

# Neal Waldrop

## **Spiritual journey**

I was born in June 1947, the first child of a Roman Catholic mother and a Protestant father. My father, an attorney, used his skills in cross-examination to challenge me in religious matters and compel me to defend the precepts of the Roman Catholic Church that I was learning in school. Nonetheless, I was quite devout. I served as an altar boy and, during my first two years of university studies, as a lay reader of scriptures during services at the Roman Catholic chapel. In the fall of 1966, however, I succumbed to a crisis of faith, suspending belief and becoming an agnostic. Six years later I began an intensive program of exploratory reading, just after I returned to the Washington area from my U.S. Navy assignment in Morocco. These explorations led me through astrology, rajah yoga meditation, Hindu mysticism, and so on to *The Urantia Book* (November 1973), after which the rest rapidly fell away.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, I helped to organize a series of regional conferences for readers of *The Urantia Book* that were held in the Washington, DC area. I served as a Trustee of Urantia Foundation for a tempestuous three years (August 1989 – August 1992), but the practical circumstances of that era made it necessary for me to resign when my family and I were transferred to Canberra, Australia.

In September 2003, the Trustees appointed me as a Trustee Emeritus and asked me to participate actively in the work of the Board for a period of four years. This active involvement ended in August 2007, but I remain a Trustee Emeritus (essentially an honorary title) and am a member of the Foundation's Translation Committee, in part because I retain a strong personal interest in the Chinese translation in progress.

## **The Global Endeavor**

In retrospect, “Futurity” (July 1998) may have been the most important speech that I have ever given at a conference of readers of *The Urantia Book*, not because of what it said, but because of what it signified. In practice, this presentation marked the beginning of my active search for methods that would enable readers to contribute to the progressive growth and development of human society and civilization, pursuant to the patterns and goals that the revelators have portrayed in Part III. In November 2003, I suddenly realized that we should adopt the same basic approach as the master seraphim and should use their work as our spiritual model.

In January 2004, the Trustees of Urantia Foundation appointed me as the chairman of an ad hoc committee tasked with developing a plan for idealistic service to individuals and groups in society who wish to promote progressive growth and development in their own fields of experience, knowledge, or interest. During the next three years, the ad hoc committee developed the plan, but in January 2007 the Trustees decided that the Foundation should not sponsor it. Instead, they encouraged individuals to pursue the

initiative independently. At first I was intensely disappointed, but after a while I came to understand that an entirely independent approach has very substantial advantages.

The Committee for the Global Endeavor now has seven members (five from the United States, one from Canada, and one from the United Kingdom). Our fundamental goal is to promote the progressive growth of human society and civilization, while seeking to serve others in the spirit of the master seraphim. The plan we are pursuing is indeed global, but the endeavor will start small and will develop bit by bit.

Even though we are still in the formative stages, the French translation of the committee's documents is almost finished, and work on the Spanish translation began in late 2009. We welcome and encourage active interest and hope that readers of *The Urantia Book* will take a close look. For further information, please see the committee's modest website (<http://www.globalendeavor.net>).

### **Professional background**

After graduating from college in June 1969 with a B.A. in history, I worked for the U.S. Department of Defense for just over one year. In September 1970, I entered the U.S. Navy. For the next five years, I performed various duties that related to naval communications, while assigned to Newport, Rhode Island; Sidi Yahia du Rharb, Morocco; and Washington, DC.

In January 1976, I reported to the U.S. Department of State in Washington, in order to begin work as a Foreign Service Officer (career diplomat). From that moment until I retired in September 2003, I performed various diplomatic or official duties in Washington, in New York City, and in four overseas locations (Taipei, Taiwan; Hong Kong; Canberra, Australia; and Geneva, Switzerland).

As I look back on my career in the Foreign Service, I consider it an apprenticeship during which I learned how to understand and influence people from many countries who had a wide range of cultural and social backgrounds. Two intervals were particularly important: (1) my 1988-1991 assignment at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. in New York, during which I worked on human rights and other social topics; and (2) my 1998-2002 assignment in Geneva, Switzerland, during which I participated in active discussion of a wide range of multilateral issues associated with arms control and disarmament. In addition, I benefited immeasurably from almost two years of full-time training in Mandarin Chinese (September 1978 – June 1980).

Since November 2006, I have been working as a translator from French to English and from English to French, carrying out these tasks for a branch of the U.S. Department of Justice.

### **Personal background**

In February 1982, I married the former Vanessa Wong, whom I met while assigned to the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong. We have two children: our daughter Charmaine (b. June 1984), and our son Kirk (b. February 1988).