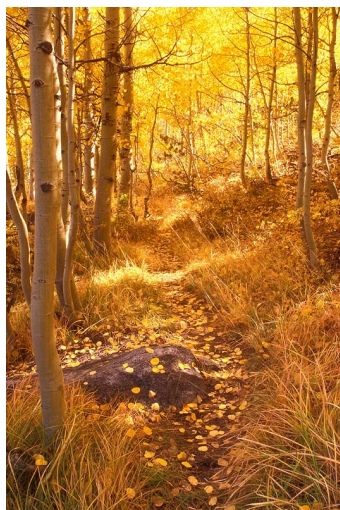




# CURING BLINDNESS IN ETHIOPIA

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By Mo Siegel, president, Urantia Foundation, Colorado, United States

For the past two years I've been blessed with the opportunity of assisting Dr. Geoff Tabin, cofounder of the Himalayan Cataract Project, as he cured cataract blindness in Ethiopia. During the last week of August 2017, our small surgical team of three experienced and three resident doctors performed 1100 cataract surgeries on blind men, women, and children. With that many surgeries being performed in such a short span of time, it felt like an assembly line delivering light to those lost in darkness. When you see the despair caused by blindness, you can easily understand why the merciful soul of Jesus felt compelled to cure the blind. It took several weeks after returning to the United States for me to

go a day without thinking about the experience, tearing up, or dreaming of those souls who found relief from Dr. Geoff's scalpel.

This year we worked in a small eye clinic in a remote town in southern Ethiopia. The clinic had two "hole in the floor" toilets without running water and one old AC unit that didn't function. Electricity generally worked but would frequently shut down during surgery. From seven thirty in the morning to eight thirty at night, the blind patients, often the poorest of the poor, streamed in, busload after busload. For me, it was an endurance test that I could only pass when I remembered Jesus' words, "What you do for the least of my fellows you do to me also." From my pampered American perspective I frequently felt overwhelmed



Mo Siegel

by germs, suffering, and the seemingly endless waiting room of patients. Intertwined among the wafting unfamiliar smells of Ethiopia came moments of joy, medical success, and hopefulness. One look at Geoff, eyes steady on the microscope, and you felt humbled by his selfless and tireless determination to end unnecessary blindness. From the viewpoint of the patients and their families, they must have felt love, care, and the total transformation of their lives.

Imagine being completely blind before surgery on Monday, and after your bandages are removed Tuesday morning, you have near-perfect eyesight again. In an instant a blind person goes from helplessness to self-sufficiency. Despair, coupled with deep depression, turns into promise for





Dr. Geoff Tabin

the future. No longer does the blind person suffer the fate of being perceived by his or her family as “a mouth with no hands,” nor will the blind child endure the taunts of other children.

Dr. Geoff's tenacity is a great lesson in life. Two decades ago Geoff was on the first climbing team to successfully summit the east face of Mount Everest, a route considered unclimbable. Today Geoff attacks blindness like he attacked the sheer ice and rock walls of the east face. I had the pleasure of doing the “runner” job in the operating room working for Geoff and his two highly skilled

nurses. I wore my Fitbit and clocked 12,000 steps a day putting on bandages, moving patients, getting supplies, and being the nonsterile hands for the operating team. Geoff worked tirelessly, often going five hours without eating, drinking, or going to the bathroom. His average operation took about eight minutes and resulted in a success rate of over 99%. Those who didn't have success had other eye complications. He's like a dog with a bone in his mouth. Nothing blocks his relentless drive to cure the blind. When the electricity goes out, he operates with a headlamp. When food comes at lunch, he's the last to eat. When the clock strikes 8:00 p.m. and the final few patients are ready to be operated on, instead of quickly finishing, Geoff invites the resident doctors to watch so he can teach them.

Over the last twenty-one years the Himalayan Cataract Project (HCP) doctors have operated on over one hundred fifty thousand blind people. Even more extraordinary is the fact that the doctors trained by HCP



*The Kingdom's First Hospital by Russ Docken*

have cured over three million blind people. Boundless determination, medical excellence, and a grand

vision of curing unnecessary blindness drive this selfless team.

**Three golden Urantia Book lessons I experienced in Ethiopia**

1. I was born and raised on Colorado ranches. Because of the fortuitous blend of genetics and good luck, my childhood memories were blue skies and towering peaks. But for the grace of God I could have been born blind in Ethiopia, or even worse, trapped in the spiritually blind existentialist philosophy that plagued my early teenage years. Gratitude floods my being. Our heavenly Father gave me the most blessed life I could have ever hoped for and more than I deserve. Why me? I have no idea, but I'm eternally grateful. As my friend T.A. Barron says, “To





be wholly alive is to be grateful—for every breath we take, every song we sing, every person we love, and every day we discover.”

2. At the end of Part II of *The Urantia Book*, a Mighty Messenger writes: “Love is the desire to do good to others.” 56:10.21 (648.4) This sentence has challenged and inspired me for decades. I’ve spent a lifetime working in institutions where the executives or board members do good for others. During the nine years I served on a hospital board, we built a cancer center and did good for others. It was needed and valuable executive work. But the nurses working on the floor of the cancer center actually touched patients’ lives by cleaning their beds, holding their hands, checking their meds, listening to them, and doing a myriad of necessary tasks to care for them. They were the feet on the ground doing good to others. For three months Jesus comforted patients in the tented hospital at Bethsaida. Oh, what a lesson here! It did my soul good to touch the faces of hundreds



of blind people, to hold them, put on their bandages, cheer them, and to actually do good to them.

To live fully means to become free from the self by following the Spirit of Truth into avenues of love and service. “Man’s great universe adventure consists in the transit of his mortal mind from the stability of mechanical statics to the divinity of spiritual dynamics.” 118:8.11 (1303.1) Love is a verb; it acts dynamically and thus satisfies the will of God. When the end of our days comes, having given all we have to others, we’ll depart this world without regret for what could have been and



will leave with joy because of what was! My prayer for you and me is that we remember this lesson on a daily basis and do what Mother Teresa said: “Give until it hurts.” Selflessness and service are true freedom and also a lot of fun!

