

This collection of their stories from *How I Found The Urantia Book* is a loving tribute to our fellow Urantians who have recently graduated to the mansion worlds. COMPILED BY SASKIA PRAAMSMA RAEVOURI

## UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN . . .

**LA HALL:** In 1957 my husband Loren and I were given a pamphlet by a naturopathic doctor who was treating our little boy who had contracted polio in 1949. The pamphlet advertised a UFO meeting near Mountain View, Missouri. UFOs were something we didn't know much about so we decided to attend the three-day meeting scheduled for that June.

The next year we went again. At that meeting we listened to a talk given by a man from Minnesota who mentioned the Urantia Book, which he'd brought along. As we were loading up the car to start home, I said to Loren, "Wait for me. I just want to look through the books." I went back and on a shelf I saw this big blue book—the Urantia Book.

I opened it to Paper 18, "The Universe of Universes." How great it was reading about all the universes and the inhabited planets! I ran back to the car and told Loren that there was a book in there I wanted.

"How much is it?" he asked.

"Twelve dollars," I told him.

"I don't have that much money with me now," he replied.

"Let me see if I can find the man who brought it," I insisted, "because I have to have that book!" I went back and found him, and the man said he'd mail me the book when he again heard from me. It took me another month to persuade Loren that I really *had* to have that book!

Finally one day the book came in the mail. It was the greatest book I had ever possessed and the truths contained in it thrilled me. From the moment I first opened the Urantia Book at that meeting I knew it was true and I have never doubted it. Both of us have been so thankful ever since for that UFO meeting where I found the book. I believe we were meant to be there.

*[Ila Hall graduated September 16, 1999]*

**HAL KETTELL:** Sometime in the early '60s I was working on a fine elderly gentleman in my dental chair. His name was Fred Squires. We talked about philosophy and religion. I was searching even then. In my youth my mother had exposed me to Christian Science; I had been a Sunday school teacher, superintendent, Christian Education chair, elder and trustee of a large Presbyterian church; I had looked into reincarnation, Edgar Cayce, pyramids, and UFOs, but something



was always missing and I was ready for something new. At one point I made the "mistake" of taking my hands out of Fred's mouth long enough for him to say, "I have a book that I think you might be interested in." He then told me a little about it. It sounded quite interesting, so I asked if I could borrow it.

"No way!" he replied, "But you can buy one at the bookstore." ►

I was not in the habit of buying everything recommended to me in the office, but I guess my guardian angel—or midwayers or my Thought Adjuster—must have been needling me, because I made a trip to Vroman's Bookstore in Pasadena to buy one. At the time, of course, I had no idea that I had a guardian angel or Thought Adjuster, but something motivated me to pursue the issue.

At the bookstore, when I asked for the Urantia Book (Fred had written the name down for me), the salesgirl said, "The *what* book?" When I repeated the name, she said, "Okay, I'll look it up." She soon found that it could be ordered from the publisher in Chicago but that it would cost \$12.50. Feeling like a big spender, and having made a special trip to the store, I told her to go ahead.

In about two weeks I received a phone call saying my book had arrived.

"What book?" I asked.

"The Urantia Book you ordered," came the reply.

Well, that was the start of a new adventure into the universe for me. After thumbing through the table of contents and scanning the list of authors with all of their weird names, I decided I had an enormous, expensive, paper-pack of science fiction. I enjoyed science fiction, so I started with the geological development of our planet. It was fascinating, and within a couple of weeks I was hooked on the Urantia Book as fact and not fiction.

Fred subsequently invited me to a study group at Helen Steen's home in Pasadena. Helen, Fred, and Fred's sister Julia Fenderson were all from Chicago and had been a part of the Forum with Dr. Sadler. It was a fascinating study group, whose members prepared charts for daily reading, summaries of the apostles, lists of Jesus' earth family, and some beautiful color drawings of the universes by Georgia Gecht.

After I had read enough to know what it was about, I bought several more first-printing copies and gave them to my relatives. The results were predictable: one fundamentalist sister burned the book, calling it the work of the devil; one brother put it on the shelf of his library, and it was years before he blew the dust off it. So I learned. Now I just occasionally sow a few seeds in the hope that they will take root and grow. Since then, a couple of my siblings have graduated to the mansion worlds, and I'm sure they were surprised on arrival.

