

# Foundation Leadership Forum 4 — Multimedia (Part 2)

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**Date:** 2026-04-26 **Duration:** approximately 1 hour 30 minutes **Chair:** David Kantor

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## Overview

The fourth forum continued the multimedia thread of the Roundtable. It opened with Jeannie Vazquez on social-media study groups (overflow from the Internationalisation forum), followed by Rick Lyon on Cosmic Creations and the role of print media, and Gary Tonge on Channel 606 — a collective of Urantia content creators developing a curated video platform — including a presentation by Derek Grimm (delivered by pre-recorded video) on the use of Unreal Engine virtual production. The forum closed with a community sing-along screening of a "Vincent (Starry Starry Night)" parody video about Jesus.

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## Presenters

- **Jeannie Vazquez** — UAI social-media subcommittee (joining by video)
  - **Rick Lyon** — Cosmic Creations (with wife Susan Lyon)
  - **Gary Tonge** — Channel 606 collective
  - **Derek Grimm** — Channel 606; presenting on virtual production with Unreal Engine (pre-recorded video shown during Gary Tonge's segment)
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## Topics Presented

### Social media study groups (Jeannie Vazquez)

Vazquez framed social media as global infrastructure (citing approximately 5.6 billion users worldwide, approximately 64 percent of the world population, as of early 2026). She presented the largest Facebook-based Urantia Book groups: an English-speaking group with approximately 13,000 members; a Spanish-speaking group with approximately 23,500 members; the largest Spanish group with more than 43,500 members. She noted "more than 100 other smaller study groups on Facebook and several more on WhatsApp and Telegram."

She framed Facebook groups as effective spaces for outreach because they permit moderated public participation, accommodate quiet observers, and reach people across language and culture. She emphasised the need for moderation that focuses on the teachings, avoids divisive or discriminatory content, and welcomes newcomers.

She named the Brazilian Urantia School as an example of a structured online platform — a Portuguese-language operation with weekly Zoom classes, divided into basic / intermediate / advanced modules, with a website and exercise modules. Over the past two years they have offered the life and teachings of Jesus, paper by paper, with one paper per two-week cycle (one week exposition, one week analysis).

In Q&A:

- **Lisa Crawford** asked clarifying questions about what "study" means in a Facebook context. Vazquez described it as content sharing — articles, studies, analysis, news — with discussion in the comments below.
- **Douglas Burns** asked about synchronous versus asynchronous engagement. Vazquez confirmed Facebook groups are predominantly asynchronous and emphasised their value as a dissemination tool.
- **Geoff Theiss** asked about the gap between institutional engagement and social-media reach. Vazquez responded that the lack of organised, coordinated team-based service from the institutions is a missed opportunity, and that a database of curated answers to common questions, archeological/scientific information, and other resources would be valuable.

## Cosmic Creations and print media (Rick Lyon)

Lyon presented Cosmic Creations, the merchandising and secondary-works distribution operation that he and his wife Susan Lyon run, with roots dating to 2014. He described:

- Distribution of secondary works (new and used), including used materials donated by readers and recycled to new homes
- Self-publishing operations begun about a decade ago after working with Carol Bye (widow of John Bye, creator of Urantia revelation posters); Cosmic Creations now publishes for several authors including Rick Warren and Carrie Branch (children's books), and produces a coffee-table book derived from the Discover Jesus website
- Print, digital, and audio formats
- A range of merchandise (T-shirts, hats, jewellery, pins, key chains) carrying Urantia symbolism — concentric circles, sometimes combined with the cross

He framed the symbolism aspect with reference to Paper 87, Section 7, Paragraph 3 — that "modern believers in moral standards and spiritual ideals have no adequate symbolism, no cult of mutual support, nothing belong to" — and proposed the concentric circles as such a symbol.

He shared anecdotes about merchandise serving as a passive opener for conversations — at the Parliament of World Religions in Salt Lake City, at a movie theatre, at a polling station, and through a necklace that revealed a friendship spanning two best friends who had not previously known they were both readers.

He encouraged secondary-works creation: distributors carry the Urantia Book more readily as more books *about* the book are published; he encouraged attendees to write books, create children's content, and to leave positive reviews on Amazon for existing secondary works.

**Mo Siegel** noted that the previous Foundation publishing operation, Good Cheer Press, was a perpetual financial loss-maker; Cosmic Creations has absorbed those losses by taking on the work.

## Channel 606 — a collective of Urantia content creators (Gary Tonge)

Tonge presented Channel 606 as a collective of independent Urantia content creators: members include Jerry David Day (music and visualisations), Josh Abernathy (Urantia Book of Science and History), the *Imperfections* podcast (multiple hosts and guests), Shane Tyler (*111 HQ*), Vision Afar, the *Cosmic Citizen* podcast (long-running, joined recently by Tonge with Paula Thompson, André

Radatus, Gabriel Pamela Chap, and Chuck Thurston as co-hosts, with video episodes coming to Channel 606 in 2026), and Derek Grimm's *Urantia TLDR* documentary series.

