **Jena has emailed the GC inviting people to make videos of themselves talking about life after death.** If you are interested in making a video for that project, contact Jena.

Videos and beautiful images are also a big part of engagement. Gary Tonge and Richard Daunt work with Jena to build landing pages.

You can access Jena’s full presentation at the following link.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lCgJBeuhz7rTJ9scnvejVfrJoKUWs7Wiqyvf7BAAeUI/edit#heading=h.ct8a38bi3dwn>

**Comments**:

\*There was general excitement about the potential of this project and great appreciation for all of the hard work and talent involved. Jena’s leadership was specifically touted.

\*GC members offered suggestions and endorsed the ones Jena presented, such as offering chat opportunities early on, looking for commonality of values and meanings, and giving participants options to take several directions from the first landing page.

\*It makes sense that videos are important in engaging people.

\*Since many people watch videos on cell phones with the sound off, embedding subtext is important.

\*If a person has never encountered The UB, some basic questions are common among people who have never encountered The UB and those common questions could be available to click on and find answers early on.

\*Could people ask questions and members of Ted Blaney’s Mentorship Program sign up to answer, rather than people just following prearranged bread crumbs?

\*There is overlap in some core values among different religions. Using this knowledge can bring in people from various spiritual frameworks.

\*Perhaps Facebook content can be integrated.

**10. Update on Executive Director Search.**

David Schlundt reported that the search committee from the EC have four superb candidates and are setting up interviews for them in the near future. All of them are *Urantia Book* readers.

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**11. Location Ad Hoc Committee Motion:**

**Subject: Resolution to Find a Headquarters in Chicago for the Urantia Book Fellowship**

**with a Satellite near Denver.**

**Presented by the Location Ad Hoc Committee: Lara Amyx (Chair), David Kulieke, John Lange, Sue Seccombe, and Paula Thompson.**

**Seconded by: ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­Cristina Seaborn.**

**Whereas** the advantages of having a material headquarters continue even during the electronic age; and

**Whereas** thehistory in choosing the original headquarters site of the Revelation, Chicago, has helped to guide our search; and

**Whereas** many ofthe same factors that caused the revelators to seek a city in the Midwest still apply today; and

**Whereas** that history has led us to prioritize such criteria for the geographic location as being in the United States; having a transportationally accessible central location being a cosmopolitan center of culture, education, and diversity that supports a full range of world religions and having other pertinent qualities, including a community of readers of *The Urantia Book*; and

**Whereas** that it would be beneficial to be in a metropolitan area that would lend itself to experiments such as a storefront reading room, preferably near a university, as well as other outreach initiatives; and

**Whereas** smaller metropolitan areas do not offer all of the desired qualities; and

**Whereas** Chicago meets these criteria as it did when it was chosen as the headquarters originally for the Fifth Epochal Revelation; and

**Whereas** there are advantages to being in the same city as the most probable long-term, stable organization working for the Urantia Revelation, Urantia Foundation; and

**Whereas** such good work has been accomplished in the Denver area, including in the area of attracting young people; therefore be it

**Resolved** thatthe Location Committee recommends Chicago as the best location to establish a geographical headquarters, with a satellite in the Denver area, and that the search for a specific building that will provide an income that will help pay for itself in an area with high foot traffic, near a university and near 533 Diversey Parkway, that will be measured for the best financial benefit as the end of the pandemic is approached.

**Supporting information:**

David Kuelieke prepared the following document:

**Rationale for Recommending Chicago as the Location for the Headquarters for the Urantia Book Fellowship with a Satellite Office in the Denver Area.**

**Why Have a Physical Location?**

The twenty-first century has brought with it changes that the human founders of the effort to spread  the teachings of the *Urantia Book* Revelation could not have foreseen. Most notable are the  technological innovations that are the consequences of a new epoch in human development—the computer, electronic, communication, and information era that burst forth during the waning decades  of the twentieth century. The pioneers of the Forum, the Foundation, and the Brotherhood would be  amazed to see electronic books, Zoom meetings, virtual study groups and other worldwide  instantaneous communication, online workshops and classes, websites and social media with  consequent new methods of outreach, and online art, graphics and films. All of these new miracles  multiply our opportunities, especially when individuals are isolated, whether because of where they live or during our quarantining in the times of Covid-19.