3. All through the days of surgery, I kept asking myself if I was a halfhearted believer in the *Urantia Revelation’s* teachings. Do I have the drive, commitment, dedicated time, and courage to help cure spiritual blindness like this team of doctors devoted to curing physical blindness? After all, what’s a worse fate: not physically seeing your loved ones—or living a life without



Jennifer Siegel

seeing God, having a vision of the mansion worlds, and trusting in a friendly universe? Consider these numbers. There are thirty-six million needlessly blind cataract patients in the world. But there are at least two billion spiritually blind souls in the world. What would the world become if fifty, a hundred, or maybe a thousand *Urantia Book* believers became as dogged about curing spiritual blindness as Dr. Tabin and team are about curing physical blindness?

Since returning home I’ve doubled down on my commitment to living and sharing the teachings in *The Urantia Book*. This book is “God-sent,” literally. These teachings cure spiritual

blindness. Knowing God and loving others is the pearl of great price that I want for you and me! Sharing the good news from *The Urantia Book* is salvation for this world. A mighty and great miracle has descended upon our lives. For, by some stroke of fate, you and I were blessed to discover this revelation in its early days.

If there were one message I could leave with you, it’s that you envision the Thought Adjuster in others and tirelessly act upon that knowledge.



# NOTEWORTHY DECISIONS FROM THE OCTOBER 2017 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING



By Judy Van Cleave, secretary, Urantia Foundation, Idaho, United States

## Overview

Q3 2017 was a good quarter for Urantia Foundation. There has been plenty of work to do and a steady stream of visitors who came and went as summer passed into fall. Most importantly, at the beginning of September Tamara Strumfeld became the new executive director of Urantia Foundation. It is thrilling and a blessing to witness the next generation of leadership taking charge!

During the next year Tamara and the board will spend quality time thinking about the organization of the future. We have stepped into the bold new world of virtual workspaces where most of our team members work from their homes across the world. Even with a virtual work force, succession planning is at the top of our agenda. Jesus said to pray for workers so we are praying and scouting. If you have underutilized talents and want to volunteer, please send us your resume and what you would like to do. The Foundation needs help!

Sometime in late spring of 2018, Joanne and John Strobel will move back to Georgia. She will continue working remotely for the Foundation. Replacing Joanne will be difficult, since she wears many hats including building management, executive assistant to the president and board, UBIS coordination, project management, and seminar/meeting coordination. We are all replaceable, but that theory will be tested when Joanne leaves 533.



Joanne Strobel

A reader of *The Urantia Book* is needed to fill this position. If you are looking for a job and have a high level of executive assistant and project management experience, please send inquiries and your resume to Joanne at [joanne@urantia.org](mailto:joanne@urantia.org). This job is Chicago-based, and for the right person, it presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to serve at the birthplace of the revelation and get paid to do it!



Henk Mylanus

## In Appreciation of Henk Mylanus

With deep respect and appreciation for a job well done, a reception to honor the retirement of Trustee Henk Mylanus was held during the October board meeting. Henk has served the Foundation as our European sales manager and trustee. He will continue as the sales manager in Europe and will serve in the role of trustee emeritus. Henk, thank you for your many years of love and dedicated service. We have been honored to serve side by side with you!

## Community Relations

The Urantia Book community continues to exhibit good will, peace, cooperation, and understanding. In keeping with the increasing good will between organizations, we have budgeted money to sponsor the UAI conferences in Amsterdam and Colombia in 2018. We have also budgeted outreach funds to share expenses with readers/organizations attending book fairs, outreach events, and the

Parliament of World Religions.

## Books

2017 year-to-date physical book sales are slightly down while Internet downloads are up 43%. This might be the precursor to a future where expanding digital downloads dramatically outpace bookstore sales. The good news is that either way, *The Urantia Book* is getting into the world.

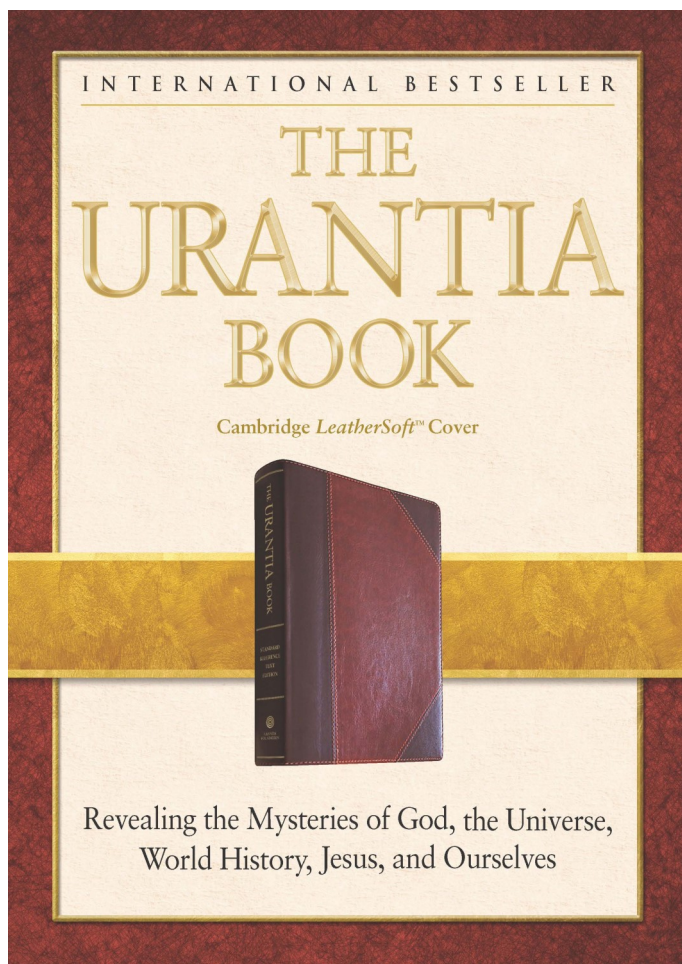
## Index of *The Urantia Book*

The index project that began many decades ago is finally finished! The first edition of the index will be uploaded to [urantia.org](http://urantia.org) soon and will link to the online text. An enhanced e-book is also being planned which, in addition to the index linked to the text file of the book, will include a pronunciation guide, a glossary of terms, and a Urantia history timeline.

