

**EC/Society Conclave
of The Urantia Book Fellowship
May 8, 2021**

Approved Minutes

President Geoffrey Theiss called the meeting to order on Zoom at 11:06 a.m. PDT. Secretary General Larry Bowman acted as Secretary of the Conclave.

Present:

Executive Committee: Lara Amyx (Agondonter), Larry Bowman (Grand Canyon), Jena Lasiter (Inland Northwest), Brent St. Denis, Stephen Sawyer, David Schlundt, Jill Strunk (RMSF), Geoff Theiss (UBLA)

Other society representatives:

John Hales, Ken Keyser, David Kulieke (First Society)
Diane Bishop and Phil Calabrese (UBLA)
Ted Blaney and Donna Huy (Orvonton)
Janet Kratzat and John Schlundt (Fort Wayne)
Douglas Burns and Michelle Klimesh (Golden Gate)
Paula Thompson (RMSF)
Lila Dogim and Harry Rainbow (Greater New York)
Beth Wenger (Grand Canyon)
Bob Arkens, Vicki Arkens, and Kurt Cira (Wisconsin)
Dan Amyx (Agondonter)
Thomas Orjala (Inland Northwest)
Duane Johnson (Heart of America)

Twelve societies represented

Later, John Hay of RMSF attended for a brief period. And late in the meeting, Debbie Bartman of Vancouver Island Peoples' Society joined.

Opening reading or prayer: Geoff Theiss

84:6 Partnership of man and woman

15:11 Deliberative assembly

followed by a brief prayer

Welcome and overview of the meeting:

Geoff asked why Urantia Book Fellowship only interacts with its constituent societies every three years. This meeting is an experiment.

Brief personal introductions:

Geoff asked everyone to indicate what they last prayed for.

Society introductions:

Paula Thompson (Rocky Mountain Spiritual Fellowship)

Founded 1980. As far as they know, they were the first society to do public outreach of the Urantia Book. Atheists had a booth with a sign that said, "God is nowhere." Paula read it back to them as "God is now here" and said she completely agreed; they were not happy with her. RMSF is supporting David Kantor's upcoming film on history of Christianity leading up to the coming of the Urantia Book.

Larry Bowman (Grand Canyon Urantia Book Society)

Founded 1990, first society to be installed under new name, Urantia Book Fellowship. Major service project is cleanup of a one-mile stretch of an interstate highway. Mostly virtual the past year, anticipates upcoming in-person get-togethers. Membership consists mostly of older people, not attracting enough younger members.

Thomas Orjala (Inland Northwest Urantia Society)

Founded fall 2015, newest society. Thomas and Jena and Albert Einstein Lassiter are involved in the Fellowship's Stepping Stones project.

Thomas is glad we're meeting today, hopes for more such meetings. "Fellowship should give societies work to do."

David Kulieke (First Society)

Founded 1956, successor to Forum, which started on Feb. 11, 1923, and led to development of the Urantia Papers. Sponsors two study groups, two seminars a year, Jesus' birthday celebration at 533 that started in 1935, and joint Christmas celebration with Urantia Foundation and Greater Lake Michigan Urantia Association. Supports online publication, *Pervaded Space*. Supports a sister study group in the Philippines and hopes to do the same with a group in Africa. Created Society Conclave concept in 1981.

John Schlundt (Fort Wayne Urantia Society)

Founded 1969, primary activity presently is study group that has grown somewhat thanks to Zoom.

Diane Bishop (UBLA—Urantia Book Los Angeles Society)

Formerly FUSLA, First Urantia Society of Los Angeles. Dates from 1957. Using software to find inactive members. Quarterly gatherings now on Zoom but hope to return to in-present as well. Upcoming session is May 22 with Guy Perron of Belgium. Going with media to attract younger readers but would need help with that. Recently had a virtual dinner; Noah Theiss (Geoff's toddler) attended.

Michelle Klimesh (Golden Gate Circle for Students of the Urantia Book)

Dates from 1976. Now drawing membership from beyond Bay Area: Nevada and Oregon. Sponsors retreats and women's gatherings. Overhauled constitution three years ago. Celebrated New Year's and online worship. Sponsored the flag that flew over Jerusalem in summer 1993 celebrating Jesus' 2000th birthday.

Duane Johnson (Heart of America Urantia Society)

In process of being reactivated. Online sessions with guest speakers.