While we are appreciative of the study and interaction possibilities that platforms like Zoom have given  us, many individuals, ranging from schoolchildren to university students to adults sequestered at home,  have come to appreciate the benefits of in-person socialization and community more than ever before.  The advantages of being together when we can supplement gatherings with modern miracles seem the  best possible world. Consider these thoughts, drawn from a myriad of articles (on the Internet) about

the importance of human interaction:

Without physical human interaction, we fall subject to potentially losing our sense of real  connection. We’ll become desensitized, numb, and oblivious to the social cues that we would  have witnessed had only the conversation been made in-person.

We need to step away from technology and talk to people face-to-face again. We need to build  real connections and have real experiences with one another. We need to interact with one  another — Share our thoughts, feelings, ideas, hopes, and dreams. ***Lindsey (Lazarte) Carson***

**“In the Age of Technology”**

Use technology to facilitate, not replace, human interactions: Whatsapp and Facetime

are fantastic tools, but a relationship based purely on electronic communications is one

doomed to fail.

Communities are helpful to join or create because they provide support to individuals

who are impacted by the daily stress, struggles and chaos of modern life. Your

neighbours might help look after your children but you might water their plants when

they are on holiday. Neighbours might pull together if a member of your family

undergoes an important medical procedure. But of course there is the fun and

friendship factor: there is nothing better than spontaneously meeting a neighbour on

your street and deciding to go for a quick coffee. You don’t have to plan it months in

advance. It reminds you that the world is full of nice, friendly people. You just got

lucky that you live next door to them. *Katherine Diggory on ExploreLife website.*

The point here is not to do away with all of the incredible advantages technology is giving us nor to forsake the convenience and efficiency remote meetings provide but instead to realize that interpersonal interaction, community, and an actual place or places to stand for our organization will  always be fundamental.

So we begin with the recommendation that the Fellowship benefits with having a headquarters, one  that continues to take advantage of the best that technology can offer but which allows for personal  meeting space, as well as providing an actual place for readers to visit and put human beings as representing a movement.

**Why Chicago?**

We recommend returning to Chicago, the place the revelators originally chose for headquarters of the  Fifth Epochal Revelation. We also recommend a satellite office in the Denver area with an eye to  eventually adding other satellite sites around the world as opportunity permits. Below is our rationale.

**Historical Context:** Clearly, conditions are not the same as they were over a century ago when Chicago was chosen. However, we know that:

**19:1.6 (215.3)** The true perspective of any reality problem—human or divine, terrestrial or cosmic—can  be had only by the full and unprejudiced study and correlation of three phases of universe  reality: origin, history, and destiny. The proper understanding of these three experiential realities affords the basis for a wise estimate of the current status.

Consequently, it is good to be mindful, as well as we can try, as to why the revelators chose Chicago.

**Locations of the previous revelations:** *The Urantia Book* goes into great detail as to the criteria that went  into choosing where to place the four previous epochal revelations. Dalamatia was chosen for its  “climate and conditions” that, among other things, would be conducive to a progression from hunting to  herding to farming. Later Van and Amadon sponsored an exhaustive search before choosing the site of  the first Garden. And because Michael’s bestowal needed to be in the appropriate family in the right culture possessing the best religion of the times and in a location where Jesus was in a position to meet  people from other cultures as well, Melchizedek arrived 2000 years earlier in Salem where he could  influence the culture and religion of that area and prepare the way for the bestowal.

These are certainly different times from today, but it is significant that, in a normal world, the Planetary  Prince’s headquarters and the garden home of Adam and Eve would continue simultaneously, well into  more advanced epochs, during which time, location is still considered significant:

**51:6.2 (586.6)** On normal worlds the garden headquarters of the violet race becomes the second center of world culture and, jointly with the headquarters city of the Planetary Prince,  sets the pace for the development of civilization. For centuries the city headquarters schools of  the Planetary Prince and the garden schools of Adam and Eve are contemporary. They are  usually not very far apart, and they work together in harmonious co-operation.

**Location Choice of the United States for the Fifth Revelation:** Of course, much of this is speculation. But  after perusing the process for the sites of the first four revelations, some things seem clear. As the focus  of modern democracy at the time—and it’s up and coming financial, political, industrial, and  technological strength, among other things—the United States was the obvious choice. It was also out of  the crucible of upcoming world conflicts, it was among the first to gain printing and copyright modernity, and its citizens speak English.

**Location Choice of the Midwest for the Fifth Revelation:** According to Urantia lore, two locations in Chicago, including the Sadlers, and one in Omaha, Nebraska, were considered. The second Chicago site is said to have been on the South Side. If these three locations are an indication, the middle of the  country was where the revelators headed. Los Angeles was not the cultural setting it has become, but it was headed in that direction. New York City also was a place of great cultural diversity with a constant flood of new immigrant (and none of this is stated pejoratively) but the somewhat faster  lifestyle of New York and the more international trends may have lacked the balancing braking that the  launch of the Revelation needed.

