

**The Foundation--Brotherhood Relationship Crisis
A Question of Underlying Philosophy
Presented at SFBAUS--January 20, 1990**

As our understanding of the relationship between URANTIA Foundation and the former URANTIA Brotherhood matures, it becomes increasingly apparent that the basis for this controversy is in the disparate philosophical views which each organization holds. While reconciliation of the relationships between the persons holding differing philosophical views should be and is taking place, any reconciliation between the two organizations is a different matter and must be based upon an honest and open-minded dialogue which attempts to reconcile the underlying philosophies which drive each organization. Fifth Epochal Fellowship has been and is willing to engage the Trustees in such a dialogue, despite their October 30 actions which terminated the Brotherhood's rights to use the symbols which identify our work as associated directly with *The Urantia Book*.

It is our view that there were real and significant philosophical reasons for the original separation of the human functions associated with this revelation into the two organizations, URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation. Specifically, we believe:

First, that it was and is appropriate to vest the custodial and protective functions in a small, autocratic group insulated to some degree from political pressures.

Secondly, that it was and is appropriate to vest the religio-social functions in a self-governing, democratically functioning body of readers and believers who choose to enter into a cooperative association as a consequence of their finding and committing to the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.

Third, that the separation of these functions would insulate the religio-social group from the legalistic, secular, and materialistic work of the Foundation, thereby freeing it to evolve as a true fellowship of religionists dedicated to the study and dissemination of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*.

And, fourth, that the original plan was based upon the need to utilize human, materialistic techniques and laws to protect the revelation in the early years. This form of protection would then slowly give way over time to the living protection of the book and its teachings by its broad, multi-lingual distribution across the face of the planet and the existence of a worldwide network of readers and believers. All of this would take place quietly but steadily in advance of and as a prelude to the worldwide public mission of *The Urantia Book*.

An analogy which helps to explain this developmental pattern is this: Just as the eggshell protects a chick before it hatches, so the legal system protects *The Urantia Book* until its religio-social expression (the fellowship of readers and believers) hatches. Just as the nurturance and protection of the hatched chick is provided by other sources, legal protection of *The Urantia Book* must give way to nurturance by individuals who become committed to the success of this revelation on our planet.

It is our belief that the current relationship crisis and actions on the part of URANTIA Foundation are based upon the Foundation's philosophical belief that the only way to achieve its protective objectives is to use its legal and secular approach to control the development of the very organization which was to provide protection when the legal approach could no longer be used effectively. This is somewhat like trying to control the chick's development by stuffing it back into the eggshell. At a time when URANTIA Foundation's efforts should have been directed more at nurturing URANTIA Brotherhood, instead they were directed at control. Instead of efforts being directed at support and encouragement, fear of the law and disenfranchisement were used as threats. Then in October 1989 the threat became

A Question of Philosophy—page 2

action and the relationship was severed by the Foundation. The chick was kicked out of the nest and its name taken away—all because it refused to climb back into its shell.

In our view, the current Trustees of URANTIA Foundation have mis-interpreted the organizational responsibilities intended by the founders. This contention is supported by six of the seven past Trustees whose service totals 77 years (see letter from the past Trustees, January 18, 1990). Two of these trustees served consecutively as president for the first 33 years of the Foundation's existence. This mis-interpretation manifested itself in the legal registration of the Concentric Circles Symbol and the word, Urantia, as trademarks in the early 1970s, which is coincident with Martin Myers joining the Board. Since that time, the attempts to control the growing worldwide fellowship of readers and believers have become increasingly stronger. Our research suggests that the Foundation's actions seemed to be based upon an instruction message given to the Contact Commission in the 1940s. The date and wording has been confirmed by several knowledgeable people. Because it is so crucial to the understanding of the philosophical basis for our current dilemma, we would like to share the text of that message. It is as follows:

You must carefully safeguard the name, Urantia. Make it very safe for one generation so that it cannot be preempted. In a common law trust you hold the name. You also do it in the copyright. You must also register it with the division of government which controls trade relations, trademarks. In all ways you must safeguard the name. This is one of your most important duties.