Now the blanks in my faith are filled in—the i's are dotted and the t's crossed. I have complete faith and trust in God as my Father and friend as I search to reach him. He is personal and real to me now, rather than a man in the sky with a long beard, waiting for me to make a mistake so that St. Peter can write it down in my book of life. Best of all, the book has given me a real concept of Jesus as Michael of Nebadon, my elder brother and

creator. My life is now becoming fulfilled, and I am more at peace with the real world of the spirit. What more can I ask for than to enjoy the journey?

*[Hal Kettell graduated March 3, 2001]*

**SUSAN SARFATY:** From earliest childhood memory, I loved and admired Jesus. I hadn't a clue about who God was, but Jesus was made very real to me by stories I heard that showed the beauty and symmetry of his character. These stories helped set my standards for idealistic living and inspired me to want to be just like him.

Since Jesus traveled and mingled among all sorts of people, learning, teaching, sharing, and loving, this became my dream also. As I grew, I questioned more, and a fuzzy notion of God as primal force, the uncaused cause, began to form in my mind. How this related to Jesus was still a mystery, but I knew Jesus' way was the right way, the way I must live if I wanted to be real.

Increasingly, I placed a premium on connecting with people, places, things and ideas that demonstrated the quality of realness—the quality of flowing naturally and harmoniously from observable universal law; that which is flexible, fluid and open to change; that which is motivated by truth and activated by love, the driving force and powerful bond that holds creation in place.

In search of the reality I felt missing in everyday life, I left home at 16, married and had two children, divorced within a few years, underwent Freudian analysis, explored the inner sanctum of Scientology, and wandered across Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, the United States and Mexico. Along the way I examined everything I could find that might light the way to a greater awareness of how the universe really works—Eastern and Western mysticism, metaphysics and occult studies. I lived among the natives, learning the local traditions through their eyes, and sharing my own experiences with them, each of us contributing to a greater understanding between our respective cultures.

My first encounter with the Urantia Papers occurred in 1969 in a little bookshop in Sausalito, California. A friend and I had recently left Scientology, and we were ripe for a different approach, one that might inform and inspire in a more loving way than the one from which we had just escaped. Her brother had told us about the Urantia Book, that it shed new light on mystical truth. So when we saw it on the shelf, we couldn't resist its pull and between us we scraped together the money to buy one we could share.

During my early years with the book, I used to let it fall open where it might and consult the exposed text somewhat as if it were an oracle. I always gained new insight through this process,

One ship sails East, another West,  
By the self-same winds that blow;  
'Tis the set of the sail and not the gale  
That determines the way they go.

Like the winds of the sea are the ways of fate  
As we voyage along through life;  
'Tis the set of the soul that decides the goal  
And not the calm or the strife.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

but it wasn't until I attended my first Urantia conference in 1974, meeting all sorts of wonderful people I liked and respected, who were devout readers (including my soon-to-be-husband, Peter Sarfaty), that I finally undertook to read the entire book from front to back. The story of creation thus presented opened my senses to an exciting new perception of reality, one in which I knew myself to be a beloved citizen of an orderly universe, with a real destiny and purpose, where my contributions could be meaningful and valuable.

My quest to understand ultimate reality had led me through many a puzzling maze, each a unique and thrilling learning adventure. Eventually it brought me face to face with the Urantia teachings, which finally clarified my understanding of the relationship between Jesus and God. At the same time, this amazing synthesis of scientific, religious and philosophical thought has challenged me to consider a whole new universe of questions and discoveries, while also leading me to revel in the refreshing simplicity of Jesus' words to us: "Love one another, even as I have loved you."

*[Susan Sarfaty graduated September 19, 2000]*

**IRVING TOWNSEND:** In 1969 I owned a fabric store on Wilshire Boulevard in Brentwood, a neighborhood in Los Angeles. My bookkeeper was a young woman with two small children. She was going to school part time and working on my books part time to support her family.

We became friends. One evening while she was taking care of her children and preparing to go to dinner with me, she placed the Urantia Book in my hands and said, "Here, Irving. Read this." After reading three pages I realized that this was something I had been searching for for a long time.