It would seem that the revelators sought the stability of the middle of the country.

**Location Choice of Chicago for the Fifth Revelation:** An urban setting was needed with enough  population, culture, and other societal infrastructure of numerous kinds that support and sustain the effort. Omaha seems somewhat mystifying, but Chicago made perfect sense:

• As the nineteenth century rushed forward, Chicago was rapidly growing into the second most influential city in the country (the “Second City”).

• Within the span of forty years, the city's population grew from slightly under 30,000 to over one  million by 1890. By the close of the nineteenth century, Chicago was the fifth largest city in the  world. Within fifty years of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, the population had tripled to over 3  million. *(Wikipedia)*

• While not possessing all of the outstanding qualities of New York to the same degree, Chicago had many similar accoutrements by the early twentieth century. In some ways it was the  archetypal American city of the time, both in good ways and bad. It was vigorous, ambitious,  and undaunted, even after being nearly wiped out in the Chicago Fire. It was the place to go to make money, reflecting the capitalism of the period; hence it was corrupt, growing out of  control, and sprawling. It spawned some of the most iconic millionaires as well as many innovative inventions and economic enterprises. It was filthy and poorly planned but already boasting the beginnings of great architecture, including the world’s first skyscraper, by the 1880s. Another interesting thing happened in the early 1880s: some of its “city leaders,” some  of them only solvent since a few years earlier, decided that they should have more civic pride, and they began building libraries, museums, an opera, playhouses, a symphony orchestra, and a multitude of educational institutions, including the University of Chicago, during the next  decade.

• Another important aspect of Chicago has always been its

location in terms of being a transportation hub. While a strategic position between the Great  Lakes and the navigable system of waterways  feeding into the Mississippi River might have  been the “why” behind Chicago’s rise, the  invention of the rail was certainly the “how.” At the height of passenger travel and rail-based commerce, Chicago is the single most  important hub for the United States—linking East to West and North to South.

During its growth during the nineteenth century, Chicago was actually the busiest port in the country, even surpassing New York City, despite being closed during winter. Today we all know it as an air hub, at one time the busiest in the world.

• The growth of culture in Chicago pushed it towards being a sufficiently cosmopolitan  incubator for the Urantia revelation; possibly the crowning event was the 1893 World’s Fair.  Run by Daniel Burnham, who also partnered in building the first skyscraper, Chicago “stole”  this Columbian Exposition from New York and Washington, D.C. and put together perhaps  the most outstanding event of the nineteenth century. Every state and virtually every country hosted a pavilion, and tens of millions from all over the world attended. Not only did  the Exposition showcase the inventions and innovations of the nineteenth century, many new ideas were created for it. For example, it was there that Tesla’s alternating current triumphed finally over Edison’s direct current. It was there Burnham began pushing for his city beautiful idea as he looked about the splendor of his “White City,” the color the buildings  were painted for the World’s Fair. This was also, incidentally, the inspiration for both L. Frank  Baum’s Emerald City and Walt Disney’s Epcot. (Curiously, the first three parts of *The Urantia  Book* were indited in 1934 *as* the second Chicago World’s Fair, “A Century of Progress,” was  being held.)

• Hardly incidental were many of the ancillary events going on during the 1893 Exposition,  most notably the first Parliament of World Religions, which was held in the built-for-the Exposition Art Institute. This momentous gathering occurred less than two decades before “first contact” of the revelators with the Sadlers.

• By the end of the nineteen century, Chicago was on its way to being a museum-rich city, not  the least of which were to be two important museums dealing with ancient cultures, the  Field Museum and the Oriental Institute.

• While the Sadlers may have been critical as individuals capable of galvanizing a group to  support the beginning of the Revelation, it is difficult to imagine how they could have been as successful without their networks of educational, medical, cultural, and social  organizations. Both Lena and William were strongly networked into many such institutions and social causes.

The first decade of the twentieth century not only began the anticipatory activities of the

Fifth Epochal Revelation, it was also a time when many federal and local laws were finally dealing with the issues that had been boiling throughout a century of industrialism (that well may  have been a major factor in the timing of the Revelation). One of these was planning cities  better and cleaning them up. Daniel Burnham became the world’s first city planner, in large  part because of his experience with the White City. In 1909 he first-authored *A Plan for  Chicago.* Interestingly, his concept for downtown was modeled on Swedenborg’s *The City of  Heaven* (Burnham was himself a Swedenborgian), though that vision was not fully adopted.  He also helped replan such cities as San Francisco, Cleveland, Manila, and much of the Mall in Washington, D.C., including the Lincoln Memorial and the statute therein.