A printed version of the index is being discussed now. Would you be interested in buying a stand-alone index separate from the book itself? What about a Urantia Book which is complete with an index at the back?

## The New LeatherSoft™ Cambridge Edition of *The Urantia Book*

The new LeatherSoft™ Cambridge edition of *The Urantia Book* is now available. This beautiful book feels so classy and is easy to carry. It's the perfect addition to your Urantia Book collection and will make the



The New LeatherSoft™ Cambridge Edition of *The Urantia Book*

perfect gift for family and friends. See:

<https://urantia.org/news/2017-12/new-cambridge-edition-available-now>.

#### Translations and Revisions

The October 2017 board meeting was a significant milestone because five members of the Spanish revision team met at 533 simultaneously with the expanded board. [Click here to read more](#). The Spanish revision has been underway since 2011, and we expect its completion in 2020. With over 154,000 Spanish books in distribution, it's vitally important that the Spanish translation is true to the English text and beautiful in language. And as with all translations, refinement and improvement over time will produce the best translation.



Carmelo Martínez, Anibal Pacheco, Olga López, Víctor García-Bory, Raúl Pujol

We are deeply indebted to the Spanish Revision Team—Carmelo Martínez, Spain; Anibal Pacheco, Chile; Olga López, Spain; Víctor García-Bory, Mexico and NYC; and Raúl Pujol, Puerto Rico and Florida. Thank you for the thousands of volunteer hours you have spent improving the current translation. A giant thanks also goes to Urantia Foundation's Translation Committee, volunteer consulting reader groups, and the donations that have made this project possible.

#### Donations

Year to date, unrestricted donations in 2017 are slightly above 2016. With the upcoming winter match fundraiser, we hope to raise enough donations to cover expenses for 2017. Our investments, while conservatively managed, have had a nice increase due to a positive stock market. While we intend not to dip into the investment accounts, it is encouraging to see those investments growing to protect us from economic downturns and for the benefit of future generations.

#### Revelation Bridge Endowment Fund

For the last few years we have been talking about creating a new restricted endowment fund titled *Revelation Bridge Endowment Fund*. The fund is intended to secure the financial security of the Urantia Revelation for the next generation. The plan for the fund is to preserve its principal and appreciation until the time when it is needed. Providing for the growth and stability of Urantia Foundation will help prepare it to secure the revelation in the future.

Now for the good news: In the last year, two estates were settled and Urantia Foundation was generously bequeathed \$395,000. Additionally, Richard Keeler, Urantia Foundation's longest serving trustee and major contributor to the Foundation's work, has decided to put the money that he has been investing for the Foundation into the new Revelation Bridge Endowment Fund. Combining Richard's most generous gift with the two estate settlements brings

the seed capital in the Revelation Bridge to over \$1,000,000. Our goal is to build the fund to \$25,000,000. We should all feel good about passing that inheritance onto future generations of believers.

If you are thinking about putting Urantia Foundation in your will, please do so! If you want your donations designated for future generations, specify that your estate gift be placed into the Revelation Bridge Endowment Fund.

### Operating Expenses

Year to date operating expenses are \$539,498 in 2017 compared to \$527,108 in 2016. We are 3% above a year ago but 10% below budget. We are anticipating ending 2017 with operating expenses 3.5% above 2016 but 6% below budget.

### Succession Planning

For the last number of years we have talked about the millennial generation inheriting *The Urantia Book*. For whatever reasons, the Urantia movement only attracted a small number of Gen Xers in North America. Once we realized that we had lost a generation, we started focusing on the millennial generation. Hopefully we will be more effective in attracting them than we were with Gen X. Interestingly enough, demographers are now talking about Gen Z. For those in the North American Urantia movement, within the next ten years, Gen Z will become the largest potential source of new readers and leaders.

It's also worth noting some of the most recent trends in religion with North American youth. It will be interesting to see if some of the same secular trends that have negatively affected Europe continue to grow in North America. Will Gen Z accelerate or reverse the negative religious trends of the millennial generation?

Here is a link to a recent Pew study:  
<http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/generational-cohort/>.

In one of the charts in the above link you will see Gen Z's interest in the wonders of the universe. Young people are attracted to that subject, and that is good for us. We have the **only** religious book in the world that explains what our scientists and astronomers are seeing through Hubble. We have the **only** religious book in the world that explains the wonders of the universe!

### Major Actions and Decisions

- With great pleasure we announce that Mark Hutchings and Minoo Claire were elected as associate trustees. Mark lives in Las Vegas where he practices law. Minoo Claire lives in Switzerland, where she has an active career as a graphic designer. Both Mark and Minoo Claire have distinct and valuable skills to accomplish the mission of seeding *The Urantia Book* and its teachings throughout the world. Beyond their skills, both are dedicated and loving readers of the book. Please join the board in welcoming them to the team.



Mark Hutchings

- The board reviewed the reports of the president and the executive director, and the committee reports from Book, Education, Finance, Fundraising, Governance and Nominating, and Translation Committees.
- The board voted that when the Translation Committee approves a new revision, and when it is approved by the board, this revision will be given a new text identification number (TIN). It will also be made available in electronic form as an e-book for sale and as a free download at [urantia.org](http://urantia.org). The existing inventory of physical books will continue to be sold until the stock is depleted. The ramifications of this decision are important to the translators and revisers. Oftentimes we have slow-moving and expensive inventories, and if a revision is not introduced until all the old books are sold, it could be years before the revision sees the light of day. With this new policy, revisions like the Russian completed by Michael Hanian will be published on the web before the revised books are printed. Considering that web downloads are greater than physical books sold, this



Minoo Claire

decision brings the new revision to readers in a timely manner.

