

Letter from our President, Rick Lyon

March 28, 2009

Welcome everyone to the 16th annual membership meeting of greater lake Michigan Urantia association, lovingly known as GLMUA. Thanks for spending the time and money to attend today. I trust it will be time and money well spent. Our purpose here today is to update you on the activities of the past year and give each of you the opportunity to determine the activities of the coming year.

Our new format brackets the business meeting with study periods. The next study period is at 3pm and we invited non-members to attend that so please help me to keep on track so we end this meeting on time.

We will be going out to dinner tonight at Magiano's and listen to Bob Solone play tonight.

Lets begin with a prayer:

Father thank you for bringing us together today for the purpose of serving you and our fellow man. Thank you for the gift of our indwelling spirit who works tirelessly to adjust our thinking to be more in tune with your will. Thank you for the Spirit of Truth who helps us to know truth when we see it and to continue our seeking of it. Thank you for the Angels that are with us here today and every day as we seek to learn and progress from the experiences they lay before us. Please bless us in this work as we seek to further your kingdom here on Urantia. Please guide us and show us what you want us to do. Amen

Before I get into my report let me share a few things with you.

The International Service Board of Urantia Association International met here at the Foundation in February for a very productive meeting. They discussed our participation in the World interfaith conference next year in Australia. They discussed the next phase of operation for UAI now that the groundwork has been completed as far as legal requirements, organization, and how we function. Long term strategic planning has been completed. They also discussed the upcoming conference in Spain – anyone going to Spain? The 2012 international conference was discussed but no location has been chosen for that yet. I would like for us to begin thinking about bringing the International Conference back to Chicago in 2012.

UAI has purchased 250 books from the Foundation for our dissemination efforts and we are offering them at a big discount to associations and study groups.

We will hear later from Benet about events at UAUS and from Tamara about Urantia Foundation

Our brother Bill Martin is on his yacht somewhere in the Carribean on a five year trip to Thailand. He is distributing UB wherever he stops.

First area of effort will be the ancestral home of the mixed race group known as Mayans that encompasses parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize.

If anyone would like to contribute money or books to this project, see me after the meeting.

Let me remind everyone that tomorrow we will have a morning study session for anyone staying over. At 1 pm tomorrow, First Society will be hosting a study session in this room and I encourage everyone to be here for that if you can.

There is a lot of activity and many good things happening with this organization and this revelation. These are indeed exciting times.

And now my report:

The word “organization” or some form of it appears in the UB 494 times. The word “leader” or some form of it appears 686 times. The word “teach” or some form of it appears 1365 times.

The Urantia Book is clear about the importance and value of the individual citizen in this cosmic society. We make great effort not to impose our personal beliefs on each other but to share them in peaceful harmony. So, why have we gone to so much trouble creating this organization of readers – Urantia Association International. Why have we exposed ourselves to the dangers of churchification by bringing together large groups of people to study the UB? What is the value of an organization when the real mission is the personal spiritual ministry of each person?

911 : 3 – *"in civilization much, very much, depends on an enthusiastic and effective load -pulling spirit. Ten men are of little more value than one in lifting a great load unless they lift together --all at the same moment. And such teamwork--social co-operation--is dependent on leadership."*

I would conclude from this quote that an organization of people working for the same purpose at the same time “together” are much more effective than that same number of people working for the same purpose at the same time “separately” Those of us blessed to be part of the early days of this revelation have a big job to do – a heavy load to lift.

312:2 - One of the most important lessons to be learned during your mortal career is *teamwork*. The spheres of perfection are manned by those who have mastered this art of working with other beings. Few are the duties in the universe for the lone servant.

It is impossible to learn teamwork without a team. Teamwork is very important to our own personal ascension career. So, these are some reasons why membership in UAI is important to us as individuals. It gives us the opportunity to be part of a team. It gives us the opportunity to do things as part of a group that we normally may not be able to do on our own. We benefit and learn from exposure to group wisdom. Being a part of this worldwide family of associations within the larger community of UB readers, gives us a greater opportunity to serve, increased access to the resources needed to serve more people, and a platform from which to shine our light farther and wider. As a member of this organization we stand with our teammates here today and on the shoulders of those who came before us.

The fifth epochal revelation was given to us in this building about 75 years ago. The history of reader service organizations began in this room 54 years ago. 16 years ago this month in this room The Greater Lake Michigan Urantia Association was created.

Here is a picture taken on that day. This is the chartering ceremony of GLMUA. We can see Bob Solone, Mike Ferree, Susan , Mark Kurtz, Who else is in this picture Susan?

I have more pictures from that day if anyone would like to see them later. We are glad that many of these people are still with us today and would like to see more of them joining us.

One of the difficulties that face non-profit organizations like ours is that since they are non-profit - people often don't take them seriously. Because the non-profit “staff” is made up of volunteers, there is often a perception of no accountability or expectation of success. Without the profit motive it is often difficult to define the mission of a non-profit. A corporation has stock holders who can measure the success of their organization by the amount of money they receive from owning corporate stock. With a non-profit organization the measure of success is often something less tangible but infinitely more valuable.

We are a real organization with a real purpose. Ours is a spiritual mission so our success may be difficult to measure sometimes by material means. We can measure our success by the fruits we bear. Looking around this room, we can see that GLMUA has been very successful. The teachers

and leaders we have produced have made significant contributions to this revelation, the Foundation, and UAI. In order for us to have teachers and leaders like these, they must have someone to teach and to lead. So no less important are those who work within GLMUA and our communities to bring the teachings of the UB to their family and friends for that IS the real work of UAI and our personal mission. All the organization, meetings, and planning are for the soul purpose of facilitating our spiritual mission and to server all mankind with their spiritual growth and progress. Leaders may lead but nothing is accomplished without workers who work. A successful organization must have both leaders and workers.