**The Current Situation:** The Fellowship is at an inflection point. Several steps have occurred during the last several decades that  have led us to this point.

•The Brotherhood and Foundation split caused the purchase of a new headquarters at 529 Wrightwood in Chicago. The Brotherhood was renamed the Urantia Book Fellowship.

• John Hales retired as director of the Fellowship, and the Fellowship chose to sell its

headquarters and become a “virtual” organization.

• Paula Thompson became executive director and the virtual organization essentially became  headquartered in the Denver area in Paula’s home.

• Derek Samaras became Paula’s assistant, also living in the Denver area.

• Paula Thompson announced her retirement as of the end of 2021

The Fellowship has announced its search for a new director, creating a need to make the *best* decision for the future of the organization. That decision should be based on the factors that would best serve the future of the Fifth Epochal Revelation and not forced by an overly hasty decision.

**Recommendations of the Location Committee:**

**Premises:** Obviously, not all factors that contributed to Chicago being the city in which the Revelation began apply to the question that faces us in 2021; however, some premises can be assumed:

* Our organization will continue to headquarter in the United States, and considerations of moderation still argue for the center of the country. While electronic communication ameliorates some of the demands of location, the very fact that we are discussing this issue indicates the need to choose a propitious location.
* Our organization will continue to headquarter in the United States, and
* Ease of geographic access is an important priority. A transportation hub is highly advantageous.
* An outstanding cultural climate must support what we do. This includes educational institutions;  museums, and a broad, varied, and vital religious community, all of which Chicago possesses. In  fact, there is a practicing congregation of every religion in the world in Chicago making the  prospects of interaction with other religionists and cultures unsurpassed. Only New York City can rival Chicago in this regard. The committee has investigated Indianapolis, and south Florida, and considered Omaha and smaller cities in Colorado and considered them wanting in this sense.
* Among Urantia Book groups, the Urantia Foundation is most likely to be an organizational entity that will be stable over the next several decades, making Chicago the best place to be a visitable location for readers. Readers who want to see 533 will also visit a nearby Fellowship headquarters.  Being in the same city as the Foundation will help our exposure to readers who will visit.

**Recommendations:** The committee recommends the following:

A building is purchased in Chicago to become the new headquarters, in keeping with the original plan of  the revelators. This will be in the accessible central part of the country, in one of the most cultural,  ethnically diverse, and broadly religiously varied cities in the country. It will be near the Foundation and be a destination for readers.

Locations within the city that offer the flexibility to both house our offices and generate income from other tenants will allow us to cover most if not all of our overhead. Priority will be given to  buildings with the flexibility to generate cash flow and income.

The headquarters would be in a university area, possibly that of DePaul University, with a storefront that can be used to welcome new and curious visitors. Whether a reading room, an Internet café, a coffee  shop, or a visitors’ center—or all of these, a storefront allows us to experiment with other outreach ideas that can be tried with the purpose of exporting the successes to other locales.

A second, satellite location for Fellowship work would remain located in the Denver area, where there is some momentum of youth and young adults interested in spirituality and *The Urantia Book*.

Chicago and Denver are almost like the two foci of an ellipse within the continental United States.

The Location Committee is grateful for this opportunity to express its recommendations.

Respectfully,

Lara Amyx (Chair), David Kulieke, John Lange, Sue Seccombe, and Paula Thompson

**Discussion:**

David summarized the points made in the document. The committee has been functioning since 2017. They have looked at different advantages and disadvantages of different parts of the country. The history of Chicago being chosen by the Revelators was explored. Chicago is a transportation hub for air and railroad, as well as a major port, once the busiest in the country. It is growing rapidly. It’s in the middle of the country. Every major religion has a community in Chicago. The initial Parliament of World Religions was in Chicago, as was the second, on the 100th Anniversary of the first. It is rich in culture in a number of different ways.

Perhaps the Revelators took into consideration not just what it was when The UB was presented, but also what it was going to grow into.

Even if we have a headquarters location, we can continue taking advantage of what can be done online, maintaining employees in the Denver area.

Lara described the advantage of having a building open to the public that interacts with people in its neighborhood, in addition to what we do now which is much more global.

It would be a mixed-use building that generates revenue to at least cover expenses and maybe generate additional revenue.

It can have a coffee shop, wifi hotspot, etc. run by other company in the same building. It can be near a university, to maximize exposure to our target age range of young people. The Chicago location can create a success model to take on the road and replicate in other areas.