- The board voted to form a new and permanent (standing) Outreach Committee contingent upon the development and approval of its charter by the trustees. While outreach activities are intrinsic to our day-to-day activities, we have never had a formal committee solely focused on this important effort. We envision this committee working with individuals and organizations like the Urantia Book Fellowship and Urantia Association International (UAI) to achieve outreach goals.
- The trustees accepted the proposal of Chris Wood, president of UAI, to hold a joint meeting of representatives of both organizations to discuss increased cooperation to achieve mutually agreed-upon service goals.
- The board passed the 2018 budget.

**We have the only religious book in the world that explains the wonders of the universe!**

# THE SPANISH REVISION TEAM VISITS URANTIA FOUNDATION



*By Marilynn Kulieke, vice president, Urantia Foundation, Illinois, United States*

After years of planning, the Expanded Board of Trustees and staff had the privilege of welcoming the members of the Spanish Revision team to Urantia Foundation headquarters on Thursday, October 19, 2017. The team is comprised of Víctor García-Bory, associate trustee and project coordinator Olga López from Spain, Carmelo Martínez from Spain, Anibal Pacheco from Chile, and Raúl Pujol from Puerto Rico and Florida. The meeting was an unqualified success as participants left with a greater understanding of each other and our shared mission to spread the Urantia Revelation throughout the Spanish-speaking world.

On Thursday night, our first time meeting together with the revision team, we shared a special dinner, introduced team members, heard stories about travel adventures (we almost lost Carmelo in travel mishaps!), and a brief presentation

about Urantia Foundation's translation program. After our dinner of Italian food, the team personally greeted each other for only the second time since 2011 when the team began its work.

Our formal meeting with the revision team began on Friday morning. After what we hoped was a good night's sleep for team members who arrived from three different time zones, the team gave a presentation about the hows and whys of the Spanish revision. But more than facts about the revision, we learned about the unity of the team, their love and respect for each other, and their sincere desire to create a more readable, fluent, and accurate Spanish translation. The team met together during the afternoon, discussing topics related to the revised translation. The day ended with a dinner of Mediterranean specialties to celebrate Trustee Henk Mylanus's retirement.

On Saturday morning we again had the opportunity to meet with the revision team. This time the team gave an informative presentation. Víctor García-Bory led the team in a coordinated presentation which included each team member. The theme of the morning was planning for the future launch of the revised Spanish translation. We had impassioned discussions about the crucial need to successfully launch a high-quality Spanish translation throughout the world.

The team members continued their work together on Saturday afternoon. But what would a trip to Chicago be without some sightseeing? On this beautiful autumn day in October, the revision team traveled up and down the Chicago River on one of Chicago's most popular attractions, the Chicago Architecture Foundation's boat tour. After a delicious dinner at a Chinese restaurant with expanded board members, our guests ended their evening at a jazz club. With hugs and tears we said our goodbyes with hopes that we would meet again with this extraordinary group of individuals.

Although we may not have treated our guests to an American culinary experience, the unselfish service that was so evident is reflected in Jesus' advice in his farewell discourse to the disciples:

“That you love one another even as I have loved you. And by this will all men know that you are my disciples if you thus love one another.” 180:1.1 (1944.4) “If you would share the Master's joy, you must share his love. And to share his love means that you have shared his service.” 180:1 5 (1945.2)



**4th row:** Richard Jernigan, Joanne Strobel, Guy Perron, Henk Mylanus, Gard Jameson

**3rd row:** Judy Van Cleave, Ralph Zehr, Claire Mylanus, Lu Schanfarber, Marta Elders, Jay Peregrine

**2nd row:** Olga López, Sherry Layton, Raúl Pujol

**1st row:** Carmelo Martínez, Anibal Pacheco, Víctor García-Bory, Marilynn Kulieke, Betty Zehr, Tamara Strumfeld

# 2017 YEAR-END MATCH



By the Trustees of Urantia Foundation

Urantia Foundation needs your help today!

**Several generous donors will contribute \$220,000 if we can raise the same amount by December 31.** Your matching gift will make it possible to cover the remaining 2017 operating expenses and to continue in 2018 the work of seeding *The Urantia Book* and its teachings globally.

As a friend of Urantia Foundation, we are so grateful for your generosity

in helping to further the dissemination of *The Urantia Book*. Your support enables the spiritually searching to discover and experience the profound light of the living truth that we have all come to embrace. Nothing is more potent than these teachings to open the eyes of the spiritually blind while helping the world's people transition from our current secular age into a more cooperative era of spirituality.

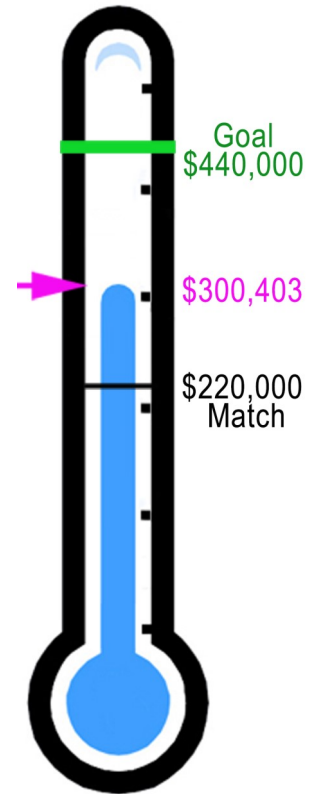
We are told that, "In this gigantic struggle between the secular and the spiritual, the religion of Jesus will eventually triumph." 195:4.5

(2075.3) Until then, however, there remains much work to be done.

Having experienced the benefit of these teachings, will you please continue working with us to provide others with this same truth? If so, your donations to Urantia Foundation make it possible to translate *The Urantia Book* into many languages, print and globally distribute them, promote study groups, foster outreach endeavors, manage [urantia.org](http://urantia.org), operate the Urantia Book Internet School, maintain the historic headquarters in Chicago, and conduct educational seminars.

Friends, now is the time to act and help shine the beautiful light of these teachings to all the world! Please join with us in this endeavor and make your matching gift today.