I have been reading it all these years. My friend, Diane, eventually got an MA degree in financial planning and has since become very successful.

*[Irving Townsend graduated October 11, 2001]*

**PEGGY M. JOHNSON:** The time was June 1972. My world was closing in on me. I was grasping to hang on to life, but I didn't know why. I was emotionally, mentally and spiritually bankrupt. I contemplated murder, but ruled that out as I would probably get caught. I then contemplated suicide, and after some thinking ruled that out as I might be missing something really beautiful that life had to offer.

You see, I had become an alcoholic—me, the perfect mother, wife, and hostess. At least, I had *tried* to be all these things, but I couldn't, so I drank. My husband Dick had sought help for me through Alanon in February of 1971. At their instruction he had ceased to talk to me or take me anywhere. He was constantly gone. I felt as though I had been abandoned. We had five children who were left to grow up on their own as I certainly was in no condition to be of any help to them.

From the time Dick went into Alanon, I became very resentful of AA and Alanon and blamed them for what had happened to my family. I wanted to get sober, but I didn't want to go to the program. I thought there must be some other way, so I started seeking answers to my problems by reading any book I could get my hands on, from self-help to the occult to the Bible to some of the well-known philosophers. I liked what I read, but that

was all it was—interesting reading. I took no action on any knowledge that I acquired from these writings.

Finally, on June 26, 1972, I reluctantly went to an AA meeting with an uncle. I thought just going would get everyone off my back, but it didn't and I didn't stay sober.

A short time after I had begun attending AA, Dick called to read some stories from a book he had found at a local bookstore. It was the Urantia Book. Everything he read to me rang true. He finally brought the book home. When I saw the size of it, I thought I could never wade through such a monstrous thing and urged him to audiotape it so I could listen to it while doing my wifely and motherly chores.

He started taping and I listened to the tapes just as fast as he could tape them. When he had finished I felt confident that I could tackle reading it, so I went out and bought myself a book. For the next few years, it was difficult to get my head out of it. I never left the house without it and many times I sat in a coffee shop after an AA meeting until the wee hours of the morning, reading until Dick picked me up. The Urantia Book became my text, and the *Twelve Steps* became my tools. I took my last and final drink on October 5, 1972.

I have been studying the contents of the book ever since. I owe my life to my God, the Urantia Book, and the AA way of life. I shall be eternally grateful for all that has happened to me, for without those experiences I would not be where I am today, and the chances are very good that I would never have found what I had been unconsciously seeking all my life.

*[Peggy Johnson graduated February 28, 2002]*

**GLENN BELL, Jr:** I was a devout follower of the Bible, convinced that it was the inspired Word of God, when a friend, Early Spire, began telling me things about Adam and Eve that were not in the Bible. After he had said enough to show me he didn't know what he was talking about, I asked him where he was getting his information. He said it came from the Urantia Book, which was written by angelic hosts to reveal God to man.

I knew from this that Early was as cuckoo as a March hare. I loved Early and thought I could read the book to point out its inconsistencies and maybe save his mind as well as his soul. Well, I read the book from cover to cover and found it to contain nothing but the truth. This was 1973. I became convinced it was a true revelation of God to man and have been devoted to it ever since.

*[Glenn Bell graduated in 1999]*

**CHRISSEY PALATUCCI SMITH:** One autumn in the early '70s, living in the town of Westhampton Beach, New York, I was one of a group of many friends who were enjoying the return of the town to its quiet post-season status. We were having a potluck when a friend began to tell me about a book his ex-girlfriend had loaned him called the Urantia Book, that it was in four parts and really cosmic. We even went over to his room where he showed it to me. It was big. We talked a bit—he hadn't really read much of it himself—but after a few minutes I was anxious to get back to the party.

The next day, my boyfriend and I were in the town of Southampton where we stopped in at a small bookstore called Keene's. I, being a seeker, went over to the Occult section. There

on the shelf was the *Urantia Book*. I took it down, opened it to the first page of the Foreword, read down to “The Eternal Isle of Paradise” and stopped. In five years, I thought to myself, I’ll be ready for this. I put the book back.