Even though we are a non-profit organization, we do have a job to do and things to accomplish. We do these things because we know they are important not because we get paid for them. Even though we do not get paid for our efforts, we are rewarded for them. I think the greatest measure of our success is the spiritual satisfaction we have from doing what we do.

James, would you tell us how you felt after the end of the 2004 conference?

Susan, what is your experience when you talk with referrals and new members on the phone?

We are a non-profit organization, we are a corporation – legally – and our members can be seen as stockholders. If you invest in membership in GLMUA, you have ownership in this corporation just like a stockholder of any major corporation. And based on the last 6 months your investment in GLMUA may be one of the best investments you have. This meeting today can be viewed as our annual stockholder meeting. You are the owners of GLMUA and I want to suggest that you take ownership of this corporation by joyfully actively participating in what we do.

UAI was part of the Urantia Foundation, until 6 years ago when UAI became it's own organization, separate but still interdependent with Urantia Foundation. We have spent the last 6 years getting incorporated, creating charters and bylaws, setting up the organization, making strategic plans and today, that necessary phase of our business is over. Today, we enter into a new phase of organization that will provide training for our leaders in the positions filling our governing boards and committees so that what we do will be accomplished efficiently and effectively in the coming decades. The focus has shifted from organization to service.

Because our mission is one of service, it requires us to be organizational. The purpose of what we do and our goals are all spiritual. We are a spiritual organization but we are a reader service spiritual organization. So it is important to remember that UAI is a multi-faceted organization. We are not just a group of people with our heads in the spiritual clouds nor are we simply a service organization always planning events and activities. Our organizational structure is how we encourage others to become closer to God. That actually is the real purpose and goal of all the organization and planning and activities we do – to bring man closer to God, to lead people to discover God as their father, to discover that they are a child of God, and then to bring God and man closer together. We do this because we love God and our fellow man. Everything we do in this meeting today has a spiritual purpose. If we fail in that, then all the organization and planning has no meaning.

The mission of Urantia Association International is to share the teachings of *The Urantia Book* and to foster in-depth study of the book. Actually, it isn't really about the book itself but what is in the book that we love and crave to share with others. I have the privelege to also serve as the administrator for UAI and as such I get to talk with many of our members. Some members ask, "What is our mission" and why isn't someone doing something? I try to politely and gently point out that if nobody is doing anything, from their perspective, then it is up to them to do something. Even the smallest task must be done so if you only can do one small task once a year, that is a great contribution to the whole.

GLMUA is certainly one of the most active associations in UAI and we are so blessed by the people who make up this association. Several people in this room have given many hours and personal resources to our mission and we as GLMUA have done some great things: our 2004 conference is still remembered as one of the best and is certainly a highlight of my life. Our fall study session is making a difference in peoples lives. Our relationship with First Society is seen as an example to other associations both in UAI and the Fellowship. We have produced many teachers and leaders who have gone on to serve in many ways. We have accomplished many good things.

And we continue to grow.

The Greater Lake Michigan Urantia Association Governing Board recently launched a new project called "Reader Support Team" The purpose of this team is to get out in the communities; get in touch with readers and help them to do those things they want to do to serve their community and this revelation. Things like sharing the teachings with family and friends, hosting or attending a study group; placing a book in the local library; having a book display at the local book store, volunteering to help at Urantia Foundation, or having a social gathering of readers in their area.

We hear many readers expressing a desire to do these things and yet all too often it comes to nothing. People lack the confidence or have a fear or just don't know what to do. This is where we come in. Our core objective is to serve all readers of The Urantia Book. And so, we created the Reader Support Team.

We are a reader service organization and in order to be of service, we need two things. People and money. I believe if we get the people, the money will come. We need people to joyfully actively participate in what we have been guided to do. We are not asking you to devote every waking moment to what we are doing nor are we asking you to send us your last dime. What we are inviting you to do and wishing to share with you is the opportunity to serve this revelation and bring about real change in your community.

So, what are the benefits of being a member of UAI and GLMUA? I think the answer is friendship, teamwork, opportunity, service, and progress.

The world is facing great challenges today just as it has in the past. We will weather this storm and if we remember that we are not of this world, then the problems we face today are made trivial. Who cares if all earthly things crash? We have a spiritual mission which is the most important mission on this planet today. While we do care that our brothers and sister have enough to eat and good medical care and proper education, "our" concern is their soul.

"P. 1 088 - §4 "The religionist is not unsympathetic with social suffering, not unmindful of civil injustice, not insulated from economic thinking, neither insensible to political tyranny. Religion influences social reconstruction directly because it spiritualizes and idealizes the individual citizen. Indirectly, cultural civilization is influenced by the attitude of these individual religionists as they become active and influential members of various social, moral, economic, and political groups. "

You are important and you can make a difference. Share these teachings with your family and friends. Strengthen your conviction and faith. Renew your zest for life! Take action and be part of our team, as leaders, as teachers, or however you are led - but do something. We are glad to have you as a member of our association and we are not only here to offer you an opportunity to serve but an opportunity to be served as well. Join us as we joyfully actively participate in sharing the fatherhood of god with the brotherhood of man.