He framed the collective's challenges and opportunities: individual creators are limited by resources; small-scale individual production is not delivering meaningful impact; YouTube and other generalised platforms drown quality content in an "ocean of noise" (he cited approximately 30,000 hours uploaded to YouTube per hour, or 720,000 hours per day); and content posted to YouTube risks being scraped and re-platformed without permission (he cited a recent experience with what he called a "parasitic" platform that has since been suspended).

He proposed a Channel 606 platform as a curated Netflix-style home for Urantia-related video content, beginning as a web-based platform and expanding to other devices, with multilingual support, collaborative production tools, and the goal of attracting larger projects with greater impact.

## **Virtual production with Unreal Engine (Derek Grimm — pre-recorded video)**

Grimm's video, presented within Gary Tonge's segment, framed Unreal Engine as a real-time creation platform suited to long-form Urantia documentary and dramatic work. He contrasted Unreal Engine with current AI video generators on six grounds: cost structure (Unreal is free; AI generators charge per output); the ability to maintain a coherent world across time; the ability to depict things that have never existed (he cited the canonical UB description of Adam and Eve as eight feet tall with violet luminous skin — a description that AI generators cannot accurately produce because no training data resembles it); creative precision; clarity of intellectual property ownership; and range of scale (from solo independent creators to studios producing series like *The Mandalorian*).

He framed the opportunity for the Urantia community as a small group with the right asset library serving as a creative resource for educators, storytellers, and filmmakers across the community.

## **Discussion: a Revelation Studio (Gabriel Rymberg)**

Rymberg, in audience response, called for a coordinated production house — "a real studio for the revelation, where we collaborate together" — encompassing software development, translations, screenwriting, production, audio, and video. He framed Channel 606 and current creators as the seed of such a studio and proposed pursuing this as one of the action items of the Roundtable. He offered to help write a proposal.

He also noted that the part-three feature film he had described in the previous forum (*The First Choice* — Andon and Fonta) is intended to be produced using AI but that Unreal Engine is a stronger tool for that purpose, and stated he would meet with Derek to discuss using Unreal.

## A caution on aesthetics (Richard Jernigan)

Jernigan offered a caution: the Urantia Book demythologises the story of Jesus and humanity's understanding of religion. Visual production should be careful not to re-mythologise. He said the aesthetic should carry the "raw newness" that readers feel on first encountering the Jesus papers — not the visual language of the New Testament or Renaissance painting; not the visual language of *The Mandalorian* — but something that conveys "this is what really happened."

## Closing video: "Vincent (Starry Starry Night)" parody (Rick Lyon, Gary Tonge, Jim English)

Lyon screened a re-lyriced version of Don McLean's "Vincent" with words addressed to Jesus, produced by Rick Lyon, Gary Tonge, and Jim English. Mo Siegel reported the video has approximately 156,000 views on YouTube. Tonge added that the video earned approximately 22,000 organic views in the eight days following its Christmas release and approximately 15,000 in its Easter run.

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## Questions Raised

- **Lisa Crawford** to Jeannie Vazquez: what does "study" mean in the context of a Facebook group?
- **Douglas Burns** to Jeannie Vazquez: synchronous or asynchronous engagement model?
- **Geoff Theiss** to Jeannie Vazquez: what is the gap between institutional engagement and social-media reach, and where is the opportunity?
- **André Radatus** to Jeannie Vazquez: is there a website for the Brazilian Urantia School?
- **Mo Siegel** to Gary Tonge: how are the YouTube view counts verified as real people rather than bot traffic?
- **Speaker (unidentified)** to Gary Tonge: how was Derek Grimm's avatar in the video produced? (Tonge confirmed it was a green-screen pre-recorded performance, not AI-generated.)

- **Sue Seccombe** to Gary Tonge: is the Netflix-style platform planned for online or TV? (Tonge confirmed web-based first, with apps and TV expansion to follow.)
  - **Sue Seccombe** to Gary Tonge: is there a Roku channel for Urantia content? (Tonge clarified that the Roku channel previously available was the parasitic content-scraping platform that has been suspended.)
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## Notable Quotes (verbatim)

- **Rick Lyon** on the role of secondary works: *"All great books and books written about them" — relaying long-standing advice from Mo Siegel about why secondary works matter for distributor uptake of the Urantia Book.*
- **Gary Tonge** on YouTube: *"Posting quality content onto YouTube can feel like dropping a bag of sugar into the Pacific Ocean and expecting it to taste sweet afterwards."*
- **Derek Grimm** on Unreal Engine versus AI generators: *"AI can only generate variations of what already exists... For content rooted in genuinely original concepts, this is the difference between visuals that honour their source material and visuals that merely approximate it."*
- **Gabriel Rymberg** in the discussion: *"I'd like to put the big vision out there of a studio that normally has software development, translations, screenwriting, production, audio, video — so a real studio for the revelation, where we collaborate together."*
- **Richard Jernigan** on aesthetics: *"Be very cognisant of the aesthetic you bring to your imagery, so that it has that kind of raw newness... So it does not feel like \*The Mandalorian, but it feels like something where, wow, this is what really happened."\**
- **Marcel Peereboom**, departing the meeting: *"My gratitude and love to you all is unpronounceable, so I will not say any word about that, but you are all in my heart."*