



The 2011 Interfaith Committee Report

Thanks to Robin Jorgenson, our application to become an NGO has been approved and passed on to UN HQ for their acceptance and confirmation. This has been an extremely slow process but we're finally nearing the completion process.

NGO Monitor defines NGOs as autonomous non-profit and non-party/politically-unaffiliated organizations that advance a particular cause or set of causes in the public interest. The range of causes on which an NGO can focus is unlimited, but a cardinal principle is that NGOs operate in a manner consistent with the objectives for which they receive funds. Donations are an NGO's lifeline because they are independent organizations. Funding can come from governments, the UN, private trusts and philanthropies, individual donations, religious institutions, and, in many cases, other NGOs. NGOs can contribute to democracy through challenging governments and promoting social interests, but they themselves are not democratic institutions and have no democratic accountability. An NGO is only accountable to its particular funding organizations and members.

There are a multitude of projects we can begin and join powerful groups with access to a wide array of resources. NGO's work in the grass roots arena and are necessary for planetary change. We work where governments will not.

Meredith Tenney emailed me recently to ask if we have NGO status because she is involved with *How Women and Girls Lead across the World*. The Women of the U.N. are sponsoring a World Conference on Women that NGO delegates may attend (Newsletter@LightPages.net). Since we have been approved, Meredith may attend.

As the result of a Big Questions workshop given in the New York area by Peter Laurence and Angie Thurston, three Protestant ministers have now joined a *Urantia Book* study group hosted by Gary and Andrea Deinstadt. One of those ministers hosts a regularly-scheduled interfaith service at his church, which Gary and Andrea have joined. Gary, who has become ordained as an interfaith minister, occasionally preaches at the interfaith service, representing *The Urantia Book*.

The Urantia Book Fellowship is solidly in place in the Kansas City Interfaith community. I've thoroughly enjoyed the work and challenge to get this accomplished.

Our work is coming to an end. I will not be resubmitting my application to the General Council. I've been with the E.C. for 9 years and am imposing a term limit on myself. My desire is that someone younger and energetic vision take my place.