

Foundation Leadership Forum 1 — Internationalisation

Date: 2026-04-25 **Duration:** approximately 2 hours 35 minutes **Chair:** André Radatus

Overview

The first forum of the Leadership Roundtable was a multi-presenter session on the internationalisation of the Urantia revelation, organised under an Origin / History / Destiny framing. Presenters covered translation operations, the missions of the Urantia Foundation, Urantia Association International, and the Urantia Book Fellowship, models of international leadership, youth engagement, creative outreach, and culturally-adapted dissemination strategies.

Presenters and Speakers

- **André Radatus** — chair of the forum
- **Tamara Strumfeld** — Urantia Foundation, translations
- **Marilynn Kulieke** — chair of the Translation Committee
- **Marcel Peereboom** — associate trustee (Netherlands), digital tools
- **Line St. Pierre** — president, Urantia Association International (UAI). [Note: see verify list re: spelling — addressed in conversation as "Lynn"]
- **Myra Hight** — UAI long-range plan (presented by pre-recorded video)
- **Sue Seccombe** — president, Urantia Book Fellowship
- **Geoff Theiss** — executive director, Urantia Book Fellowship
- **Maya Anazodo** — youth presenter, Nigeria (19, second-generation reader)
- **Emeka Anazodo** — Nigeria, reader since 2001 (father of Maya)
- **Derek Grimm** — creative producer, Canadian based in Australia (presented by video)

- **Gaétan Charland** — Quebec, Sower of Seeds project
- **Richard Zhu** — Chinese translator
- **Richard Jernigan** — chief editor, UAI Journal
- **Mo Siegel** — host of the Roundtable; intervened on time-keeping and posed questions
- **Victor Garcia-Bory** — trustee
- **Rick Lyon** — comment from the floor
- **Lisa Crawford** — comment from the floor
- **Marvin Gawryn** — comment from the floor

Two scheduled presenters did not present due to time constraints: Alejandra Rodriguez and Gabriel Rymberg (Rymberg's segment moved to the following morning). A pre-recorded video by Indonesian translator Nugroho Widi was also dropped for time.

Topics Presented

Origin, History, Destiny — opening framing (André Radatus)

André Radatus opened by structuring the forum around three themes: origin (translation as the root of internationalisation), history (the social organisations that have carried the revelation), and destiny (future leaders and ways forward).

He introduced the concept of "on-ramps" to the revelation — accessible entry points for people who would not otherwise read the Urantia Book directly. He cited JJ Benitez's *El Caballo de Troya* series as an example of an unauthorised on-ramp that, in his account, drove substantial growth of Urantia readership in Spanish-speaking regions. He noted demographic concerns about generational succession in North America and Europe, and pointed to growth in South and Central America, Spain, and other regions.

Translations and the Foundation's translation programme (Tamara Strumfeld and Marilyn Kulieke)

Strumfeld presented on the Urantia Foundation's translation operations, covering the publication chain from translation to web presence, downloads, e-books, audiobooks, and print. She

summarised the current state of the translation library (English plus 26 translations on urantia.org, with additional independent translations also catalogued) and described in-progress projects in Esperanto, Tagalog (Philippines), and Afrikaans (recently partnered with translator Johan Van Wyk).

She described several refinement processes underway: an ongoing revision of the Portuguese translation; a post-publication review of the Farsi translation; repair work on the Greek translation; parallel correction and refinement of two Spanish editions (1993 and 2021); and the Chinese simplified translation completed in 2024 by Richard Zhu.

Kulieke spoke to translation policy and the five-year goals of the Translation Committee: defining quality standards for translations and revisions, integrating AI considerations into the translation workflow, and establishing policies for refinement cycles. She framed the committee's standard as "truthful, good, and beautiful" and stated this work was a high priority for the Foundation.

A side discussion addressed African languages, with the question of how many languages exist on the continent, and a comment from Victor Garcia-Bory that Arabic, Portuguese, French, and English together cover 52 of 54 African countries at the higher and intermediate education levels.