This proposal is not committing to a building, just to the Chicago area. There would also be a solid footprint in the Denver/Boulder area. The EC and GC would be involved in further steps.

**Comments**:

\*Expressions of appreciation for all of the hard work the committee has performed.

\*At least one Society has expressed opposition to owning a building and having to manage it, which would “diffuse our energies away from doing the work of the Revelation.” Rental of buildings can serve the purpose.

\*It is not an ideal location. There is not enough support in our community for the Chicago area. Better to have a bunch of satellites all over, including in other countries eventually.

\*Better to have multiple offices in many locations in the future, including internationally. We can help Society Officers and member see the value, and they can have input into choice of locations.

\*Important to look at young religious organizations, where they are located without huge financial liability. Cities have clusters of interests. Chicago is a huge cultural center. Look at our readership like a community of souls. We should be in a place inviting to new readers as well as current ones. Chicago would present a more coherent message to the world, so coordinating with the Foundation is important.

\*There is a tsunami of UB readers waiting to hit our planet—so many downloads and so much spiritual seeking on the internet; we need to be ready for a million readers in the near future.

\*Not sure a physical location has sufficient advantages over the current situation.

\*Accept this as a final report of the Location Committee, but don’t accept the recommendation.

\*Better to hire the new Executive Director before settling on a location.

\*We need to be more mobile rather than tied down to a fixed location.

\*There is no apparent demand that necessitates a location. There is not a drive that we are doing so much we need a location to get it done. No activity we are doing requires a location. We are not ready to be housed yet.

\*Not ready to commit a large sum of money before figuring out what’s really needed.

\*Recommendations go to the EC for a course of action, which might be conversations with Societies and other stakeholders.

\*Maybe we wouldn’t house our business activities or programs there. Dissemination is planting seeds and watering them. The social arm of the Revelation also needs to reinforce the hunger for truth which we have planted. Could be a mini-museum. Inside could be “the Urantia Book Experience,” with videos introducing The UB, including its birth. Then visitors could go to 533 and appreciate that building more. Wouldn’t require lots of staffing.

\*Resolution is about assuming we will have a location and where the locations should be. Separate out whether we want a property from the location decision. It’s a downstream task to decide to buy a location and do something with it.

\*Let’s have a need before we buy a building rather than buy a building and then find a need for it. Societies are feeling that they are not being considered in decisions like this. A building is superfluous to focusing on our mission on the website. Community should be at the Society level, not the Fellowship level. We need to have long discussions with societies before making serious decision about a building and/or location. People understand we want a monument, a stake in the ground, a “home,” but have to be focused on the bigger mission of disseminating the Revelation and not have our energy and finances stolen. Bringing the price of the book down would be a better use of finances. There are advantages to moving conferences around and paying the rental fees necessary at the time.

\*The Foundation was able only recently to make money on their building, by renting parts of it. For what we do now there is no reason we can’t just rent an office space, or rent a warehouse. If we want a “think tank,” a retreat center, where people stay onsite and study together, bringing readers together for specific purposes in a specific place, that would promote the need for a building. If we stand for premier scholarship of the Revelation, a building to facilitate that function would be a valid vision.

\*I have an aversion to big cities; I like smaller cities.

\*I Agree we should involve Societies before moving.

\*This is a recommendation. The EC would have to take this and decide next steps. Could include conversations with Societies. And the motion does not specify purchase or rent.

\*Important to market this idea to Societies before taking further steps. Grass roots movement is good, but some central points are necessary. Don’t see having a building or spreading the message as mutually exclusive. This is just a start.

\*We gave up the idea of a location when gave up the Wrightwood building in Chicago. Have we maximized our potential virtually?

\*Other institutions have buildings that are 150 years old. The idea of us having a 10-year-plan appeals. Stretch thinking to what we could have in 150 years. We could be a thriving university with 20,000 students. I like the idea of starting small and having satellites. We can think big and small at the same time.

**John Lange called the question and Tom Allen seconded it. It required a 2/3 vote. Twenty-eight people were present to vote; 2/3 would be 19. The vote was 21, so the proposal to call the question passed.**

**Vote for Location Ad Hoc Committee Motion:**

**Twenty-eight people were present for the vote. Fifteen voted in favor, which carries the motion with a 2/3 majority.**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

The EC will keep the GC updated on next steps, addressing the questions brought up today.