[Click here to donate.](#)



With you in service,

Gard Jameson, Richard Keeler, Marilyn Kulieke, Georges Michelson-Dupont, Henk Mylanus (emeritus), Mo Siegel, Judy Van Cleave

## SENDING DONATIONS TO URANTIA FOUNDATION



By John Strobel, Illinois, United States

Have you ever donated to a charity only to find out later that the CEO is making millions, or they are spending a huge percentage on "marketing"? You may feel like your money was being wasted or spent on something other than the charity's mission. Well, rest

assured that your money donated to Urantia Foundation is wisely spent to spread *The Urantia Book* and its teachings around the world.

Hi, I'm John Strobel, and I'm sure you know my wife Joanne, who has been serving the Urantia Revelation for six years here in Chicago. Although I only

pitch in where needed at 533, I have spent enough time there to know that every dollar donated is greatly appreciated, budgeted judiciously, and frugally managed. When discussing expenditures (whether it is buying new equipment or just replenishing the coffee supply), I have often heard staff admonishing one



another to remember that this is donors' money being spent. As a monthly donor myself, it has always made me feel good that my time and financial contributions are really respected.

Today, when many of us are reviewing our charitable contributions, you may be confident that your loving gifts to Urantia Foundation are treasured, valued, and wisely administered.



Joanne and John Strobel

# A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

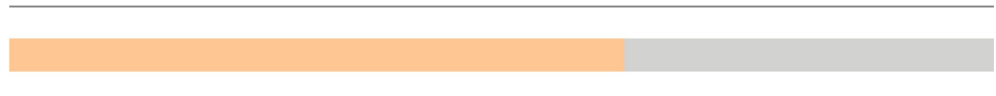


By Georges Michelson-Dupont, Trustee, Manager of Translations, Urantia Foundation, Recloses, France

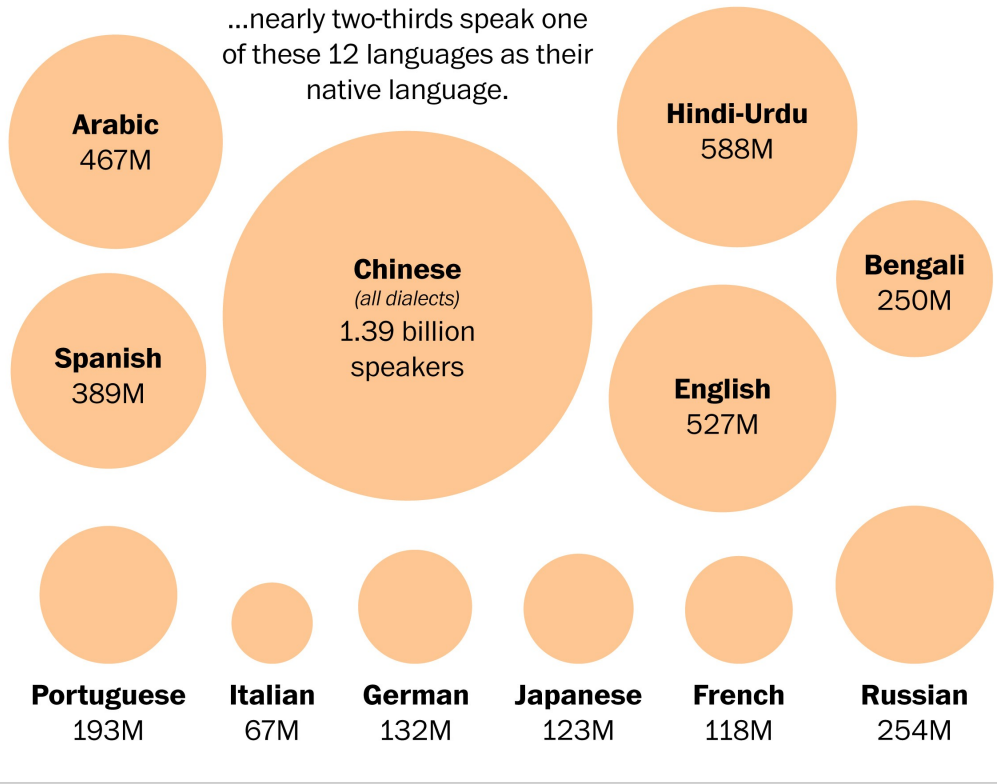
Conducting a predictive forecast of the major languages to be spoken in the next eighty years will help Urantia Foundation understand the major translating challenges that face us. We need to ask: What will be the most-spoken languages on Urantia by the year 2100, and by how many people?

These answers will also help our organizations prepare for the challenges of education and dissemination.

Of the **7.2 billion people** on Earth...



...nearly two-thirds speak one of these 12 languages as their native language.



Sources: Ulrich Ammon, University of Düsseldorf, Population Reference Bureau  
 Note: Totals for languages include bilingual speakers.  
 THE WASHINGTON POST

We need to combine statistical probabilities regarding the possible evolution of world populations starting at 1950 and projected to 2100 (See the United Nations web site at: <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Graphs/Probabilistic/POP/TOT/>) with linguistic probabilities between 1950 and 2100.

For our study, we shall retain the median hypothesis used by analysts of the United Nations.

With the development of commerce, travel, science, and student exchanges, English is becoming the “common language” for international relations, and many countries have adopted English as the second, official, or administrative language.