Urantia Association International (Line St. Pierre and Myra Hight)

St. Pierre presented UAI's mission, vision, and global structure: associations, continental coordinators in Africa, Europe, and South America, and dissemination work. She showed a video from Senegal in which a teacher, Hatab NDI, shares the teachings on prayer with two young Muslim students. She framed UAI's contribution as transformation rather than information transfer, expressed through study groups, conferences, social media, and Urantia-thons.

Hight presented UAI's long-range plan via a pre-recorded video. The plan uses a why / how / what framework; primary objectives are (a) reaching new truth seekers in countries without established associations and (b) supporting existing reader communities. Implementation work in motion includes a digital learning application for global access, an online training module for study-group hosts, and a personal-contact programme for facilitators.

Urantia Book Fellowship (Sue Seccombe)

Seccombe presented the Fellowship's mission and strategic plan, noting substantial overlap with UAI's framing. She presented a segmentation model of potential audiences as a funnel ("billions" unaware, "millions" with some engagement, "thousands" actively involved with the community), and

overlaid a marketing-style adoption sequence: awareness → curiosity → consideration → trial → engagement → leadership.

She articulated three conditions she described as necessary for the growth of a global social movement: high-quality translations, scholarly and educational rigour (which she said establishes credibility), and social proof (whether the community embodies the teachings it shares).

She also commented on past dissemination practice, characterising prior approaches as sometimes a "fire hose" — overwhelming new contacts with too much content too fast.

International leadership — vision and value (Geoff Theiss)

Theiss framed international leadership as a question of orientation. He contrasted two models:

- A **centralised model** — drawing legitimacy from origin and history, providing continuity, mission coherence, economy of scale, and accommodating the fact that the Urantia Book is in his framing "forever an English text."
- A **polycentric model** — connecting more directly to the revelation's purpose and destiny as a global text, oriented toward social trust, dynamic diffusion, and a different form of legitimacy than centralised authority.

He suggested neither model alone captures the present moment and that the actual situation is "an interesting mix of both." He raised an open question about the dependency between English-language leadership capacity and international leadership capacity, presenting an illustrative chart in which English engagement plateaued in the 1990s and international leadership has since grown to comparable scale.

Youth engagement in Nigeria (Maya Anazodo)

Anazodo, 19, described being raised in a Urantia-reading family and encountering Christianity through her mother. She said the contrast led her to actively choose the Urantia Book teachings during her early teens. She described general youth interests in Nigeria as oriented toward self-development, education, and skill-building.

She proposed a step-by-step strategy for engaging Nigerian youth: outreach (in person, then to invited networks), establishing common language or interest, and structured online study groups meeting once or twice a month. She introduced the concept of "manifestation" as a contemporary spiritual vocabulary that her father, Emeka, would discuss in more depth.

She also briefly described her work as a translator using Chinese for a Belt-and-Road infrastructure project in Nigeria.

Creative outreach and the multilingual gap (Derek Grimm — by video)

Grimm, a Canadian based in Australia, addressed creative production for the revelation from an outside-North-America perspective. He stated that current Urantia community content is largely produced inwardly — "for Urantians by Urantians" — and that this, combined with default English-first production, communicates to non-English-speaking readers that the revelation was "not made with [them] in mind."

He cited *El Caballo de Troya* as an example of how a culturally-resonant work can drive substantial reach. He proposed that the community resource skilled creatives across multiple languages and cultural contexts, with sufficient funding to enable production at scale, and raised the question of a dedicated platform for quality Urantia-inspired works.

Sower of Seeds — culturally-adapted dissemination (Gaétan Charland)

Charland described a project in Quebec called Sower of Seeds (Source / Sower of the Seeds of Truth), built around a "turnkey kit" priced at approximately CAD 200. The kit contains a 74-page guide adapted to Quebec culture, fact sheets covering nine subjects (souls, religion, Jesus, spirituality, thought adjusters, and others), pamphlets, brochures, bookmarks, spiritual cards, and book-fair display materials including kiosks, banners, and table coverings.