**12. Conference Committee Motion:**

**Subject: To Create a Conference Committee**

**Presented by: Cristina Seaborn Seconded by: Sally Annabella**

**Whereas** one of the best things the Fellowship does is conferences;

**Whereas** having continuity of knowledge on how to run a conference would be helpful; **Whereas** having a system, plan, and method for conference organization would aid in our work; Now therefore be it

**Resolved** that

1. For a trial period of 5 years a Conference Committee be created on a test basis for the  purpose of learning and sharing the best ways to organize small and larger gatherings and  virtual events.

2) The Committee will reach out to conference organizers throughout the movement to offer  assistance including a possible modest financial contribution.

3) The Committee will find and report the way this work can be done without being overly  bureaucratic or complicated.

4) The Committee will be mindful of the international nature of the Fellowship to ensure this  activity enriches participants and stakeholders across our diverse planet

5) The Committee considers itself a key resource in the Fellowship’s work to find and gather  readers.

And further that the Chair shall be Sally Annabella.

An additional number of other members up to 10 as the Chair may deem sensible shall be found among General Council members and readers-at-large.

The Executive Committee will receive and approve the list.

The Committee shall report to the EC and GC in the manner typical of ad hoc committees.

**This motion was tabled indefinitely after the following discussion and a revised version was presented and voted on.**

**Discussion:**

Cristina spoke in support of the motion, saying that supporting fellowship is what we do best. It seems strange that there is no standing Conference Committee to help a new Conference Chair when that person is chosen to head up a conference. This could be an ad hoc committee during this five-year period. A booklet could be prepared as part of the purpose.

Sally Annabella volunteered to be the Chair of the Committee.

Brent St. Denis pointed out that this is not a committee for organizing conferences, including international conferences. It is a resource base. He suggests the name Conference Resource Committee to distinguish it from an organizing committee, but is willing to accept the current title.

**Comments:**

\*Does it need to be a committee or just a working group to create a document to provide support for conference planners. Would it be better on Google Doc than as a printed booklet?

Cristina: This could be useful to regional and local groups who sponsor conferences or workshops.

\*A printed booklet and a Google Doc are not mutually exclusive. A TDA resolution passed six years ago offering support if it is requested. For years the idea has been proposed that there needs to be a group with experience as a resource.

\* If a Google Doc was created it would be available for anyone putting on a conference; a lot of people could contribute from their experience.

\*This would be especially helpful for smaller regional or local gatherings.

\*John Hales said that after each International Conference there is a booklet prepared at the end of the conference. New conference teams have never asked to look at those books. Each conference is clearly different. Event planning is a professional position. The office has always supported the logistics part of a conference.

\*Where are the books people put together after International Conferences? Could they become more available?

\* Whatever materials were in place from other conferences were not clearly available if they existed when one GC member helped sponsor an IC.

\*First step would be to gather up the documents from the past conferences. Attempts have been made to staff conference committees with people with past experience. The documents from other conferences were never gathered by the Fellowship and made available in one place. That would be a good first step for an ad hoc committee.

\*John Hales said the reports are in committee folders, like a program folder, etc.

\* People can go online and find ideas of how to run a conference. Some of the stuff is hands-on learning.

\*Paula Thompson said when Susan Cook was so interested in this and willing to take on committee work she created a budget template, helpful to conference chairs going forward. That is a good example of what can help future chairs. Very good thing for a committee like this to compile this kind of things. Lots of other details that would be helpful, like reminder that taxes on revenues need to be considered in the budget.

\*Can go on YouTube and find out how to do things. Could create an interactive exploration within the website, including videos of people explaining how to do things.

\*Could be program or project, rather than committee? Program Planning Team could present it.

\*Lack of continuity in conference planning puts lots of stress on the office each time a conference is organized. Having an experienced team ready to support the process would help the office be more effective.

\*Planning needs to begin two or three years ahead to find a site and there need to be Chairs for lots of areas. Lots of things are common to all conferences and need to be documented. It’s a good idea and former conference Chairs could be contacted.

\*Conference planners have sometimes not realized that a conference is a taxable event. Once $5,000 in taxes was paid personally by the conference Chair. In a later situation, at the 2017 Denver conference $10,000 in taxes were not planned for, which kept the conference from making a profit. This could have been foreseen and planned for, if past conference experience had been taken into consideration.

\*The Education Committee organization of Summer Study Session goes smoothly now because they have done it lots of times. Would like a printed version of recommendations, not just a Google Doc.

Cecelia Lampley suggested that we take a break and interested parties wordsmith this motion to be presented again after break.

**A motion to table this motion indefinitely was passed by unanimous consent.** Geoff asked people to send suggestions to Cristina and she prepared a Google Doc for people to help her refine a new version of the motion for after break.