To understand the relevance of this "message" we need to evaluate it in the context of its date, the fact that the book had not been published at that time, Urantia Brotherhood was obviously not in existence then, Urantia Foundation had not been formalized, and the only possible protection for the manuscript and identifying word (Urantia) was legal. It should also be noted that the Concentric Circles Symbol was not mentioned at all. The purpose of this instruction seems clearly to be that the humans at that time were to take steps to preempt the word for the "one generation" needed to bring the book to print, to begin its distribution, and to hatch the chick which was to become URANTIA Brotherhood. Clearly, it would have been tragic if, unknowingly, the humans at that time failed to copyright the book or take steps to preempt the word, Urantia, until the two organizations whose very existence would guarantee preemption, came into being. Although all the other actions were achieved, the word, Urantia, was not registered at that time. Despite this lack of registration, the word was preempted by the creation of the two organizations in the 1950s, followed by the steady growth of the Brotherhood into a worldwide fellowship. Thus, by the early 1970s, when "one generation" had passed, it would have been appropriate to question whether it was necessary to begin the legal machinations which have generated significant organizational strife since that time, and finally led to what many older readers have described as the inevitable disenfranchisement of URANTIA Brotherhood.

It is noteworthy that this entire process is coincident with the addition to the Board of Trustees of Martin Myers with his legal training and background. It is probable that his legalistic worldview contributed to an extraordinary focus on the legal means of protection. Thus, instead of the Trustees' managing the evolution of protection from the initial legalistic approach to the living protection afforded by broad, multi-lingual distribution and the association of readers and believers around the planet, they chose instead to hold onto a narrow focus, a focus which could ultimately lead to the destruction of that which they were intended to foster.

Some direct consequences of this extraordinary focus on legal mechanisms are:

1. There has been continuing divisiveness within our two organizations which should not be joined by law but by a deepening commitment to their common purpose and to the revelation. It is rather like a husband and wife joined not only by a marriage certificate but, more importantly, by evolving love and respect.

A Question of Philosophy—page 3

2. There also has been a willingness on the part of the Trustees to utilize, as tools of control, symbols of religious significance which they registered as commercial trademarks. These actions are divisive and only serve to nullify a decision-making process which was originally structured to be based on group wisdom.

3. The registration and maintenance of symbols from *The Urantia Book* as commercial trademarks requires that URANTIA Foundation disclaim the religious and revelatory meaning of these symbols since United States law won't allow them to be trademarked if they have religious significance. This is clearly a concern in the reader community and, when added to the Foundation's claimed superiority over the Brotherhood's decisions, has resulted in an unfortunate attempt to steer the Brotherhood's evolution by legalistic rather than spiritual concerns. This is in direct contradiction to the originating decisions of the founders and negates one of the inherent purposes of separation: to insulate the religio-social from the secular and legalistic.

Insert
markete
on
Founders

4. Inexplicably, after years of praising the constitutional format determined by our founders, and the expenditure of substantial monies to insure that our Removal Procedures were sound, the current Trustees of URANTIA Foundation have now seen fit to disenfranchise the organization set up originally. In his June, 1973 paper, "Unity Not Uniformity," Martin Myers stated: "The Constitution of URANTIA Brotherhood is in my opinion one of the most consistent, liberal, fair plans that has yet been devised for any movement." But not only have they disenfranchised the former URANTIA Brotherhood, they have willfully chosen to set up a competing membership organization which cannot possibly function as originally intended and which may divide the readership community. Continued mark control in such an organization will continue to stifle group decision-making and dictate legalistic and secular values.

5. Finally, despite the fact that the Trustees hold title to *The Urantia Book* and execute their responsibilities in trust for its beneficiaries, the "general public," they were willing on October 30, 1989 to withdraw from some of these beneficiaries—the members of URANTIA Brotherhood—the right to use symbols related directly to the revelation given to all of us. One of their stated reasons for this withdrawal was that members of the former Brotherhood criticized some of the Trustees and their actions. It should be noted that United States trust law guarantees the right of the beneficiaries of a trust to both monitor and criticize the performance of trustees acting on their behalf.

In summary, while the unity of our spiritual commitments and personal relationships can be maintained whether or not URANTIA Foundation and FIFTH EPOCHAL FELLOWSHIP are ever able to re-establish a partnership, the underlying philosophical differences must be reconciled. With only a mere 40 years left of copyright protection, it would be a tragedy if legalistic and secular considerations continue to play such a major role in driving Foundation actions that the living protective objectives of widespread, multi-lingual distribution, and a thriving, worldwide religio-social fellowship of readers/believers are squandered in order to satisfy commercial trademark law.

While the philosophical basis for our decision-making has up until October 30 been driven mainly by URANTIA Foundation, the recent Foundation actions have freed us to enable the membership of our organization to develop and evolve our driving philosophies and values through the constituted democratic group process. And this opportunity and responsibility naturally leads to the continued development of plans and programs which are responsive to the growing fellowship of readers. We are beginning this process next week with the General Council, Society representatives, and Area Coordinators. It is our hope that this continuing development will insure that the living protection our fellowship was originally intended to provide takes place until such time as decisions or evolution once again allows our organization to freely use the symbols associated with these teachings.