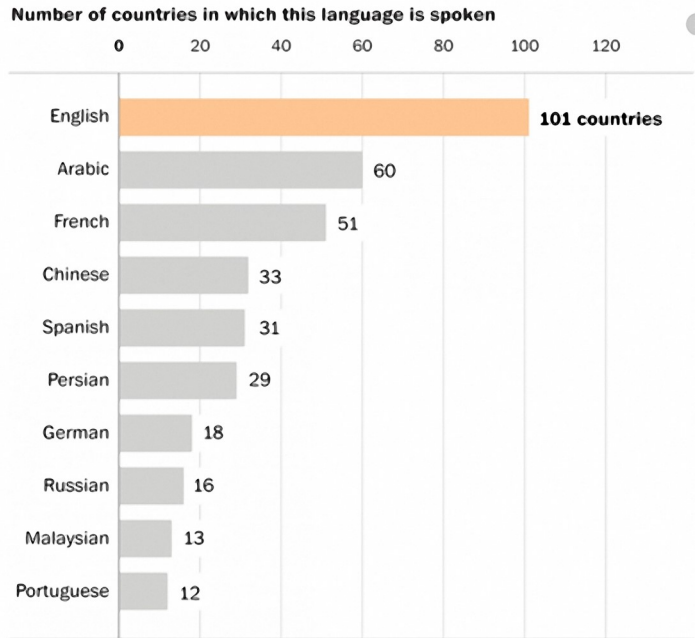
However, one should not assume, just because someone has learned English as a second language, that he or she is fluent enough to understand the ideas and nuances found in *The Urantia Book*.

In this presentation, we will assume that people will continue speaking their native language even if English is becoming a second language worldwide.

**What is the language situation today on Urantia?**

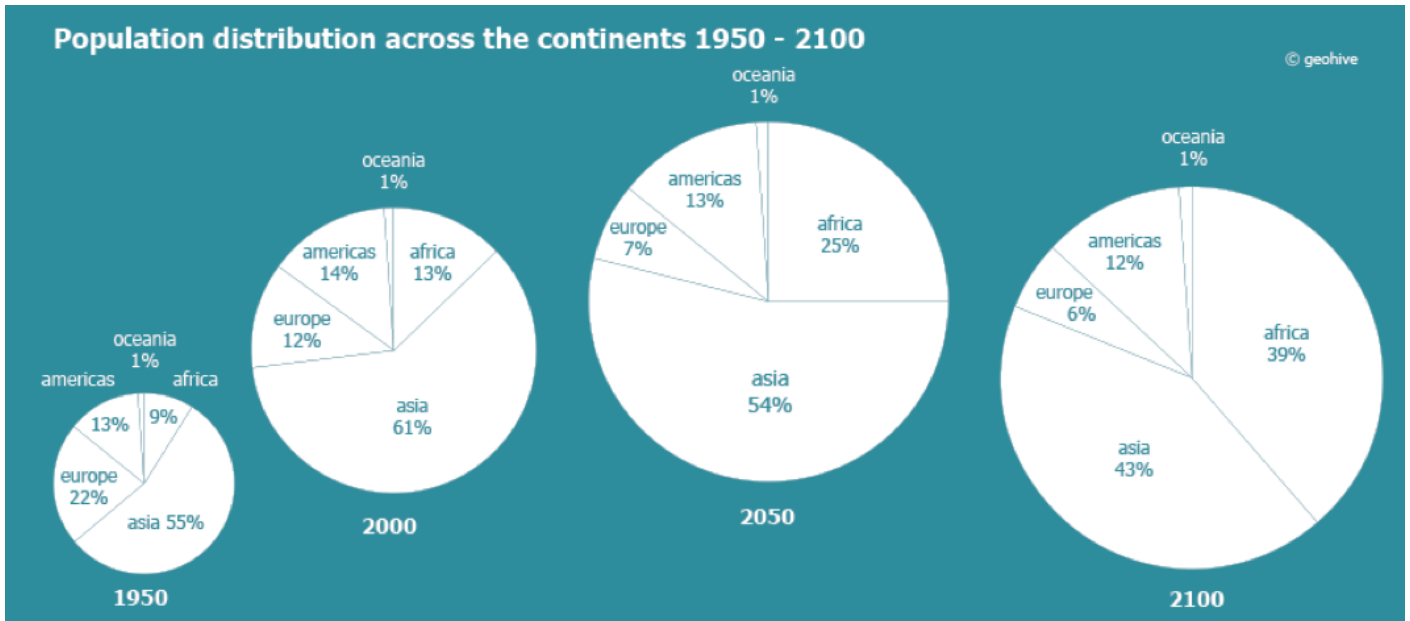
As of today, the chart labelled “Of the 7.2 billion people on Earth...” (on the previous page) shows that Chinese is the most spoken language.

The chart labelled “Number of countries in which this language is spoken” shows that English is spoken in the most countries. This fact, combined with population growth projections and the fact that English is becoming the language that is being adopted worldwide as the common language between speakers whose native languages are different, has a profound effect on language projections for 2100.