After break the following motion was proposed:

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**Subject: Conference Resources Ad Hoc Committee**

**Presented by: Cristina Seaborn Seconded by: Cecelia Lampley**

**Whereas** one of the best things the Fellowship does is conferences;

**Whereas** having continuity of knowledge on how to run a conference would be helpful;

**Whereas** having a system, plan, and method for conference organization would aid in our work;

Now therefore be it

**Resolved** that;

1)  An Ad Hoc Conference Resources Committee be created on a trial basis for the purpose of

gathering and publishing the best ways to organize small and larger gatherings and virtual events.

2)    The Committee will reach out to conference organizers throughout the movement to offer assistance in the form of “shared best practices.”

* The Committee will find and report the way this work can be done.
* The Committee will be mindful of the international nature of the Fellowship to ensure this activity enriches participants and stakeholders across our diverse planet.
* The Committee shall consider itself a key resource in the Fellowship’s work to find and gather readers.

 3) The Conference Committee would serve as a support and resource for each new person and committee put in charge of a Fellowship International Conference or a regional conference.

 4) This committee’s first assignment is the task of creating in Google Workspace a “how to” for international, regional and virtual conferences. The committee could plan to use hyperlinked teaching tools on the website.

And further that the Chair shall be Sally Annabella. Sally Annabella shall be tasked to work with the Executive Committee to provide a recommendation to the General Council on how to effectively support future Fellowship gatherings.

The Committee shall report to the GC every quarter.

**Vote: Twenty-nine eligible voters were present.**

**Yes = 26 The motion passed with a Majority.**

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**13. Volunteer Coordinator Motion:**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Subject: Volunteer Coordination Position for the Urantia Book Fellowship**

**Presented by: Cristina Seaborn Seconded by: Bobbie Dreier**

**Whereas** Urantia Book readers are registering on our UBF website in areas where they would like to volunteer and it is reasonable to assume others are willing to help in some way but just need to be asked; and

**Wherea**s those who did not get elected to the GC in elections may want to volunteer; and

**Whereas** there is currently nobody creating reports of these volunteers from our website or other sources such as office contacts; and

**Whereas** the Volunteer Coordinator position could be volunteer or a paid position; and

**Whereas** the Fellowship does need help in many areas; and

**Whereas** those areas that need volunteers can be identified by polling Committee Chairs, GC members, the EC, the reader community, and the office; and

**Whereas** we have had a volunteer coordinator in the past, Andrea Barnes, who can be interviewed; and

**Wherea**s we have had the motion to create a volunteer committee in the past by Susan Cook, who can be interviewed; and

**Whereas** we can research in the minutes any other place a volunteer coordinator idea has occurred in meetings. Now therefore be it

**Resolved** that

1. To initiate the process of building the Fellowship’s volunteer coordination capacity a Volunteer Coordination Taskforce be created on a 3-year launch basis.
2. The Volunteer Coordination Taskforce would initially have at least three members and no more than seven. The first chair of such a taskforce shall be appointed at the first GC meeting after this summers’ TDA. The remaining members will be assembled by the Taskforce chair. The EC will receive and approve the list of Taskforce members.
3. Among the first duties of the Taskforce will be to assemble a preliminary list of volunteer jobs needing to be done, build a starter list of readers willing to volunteer and, most importantly, create a simple system for matching volunteers with jobs needing to be done, including a simple tracking system.
4. Upon the appointment of an Executive Director later this year, the Taskforce chair and the Executive Director will work in unison to achieve the desired goals.
5. After three years the Taskforce will either become a permanent Volunteer Coordination Committee or it shall be disbanded in favor of the Fellowship office taking over this function.

Albert Lassiter noted that #5 should be removed, as it would require a Constitutional Amendment, which could be passed at any time.

**By unanimous Consent, #5 was taken out of the motion.**

**Comments**:

\*The Education Committee has been given close to 200 names of potential volunteers, but with no useful information. None of this will have any impact without a database of information about the volunteers.

\*One member reported having volunteered for a committee and getting no response. After a month, she reached out again to them. The lack of response did not feel good.

\*This is a complicated position. Someone has to talk to volunteers to identify their specific interests and skill sets and then volunteers need to be matched to jobs. It should be a hired position.

\*Cristina’s name was proposed as the first chair. She declined because of being Publications Chair and working on the Social Action Committee and other commitments.

\*Paula Thompson was suggested as chair of the Taskforce. She declined as she will not be on the GC after July.