Bob Arkens (First Wisconsin Society for Readers of the Urantia Book)

Founded 1992(?). Members are spread all over Wisconsin, making it hard to get together physically. Recently sponsored a conference in Madison. Sponsored children's program. Funded Alice Wood's outreach program at Green Bay University. Encouraging people to join society on Zoom.

Lara Amyx (Agondonter Boot Camp Society)

Founded April 2015, outgrowth of readers in Florida sponsoring regional conferences. Continues to sponsor an annual regional.

Lila Dogim (USGNY—Urantia Society of Greater New York)

Dates from 1988, spinoff from Connecticut Society. Five meetings a year that start with social, worship, followed by program, then a business meeting. Radio show with interviews of long-time readers. Lots of technical work, thanks to Barry Clark and Richard Daunt, who also help out with Fellowship website. Sponsored Russian, Korean, and Turkish translations. Willing to help Fellowship with projects.

Ted Blaney (Orvonton Urantia Society)

Founded 1961, outgrowth of study group on Chicago's Near North Side. Helped revitalize Area Coordinator program. Have family outings at Blaneys' farm in Kentucky. Now a wholly virtual society headquartered in Indiana.

TDA preparation:

For the first time in its history, Triennial Delegate Assembly will meet virtually this year on **July 17-18**.

The 60-day deadline for societies to elect their delegates is **May 18**. Notify Jill Strunk, UBF Secretary: jill.strunk@urantiabook.org

Ken Keyser says to use scanning to forward the form to each person required, and then send to Jill.

Jena Lassiter said IT team is working on the logistics of the form.

Videos of up to 30 General Council candidates will be uploaded on UBF website. These must be completed by June 30. Geoff wondered if this deadline is too late. They will amount to about four hours of viewing.

Kurt Cira asked who has access to these videos. His society would like to review them to inform their delegates.

Jena mentioned the online application form for GC service. Lila wants to make sure delegates can review the applications.

Geoff will send out weekly reminders to societies informing them of updated videos of candidates.

Once the TDA delegates are known, they can work out the procedures for running the Zoom meeting.

Geoff asked Bob Arkens if he'd be willing to provide guidance to TDA for rules of procedures. Bob agreed to act as consultant. He will not be attending TDA this year.

Lara mentioned REDcap, which Vice President David Schlundt uses for closed ballot voting on Zoom for General Council; but David is not attending TDA, so they will have to figure out a way on how to vote closed ballot.

Zoom accounts for Societies:

UBF approved the purchasing of Zoom accounts for those societies who, on a voluntary basis, want this. Geoff asked for an indication of what societies are interested in having a free one-year Zoom account through the Fellowship: Inland Northwest, ABC (Florida), First Society, RMSF.

Phil Calabrese raised the question about storage problems. Recordings should be available on the cloud. Geoff said YouTube has storage space, and UBF has a YouTube page.

Society discussion topics:

Several societies had submitted a list of topics to be discussed. Geoff started to go through the list submitted by Golden Gate, but Ken suggested instead that Geoff take just the first item from each society. Due to time constraints, Geoff did not get to all societies.

Expansion of society model for international (submitted by Golden Gate):

Diane Bishop, Doug Burns, Lila Dogim

Rebrand these EC/Society Conclave meetings (submitted by First Society):

David Kulieke, Harry Rainbow

Improve communications between societies and Fellowship (submitted by Inland Northwest):

Geoff will declare this a work in progress.

Our readiness on handling publicity about ourselves (submitted by UBLA):

Jena explained the Stepping Stones project.

Diane Bishop, Kurt Cira, Phil Calabrese, Thomas Orjala, Beth Wenger, Duane Johnson

Future of societies:

David Schlundt will share the video of Organizational Guidance Committee recommendations with Society Officers.

Geoff will engage with societies who submitted agenda items that weren't covered.

Meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m. PDT

After adjournment, Geoff and a few others continued to meet for a few minutes longer.

There was some sentiment for more frequent meetings among societies.

Regarding UBLA's concerns about "being ready" to meet the press when adverse publicity regarding the Urantia Book occurs, Ken mentioned the joint training session that the Fellowship, Foundation, and Urantia Association International sponsored in about 2012 on dealing with the press.

Submitted by: Larry Bowman, Secretary General

Approved by Executive Committee June 17, 2021