A few years later, at the wedding of my best friend Elaine in New Hampshire, I was having a conversation with a small group of people on things cosmic. One guy asked if anyone had ever seen the *Urantia Book*. He told us a story he had heard about it, that it had been found in a garbage can with \$10,000 and a note attached that read, “Print me!” As he talked a recognition seed was planted in my mind.

In 1975 I found myself driving to California with my friend Aubrea, who was planning to attend her high school reunion. I had always wanted to see California, and as I made preparations I had a vision flash that I was to meet a “spiritual man with a golden glow.”

Traveling up the California coast, we visited different towns, including Capitola-by-the-Sea, where my sister-in-law’s parents lived. Stopping for directions to their house, we turned a corner and up on the right was a shimmering gold sign that read The Pyramid Works. I remarked to Aubrea that we *had* to visit this store—I had recently finished reading a fascinating book that talked about pyramid power, *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain*, and was excited to see a place selling pyramids.

Later that day our host Peggy took us on a walk into town. While Peg stopped to buy some cards, Aubs and I went into The Pyramid Works. There we found all manner of pyramid-related articles, books, candles, and clothes, as well as a delightful salesman (with lots-of-time-on-the-beach golden hair) named Lee. Never having met anyone from New York before, and certainly not two women travelers, he found us intriguing. He invited us back to the store on Thursday night to attend a presentation on pyramid power. I almost missed what has now become my life as I was tired that night and didn’t really want to go. Luckily, Aubs was in a better mood and talked me into it.

By the time we arrived, the demonstration was over and people were milling around getting ready to leave. Lee was happy to see us, and after he closed up shop the three of us got together. The night continued with much sharing and good conversation, and ended up with all of us going dancing.

Lee invited us to visit him the following Saturday. On the property where he lived was a tree house and I mentioned that I wanted to climb up there. I was starting to feel very attracted to Lee and wanted some time alone with him. As we sat in the tree house facing each other cross-legged, what I remember most is the incredible energy that flowed out of my eyes and into his as I declared my love for God. I know he received it because the look on his face was unmistakable. It was, as I have come to recognize it now, a Spirit of Truth moment. The energy flowing from me to him felt like a circuitry coming through me rather than from me. My intention was that Lee should understand the meaning God had in my life—I only had a moment and the Spirit did it for me!

When it was time to leave, I decided to stay an extra week with Lee and meet up with my traveling companions later. One day, when Lee and I were working in the pyramid shop, I saw a notice on the bulletin board that read, “Anyone interested in reading the *Urantia Book* talk to Lee.” I was amazed! I felt that my spiritual journey was about to take a major leap. Excitedly I shared with

Lee the Keene’s bookstore event, my declaration of five years earlier, and that he, Lee, was the “spiritual man with the golden glow.”

Lee and I started a *Urantia Book* study group in 1975 and it still meets in our home. We were married one year later and the rest, as they say, is destiny!

*[Chrissy Smith graduated March 5, 1999]*

**T**IM TRAYLOR [*written by his wife, Kitty*]: In the fall of 1978 my husband Tim and I were living in Arkansas in a town called Russellville, near the foot of the Ozark Mountains. Tim was working in construction. He and his friend Tony had formed a partnership in a business called The Wood Shed. I had chosen to be a stay-at-home mom for our two beautiful little daughters. We were on a tight budget.

Around October, we noticed that our water supply was getting low. We hired a well driller to drill a deeper well, but it was to no avail. We were charged \$800 for a dry well. We had just enough water to flush the toilet occasionally and take a fast shower. For a long time, I hauled in water for drinking and flushing. It looked as though we would have to abandon the beautiful house that Tim had built for us. My state of mind at that time was sheer depression and worry.

## UNFOLDING THE ROSE

It is only a tiny rosebud,  
A flower of God’s design;  
But I cannot unfold the petals  
With these clumsy hands of mine.

The secret of unfolding flowers  
Is not known to such as I.  
God opens this flower so sweetly,  
When in my hands they die.

If I cannot unfold a rosebud,  
This flower of God’s design,  
Then how can I have the wisdom  
To unfold this life of mine?

So I’ll trust in Him for leading  
Each moment of my day.  
I will look to him for His guidance  
Each step of the pilgrim way.