\*Bobbie Dreier was nominated as chair. She declined because she considers it such a huge and important job that is should be a paid position.

\*A number of others agreed that it should be a paid position.

\*Why are we asking for volunteers in the first place if tasks are not available to plug them into? We should have the tasks first, then ask for volunteers with skill sets to fulfill the tasks.

\*Volunteer Coordinator is one of the toughest positions in an organization. The person is not managing employees, so has to be extra respectful and diplomatic and has to have tasks for them to do. There are lots of ways to get a black eye for the organization and only a few ways to get it right. Put more thought into this and hire someone to do it. There are a lot more ways to get it wrong than right.

\*We had a volunteer coordinator. We put out a job description, got applicants, interviewed, and hired Andrea Barnes. Within a year she had to beg Committee Chairs for part of their budget to keep her job. The organization didn’t support it. We wouldn’t buy her the software she needed., for example. We did end up doing more harm than good with a person who has always been willing to be of service. A volunteer coordinator could do a lot for us, but would need organizational support. If we make it a paid position we need to be committed to it. We could even look for a professional volunteer coordinator.

\*When Andrea was Volunteer Coordinator, she did a fantastic job; however, when one Committee Chair asked for suggestions, of 180 people on the list, none had the skill set needed.

\*Many volunteers want to do the fun stuff; few want to do the tedious stuff.

\*The chair should be appointed at the Triennial GC meeting after the TDA. The Taskforce could just get it started and it could evolve into a paid position.

\*It may take a year to get this up and running well.

\*Sue Seccombe has reached out to Committee Chairs asking for volunteer tasks, with essentially no response.

\*Maybe it should be tabled until after the TDA. Sue Seccombe can keep reaching out to committees to discover tasks needing volunteers.

\*Checking boxes might have ambiguous meaning and doesn’t capture a volunteer’s skill level. Maybe we should ask for a list of skills, instead of “volunteer areas.”

\*The membership application doesn’t actually say “Are you willing to volunteer?” It just asks for areas of interest. Don’t think it’s a correct assumption that they are volunteering and being ignored.

\*Maybe people checking boxes when they join the website or become members may not think they are really volunteering rather than expressing things they are interested in. Some people check up to eight boxes. Step back and think about it differently. Connect it with onboarding members, part of an outreach packet when they first join.

\*The old form simply said, “Would you like to know more about volunteer activities?”

\* Major changes will be coming with the new Executive Director Position.

**Jena made a motion to table the motion and Lara seconded it.**

**Vote. 28 voters. 24 yes votes . No votes= 0. So the motion passed by unanimous consent.**

**Geoff noted that there will be a draft agenda to further consider at the next meeting.**

**14. New Business**

\*Sue Seccombe asked for people to check their @urantiabook.org email frequently. That is how she communicates with Committee Chairs to request volunteer tasks.

\*Geoff Theiss pointed out that this is his last full GC meeting as president. He stated, “This whole journey has been wonderful.”

He thanked his wife for her loving support that has made it possible for him to devote so much time to his role. He shared the good news that they are expecting twin daughters, due, ironically, on Labor Day.

He also thanked Paula for all of her support and patience, saying “She is the backbone of this organization.”

He further expressed appreciation for all of the GC members who are ending their terms this summer. Specifically he honored Michael Challis as his “president mentor,” and Larry Bowman as “stalwart in his humor and preparedness, the glue that keeps us together.”

He recommended that everyone join in the farewell to GC members who are leaving (along with welcome to new GC members) at the Virtual Summer Study Session July 24, from 2-4 p.m. CST.

Outgoing counselors are: Katharina Becker, Dan Bredemeyer, Larry Bowman, Michael Challis, Jack Holloway, Sean Privitera, Pablo Segovia, and Paula Thompson.

Those who need to reapply for being on the GC are: Sally Annabella, John Hales, David Kulieke, Diane Labrecque, Karen Larsen, Albert Lassiter, Jena Lassiter, Al Lockett, Toni Oyeyemi, Michael Pierre, Brent St. Denis, and Sue Seccombe

Bobbie Dreier said, “As perhaps the most senior person here, I want to say it has been such an extraordinary experience to have you as president.” She said she has served with many presidents over the years, including her husband. “To watch you do it with a baby in your lap and never miss a beat was very impressive. I have appreciated you very much!”

Extended applause and comments in agreement filled the virtual room!

**The president adjourned the meeting at 5:56 PST**

Submitted by Jill Strunk, Fellowship secretary.

Thanks to Albert Lassiter for his assistance in offering his “stream of consciousness” notes of the entire meeting.