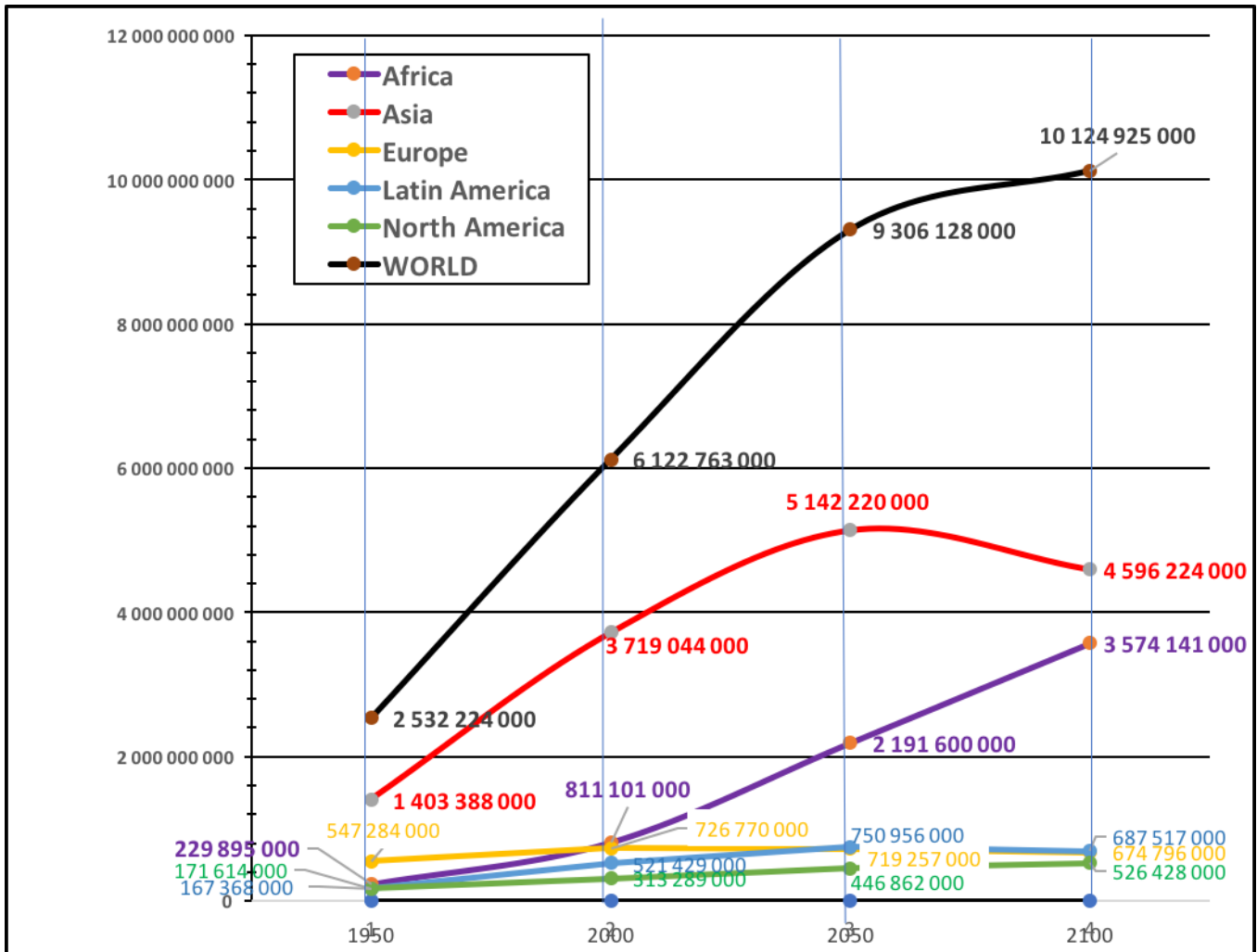


Sources: Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Eighteenth edition THE WASHINGTON POST

## What Is the Language Situation in the Future?



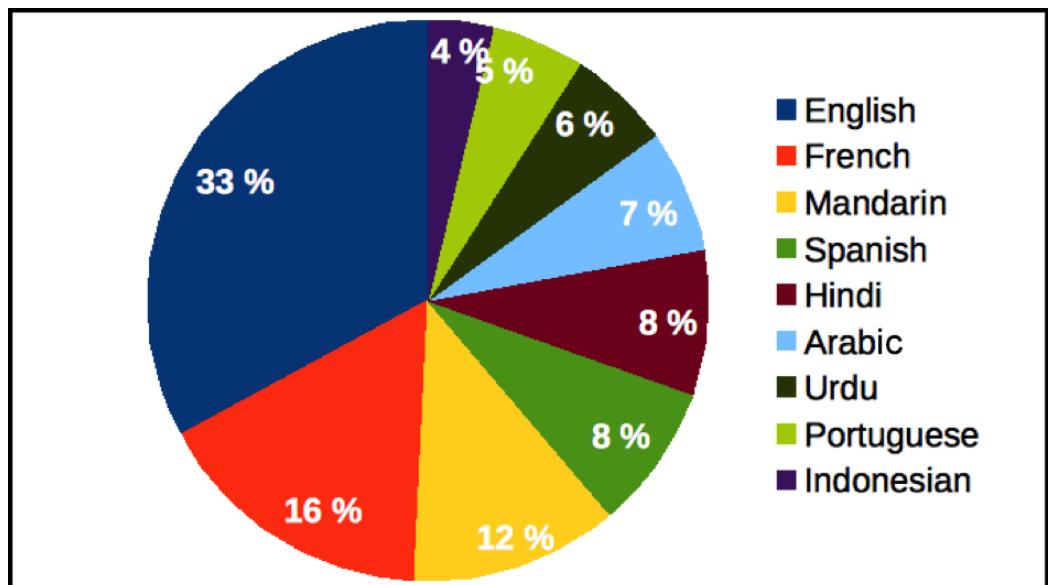
Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division



Population growth by Continent 1750–2100 (Trend)

The current and future radical population growth in Africa projects language usage in Africa at 2100 as:  
 English: 2,286 million;  
 French: 1,263 million;  
 Portuguese: 250 million;  
 Arabic: 245 million.

There will also be a decline in the Chinese population (as a percentage of the whole). These factors are going to have global impact.



Projected world language usage in 2100

**Conclusion**

Of the eight non-English languages, Urantia Foundation has already translated *The*

*Urantia Book* into French, Spanish, and Portuguese. In addition, there are translations for most European languages, including Russian.

Chinese, Indonesian, and Arabic are in progress, and should be finished by 2025.

If we were in the year 2100, with the above translations

available, 70 percent of the world's population would have access to the Urantia Revelation in its own language.

## A URANTIA BOOK BOOTH AT THE MIAMI BOOK FAIR

*By Ramón Franco, Florida, United States*

Under swaying palm trees and rainbow-colored canopies, my Urantia Book study group and I spread the word of the fifth epochal revelation at the Miami Book Fair in November 2017. I am a reader from Colombia now living in Miami, and my team hosted the booth, sponsored by Urantia Association International. Urantia Foundation sent twenty-five copies each of *The Urantia Book* in English and in Spanish.

Celebrating its thirty-fourth year in existence, the Miami Book Fair's mission statement says that it promotes reading and writing and seeks to heighten "an awareness of literacy and the literary arts in our multi-ethnic community." The fair is held every year on the Miami Dade College campus in downtown Miami and draws over 250,000 visitors and authors from around the world.

This year's featured authors included former Vice President Joe Biden, Isabel Allende, Salman Rushdie, the Bush

sisters, Lawrence O'Donnell, George Saunders, and many others. The event began on November 13 and continued through November 19 with readings and discussions by authors each day, culminating in the Street Fair on Friday through Sunday in which publishers and booksellers exhibited their wares.