The pathway that lies before me,  
Only my Heavenly Father knows.  
I’ll trust Him to unfold the moments,  
Just as He unfolds the rose.

—*Author unknown*

I was an avid reader, always searching. I studied Edgar Cayce, Swedenborg, metaphysics, science fiction, Eastern and alternative religions. . . . One day I got to thinking about the books I'd been reading lately. I was upset that none of them were really satisfying. Tony had come over, and I said in a frustrated voice, "I just wish someone would write a book that would give me some answers!"

"I've heard of a book that might do that," he said. "I don't know anything about it, but I used to know some people in Montana who sat around under trees reading it. They said they had gotten a lot of answers from it." He gave me a haphazard spelling of the name of the book, and I was able to find it listed in *Books in Print* in my county library. The library did not have a copy, but said they would try to order it from the state library in Little Rock. In a few days they called to say that they had found one.

I was so excited, I went right away to pick it up. The size of the book was overwhelming, but I could hardly wait to start reading it. I keyed in on the chapters on Adam and Eve first, since this story had so fascinated me in my childhood. Then I hit the pages on life after death. I kept finding more and more good things. . . . I became fully absorbed in it. It was speaking to my mind and my heart. Something within me told me that it was true. It made sense and gave some real answers. It made me realize that my life had meaning and purpose. The hunger in me was being satisfied.

I talked about this book continuously to Tim for about six months. He always listened but never once made a comment. One Sunday morning, to my surprise, I saw him reading it. What had I said to make him start reading? I realized it must have been my comment, "It makes science fiction seem real." Though not as much of a reader as I was, Tim enjoyed the occasional science fiction novel. He became so engrossed in the *Urantia Book* that he was keeping *me* from reading it. Eventually he bought his own copy. . . . The book has been the best thing that has happened to us. We thank those who told Tony about the book and the person who was responsible for placing the book in the Little Rock library. You may not have thought, at the time, that your actions would make a difference, but your ripples have had far-reaching effects.

*[Tim Traylor graduated September 3, 2001]*

**DON ROARK:** When I was 16 years old, I was standing with others in a traditional Christian church reciting the Apostles' Creed when it occurred to me: I don't really believe what I am saying, so I'd better leave until I find out why.

Thus began a long adventure looking for the meaning of life, why we are here and what we should do. This search included altered states of consciousness, Eastern philosophy, Science of Mind, the 12-Step Program, *A Course in Miracles*, and many blind alleys.

Then in 1992 I went to the Whole Life Expo in Los Angeles. After wandering around not seeing anything of interest, I found myself standing in front of a beautiful, blue, awe-inspiring booth. A tall, distinguished, older man (older than me) smiled and said, "This is quite a book—you might want to read it!" So, I bought the *Urantia Book* from Duane Faw, and my life has never been the same.

At first I bounced around for months, reading bits and pieces, and concluded that this was either the greatest science fiction story ever written, or it was indeed a revelation of truth. I preferred the first alternative, and decided to read one whole paper every night without fail. Soon I was reading the book "religiously." Halfway through my

second reading I concluded that the book was, indeed, a revelation.

I am now on my fifth reading and it is truly amazing that concepts continue to emerge; words that were "not there" during the first four readings suddenly appear. The things that I do remember are suddenly magnified as if they are in neon lights. Part IV is illuminated in vivid 3-D and I sometimes believe I am immersed in a virtual reality environment with surround sound.

The *Urantia Book* is not merely the most amazing book I have ever encountered, it is the most amazing source of truth this planet has had in the last two thousand years!

*[Don Roark graduated October 26, 2000]*

**SUSAN KIMSEY:** During an acrimonious divorce in 1985, I was encouraged to read *A Course in Miracles* as a means to heal my discouragement and bruised emotions. I found the *Course* to be compelling; it opened my mind to the possibility of spiritual guidance from sources other than the Bible.

In 1989 I joined a *Course in Miracles* study group, where I met Cheryl Zents, who became one of my closest friends. Cheryl had been a reader of the *Urantia Book* for a number of years, and she never hesitated to introduce the book to anyone she sensed might be open to hearing about it. She perceived this openness in me.