He outlined dissemination strategies including approaches to influencers, opinion writing, social media, volunteering, and trade-show participation. He presented the project as designed for adaptation to other cultures and language contexts.

Manifestation language as cultural bridge (Emeka Anazodo)

Anazodo described finding the Urantia Book in September 2001. He said early attempts to share it directly were unsuccessful, and that he came to identify the obstacle as the framing and conveyance of the message rather than the content of the teachings. He stated he is cautious about translating the book into African languages because of the multivalence of vocabulary in those languages.

He described an outreach approach using the contemporary "manifestation" vocabulary as an entry point, gradually introducing Urantia Book concepts. He framed this as parallel to Jesus's use of

"kingdom of heaven" — adopting familiar language and infusing it with deeper meaning. He described a three-step progression: (1) meet people in the language of desire, intention, and manifestation; (2) reframe manifestation as alignment with the indwelling presence of God (the thought adjuster); (3) anchor the conversation in Urantia Book teachings on the will of the Father and the life of Jesus.

He stated this approach has been successful in attracting individuals in Nigerian outreach meetings.

Questions Raised

- **André Radatus** asked Tamara Strumfeld how the Foundation chooses the next translation. (Answer summarised: typically driven by individuals approaching the Foundation, not by Foundation initiative.)
 - **André Radatus** asked Richard Zhu why simplified Chinese matters as a translation choice and how it relates to Mandarin and traditional Chinese. (Answer summarised: simplified Chinese is the dominant written system in mainland China and is widely accessible; traditional Chinese remains in use in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and parts of the diaspora.)
 - **Mo Siegel** asked how many languages exist in Africa.
 - **Mo Siegel** asked whether UAI and Fellowship membership numbers are growing or shrinking over the last 5, 10, or 20 years. Sue Seccombe responded that the numbers are shifting from societies to members-at-large, that the recent total is approximately the same, and that she would need to check 10- and 20-year trends; she said she suspects the long-term number is smaller.
 - **Victor Garcia-Bory** asked about Chinese diaspora populations and reception of simplified Chinese in Taiwan and elsewhere.
-

Notable Quotes (verbatim)

- **André Radatus** on demographics: *"We need to acknowledge the reality that here we are in the year 2026 and we do not see ourselves being replaced in North America and possibly not in Europe."*

- **Marilynn Kulieke** on AI in translation: *"AI is a pain. We just have, you know, there is so much going on. Nothing is stable with AI."*
- **Marilynn Kulieke** on standards: *"Truthful, good and beautiful, and that is our goal. So we don't want junk out there. This revelation is too important."*
- **Sue Seccombe** on past dissemination: *"Some of us have used a fire hose approach. As soon as we find somebody with even a little bit of interest, we tell them everything we can about the Urantia Book, because we're so excited, and then their eyes glaze over."*
- **Sue Seccombe** on social proof: *"We gotta walk our talk. We have to be what the book says we are. We have to be loving, forgiving, not be jerks, not be pushy."*
- **Geoff Theiss** on the English-language layer: *"The Urantia Book is forever, an English text, an English artifact... are we going to translate this the Chinese translation based on the Spanish revision? I don't know. I mean, maybe this is forever in architecture that's important to the movement."*
- **Derek Grimm** on production scale: *"No matter how big you're thinking, it's most likely not big enough."*
- **Derek Grimm** on the multilingual signal: *"When the resources, the production and the distribution strategy all default to English. First, we're telling the majority of this planet that the revelation is not really for them."*
- **Emeka Anazodo** on his approach: *"Just as he [Jesus] does use the language of his time, I'm using the language of this time, which is manifest[ation]."*
- **Maya Anazodo** on freedom from doctrinal constraint: *"What actually made me interested in the Urantia book was the fact that there was no hellfire."*