At our booth, we sold all twenty-five books in Spanish (but only three of the English) and registered sixty people including established readers and new readers. In addition, we delivered 1000 flyers in Spanish and 1500 in English.

Our group included Angela Alvarez, Jeannette Francis, Eva Castell, Luis Betancur, Raúl Pujol, and me. Over the Street Fair weekend, we spoke to hundreds of attendees under the cover of the orange canopy. We heard incredible histories of personal transformation from people who have read *The Urantia Book*. Without a doubt, this fair has been our best experience so far in sharing the supernal teachings of our treasured revelation.



Angela Alvarez, Sheryl Cira, Eva Castell, Ramón Franco



Luis Betancur, Raúl Pujol, Jeannette Francis, Ramón Franco



# SEASON'S GREETINGS: REFLECTIONS ON TRUE GIFTS FROM *THE URANTIA BOOK*



By Steve Shinall, drummer, Celestial House Band, Georgia, United States

If you're looking for a well-written paper that will further your understanding of *The Urantia Book*, this is not it. For that, I recommend study aids provided on the Foundation's, the Fellowship's, UAI's websites or anything written by Dr. Jeff Wattles.

What I offer today is more of an expression of gratitude in this holiday season of thanksgiving and sharing of gifts. I will try to keep it brief, for there is no way—or any of us—could name all of those who have been part of our journey and have offered a helping hand or a word of encouragement, instruction, and good cheer. *The Urantia Book* puts it this way: "If you could only fathom the motives of your associates, how much better you would understand them. If you could only know your fellows, you would eventually fall in love with them." 100:4.5 (1098.2)

As I arrived at the IC'17 conference in Denver in July, I couldn't help but marvel at the diverse group of folks that were attending the event. This is not new. I'm always filled with wonder and delight when I attend one of these

gatherings. People from all corners of the world come together because of this amazing revelation, *The Urantia Book*, that has changed all of us in ways we could not have imagined before we found it. Though we differ in vocations, religious beliefs, church affiliations, politics, culture, and education, the love of truth, beauty, and goodness has beckoned us. We have left our homes, jobs, and family to meet again with others who share our love and belief in this fifth epochal revelation and the desire to help disseminate these teachings. It is rarely easy, convenient, or inexpensive (time and money) to do so. And yet we do. Yes, dear friends, we are, dare I say, spirit led. *The Urantia Book* speaks of spirit: "There is a direct attractiveness of a spirit nature between spiritually minded persons of like tastes and longings. The term *kindred spirits* is not wholly a figure of speech." 7:1.6 (82.5)

Speaking of kindred spirits, I want to take a moment to thank Paula Thompson, her staff, and all the folks at the Fellowship for their steadfast support for the music programs and in helping so many musicians to be able to attend and participate in these

events. Their generosity has enriched many a conferencegoer's experience and changed lives in the process.

I look back on the many conferences I've attended. Most often I've been part of the music program. Musicians are, indeed, kindred spirits within a larger group of kindred spirits such as the conference attendees that gathered in Denver this summer. Our love of music is the common language we share, speak, and mold our lives around. *The Urantia Book* says that "melody has power a whole world to transform. Forever, music will remain the universal language of men, angels, and spirits. Harmony is the speech of Havona." 44:1.15 (500.6)

We are a long way from Havona, but we're having a fine time singing together as we journey in that direction, often with Richard Keeler leading the way while playing a banjo. And I found myself several times during rehearsals looking at this wildly divergent group of personalities, feeling an overflowing of affection for these kindred spirits. I have known Cristina Seaborn and Mike Wood for decades. Not only are they extremely talented at what they do, they are simply wonderful people whom I am privileged to call my friends. I have fallen in love with these folks and so many others through the many years we have come to know each other.

*The Urantia Book* instructs us to "train your memory to hold in sacred trust the strengthening and worth-while episodes of life, which you can recall at will. . . . But the

noblest of all memories are the treasured recollections of the great moments of a superb friendship." 160:4.12 (1779.4)

It takes a long time to grow an old friend, and it is never easy to lose a loved one. I miss those friends who have passed from this life to the next. I miss the kindness of their smiles, the sound of their voices, and the way their hearts touched mine. There will always be a place in my heart for Bert Cobb, Lee Farmer, Cathy Jones, Lynn Prentice, and Jan Bernard, just to name a few. Too many years have gone by to name them all, and so many loved ones have graduated.

And I want to thank you, dear friends, for all you do and have done to support Urantia Foundation and disseminate the revelation in your unique way. I look forward to meeting you soon, somewhere along the ascension pathway.

Here's wishing you a joyous holiday season surrounded by family and loved ones.

May the coming year be filled with service opportunities and learning experiences to grow in God's grace because, as *The Urantia Book* says, "man's nearest and dearest approach to God is by and through love, for God is love." 3:4.7 (50.5)

Now, get out there and spread the good news of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Fear not, lift up your voice, and make a damn joyful noise!

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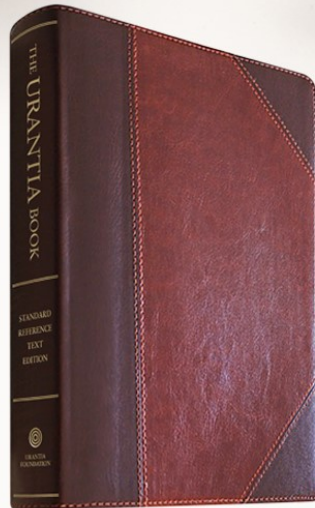
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[www.urantia.org](http://www.urantia.org)

Urantia Foundation has recently published a new Urantia Book—the Cambridge edition. Its two-toned LeatherSoft™ cover gives the book a classic antique look making it a perfect gift for the holiday season.



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## Urantia Foundation's Index to *The Urantia Book*

As mentioned in the last edition of the *News Online*, the Index is now ready for use at [urantia.org](http://urantia.org). [Click here to check it out!](#)

To read more about its history, [click here](#).