One night she brought the *Urantia Book* with her to a *Course* meeting and plopped it in my lap. I was somewhat overwhelmed by the size of the book, but I trusted Cheryl. I began to look at the table of contents. As I skimmed the titles of the papers, I was seized with a strong curiosity. Just as the *Course* had given me a broad perspective on human relationships and human understanding, I sensed that this book would give me a broad perspective on the universe in which I lived.

Cheryl loaned me her *Urantia Book* for a few days, and I thumbed through its contents. I told myself that someday I would read the book. A few days later, I went to the local library just to browse the shelves, and the *Urantia Book* was the first book I saw, in the first book stack I approached.

This felt like too big a nudge from the universe to ignore, so I checked out the *UB* from the library and have been a reader ever since. I finally

*[Susan Kimsey graduated January 21, 2003]*

**NEL BENJAMINS:** I grew up a Dutch girl in Amsterdam, the third of five children. At six I was enrolled in a Christian school. Since my parents were of modest means, I felt privileged and honored to be in such a beautiful school. The first hour of every school day was dedicated to religious teaching, mainly Bible reading. I loved those old Bible stories, although I often found them brutal. As I learned about the life of Jesus, it gave me great joy to realize the love he brought us, but the story of how he died so cruel a death on the cross for my sins troubled me. It didn't make sense, but then who was I to question the adults? The guilt and fear created great confusion within me, but oh, how much I loved Jesus!

Then something big happened. A new teacher, Mr. Keyl, came to our school. He seemed to come straight from heaven, like Jesus incarnate, because he loved us so much. In science class he took us out into the field around our school, to teach us about bugs and other creepy-crawlers, and to pick wildflowers which we kept

in empty jelly jars on our desks. He brought in containers with caterpillars so we could observe them transforming into butterflies. The experience of having this teacher in my life made me believe in the possibility of a great love existing somewhere out there. As I grew to young womanhood, while having this conflict about the story of Jesus, I tried to live as much as I could like Jesus and to do the will of the Father.

At 17 my special guy came into my life. We were married and in no time had three children, two sons, Enno and Robin, and a daughter, Sharon. My husband, a Dutch-Indonesian, loved Holland but did not want to live there, so we emigrated to the United States where, after three years, our “native American” Rodger was born.

For me the move to a foreign country was difficult. I did not have a feeling of belonging and began to isolate myself more and more. For many years, while raising my family, I struggled with depression. Now I know that even in my darkest days our Father was always there, lifting me up, guiding me along, compelling me perhaps to see a movie that had an important message for me, to help me visualize his beautiful silvery light in my mind; but at the time I wasn't aware of it.

Some time after Enno got married and had a family of his own, he found a big blue book and started telling us about it. He talked about celestial beings and “Thought Adjusters.” My husband and I thought, “What is happening? Is this some kind

of cult?” While it was somewhat frightening, at the same time I was fascinated. After a while, however, Enno stopped talking about the book.

Later, when Rodger grew up and faced his own troubles and difficulties, Enno suggested to him that his answers could be found in the Urantia Book. Rodger dared to buy it, and within a few weeks I noticed a great change in him and in Enno, who had started reading again. Now both of them were bugging me to read this book.

Still leery, at the same time I became more intrigued. The two of them conspired to get the book into my house by giving it to me for Christmas 1996. “Oh, no!” I thought, “Not that book again!” I put it in my desk drawer and, although I was aware of it being there, I did not attempt to read it for five months.

Then one day I took the book out, put it on my lap and said to myself, “It's just a book. It's not going to eat me. I will throw it out if I don't like it.” As advised, I started with the Jesus papers. Oh, my God—how wonderful it was! I was on the phone a lot asking my sons, “What is Nebadon?” and “Who is Melchizedek?” I had so many questions and it was all so exciting!

Now, after several complete readings, I am a different person. I am freed of my old fears and confusion. I feel as if I am being carried on the wings of the Spirit of Truth, thrusting forward to serve in the kingdom of God—the adventure of eternal life.

*[Nel Benjamins graduated January 22, 2003]*

### Sunday Urantia Brunch at the Kettells', Summer 1998



Those whose names are in *italics* have graduated since this photo was taken, and their stories are included in this article.