March 6, 1985

To: Chuck Burton, Chairman, Special Projects Committee
From: Chick Montgomery, Committee Member

Subject: PUTTING THE TEXT OF THE BOOK INTO COMPUTER-READABLE
FORM

As you know, I have for some time been interested in the
possibilities and problems of putting the text of The URANTIA
Book into computer readable form, and last year suggested to you
and your committee that we might address this issue as a special
project. When you called the other day you encouraged me to
pursue this, so I have prepared the following analysis of the
subject.

MAIN USER	APPLICATION	FEASIBILITY
Foundation technology	Reprintings (in lieu of plates)........Existing	
Foundation technology	Translations	
	a. Machine assisted...................Existing	
years*	b. Fully automatic...................Within 10	
Foundation technology	Reformatting (English & other lang.)	
	a. Large type (for sight impaired)...Existing	
years	b. Voice-capable disk readers.......Within 5	
	c. Other?	
Foundation 1960's	Index and concordance preparation, formatting and typesetting...........Since late	
Brotherhood during	Scholarly Investigations...............Sophisticated tools	
	a. Linguistic analysis of papers developed	
1970's	b. Diction studies (word meanings)	
	c. Topical studies	

*Increasing feasibility. Machine translation of major languages
should be available within 10 years, of most other languages
within 25 years.

COPYRIGHT DIFFICULTIES

of computer readable Text

Whenever this subject comes up the problem of copyright is immediately raised. Copyright law in the area of machine-readable works is unclear and still evolving. In general it can be said that the principles of traditional copyright law are perpetuated in the evolving law of machine-readable works, namely that the rights of the copyright owner are protected.

I have studied the matter some, and hold the opinion that the Foundation could safely put the text into machine-readable form, provided it maintained control over the distribution of copies (disks etc.) and ~~policed~~ *controlled* the publishing of any derivative works (indexes, etc.) generated therefrom.

In other words, the Foundation would have the same powers and headaches in the dissemination and policing of machine-readable versions and derivatives as they now have in the dissemination and policing of paper-text versions and derivatives.

Naturally, any machine-readable versions disseminated would carry appropriate notices of copyright and use restrictions, just as the paper-text versions do.

EFFORTS TO DATE

1. About ten years ago the Foundation received a $1,000 gift earmarked for producing a computer-generated index, or otherwise putting the text into machine-readable form.

3. I understand that the contractor for the Spanish translation will be utilizing computers, but will not produce the English text on disk, as that was not in the contract. I do not know whether the Spanish text will be on disk or just hard copy.

2. During the past few years, several students of The URANTIA Book have produced partial copies of the text (and in at least one instance a complete copy) in machine-readable form. All those that I know of are responsible readers, well aware of the copyright issue and the aims of the Foundation.

POTENTIAL PROBLEM

Unless a positive effort is made to take control of the production of machine-readable versions and authorized derivatives thereof (indexes, translations, etc.) I can foresee a situation developing much like that which pertains with respect to the Spanish and other translations: namely individual enthusiasm will spontaneously generate worthwhile products, but they will be unusable because of lack of early Foundation involvement and overcontrol, and may even become occasions for

conflict.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The following are merely ideas to think about; they are not
necessarily suggestions:

1. Offer a $1,000 prize to the first person producing an
accurate and complete machine-readable version of the text of The
URANTIA Book. Because this approach implies allowing machine
manipulation of the text and could thus be seen as a relaxation
of copyright, a limited authorization with appropriate
restrictions would be included in the contest announcement.

2. Instead of offering a prize, the Foundation could issue a
request for proposal (RFP), and enter into a contract with with
one or more potential suppliers of the desired text. If
possible, the selected supplier(s) should be Brotherhood members.
~~(We should always seek to tap the considerable resources of free
talent and enthusiasm within our own group, both for the sake of
economy and engendering good will.)~~

3. The Foundation could, after investigation, offer to purchase
the best existing machine-readable version. Since this approach,
like #1, would appear to condone machine text handling, which is
specifically prohibited in the Book's printed copyright notice,
it would be desirable to first issue a limited authorization, as
in #1, and/or enter into a specific production contract, as in
#2, before making the actual purchase.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

In conclusion, I would recommend that our Committee propose to
the General Council that they ~~forward this paper~~ to the
Foundation with the following recommendations:

1. That the Foundation approve in concept that it is desirable,
under Foundation auspices and control, to produce a
machine-readable version of the text of The URANTIA Book, and,

2. That the Foundation encourage the Special Projects Committee
to coordinate with other interested members of the Brotherhood to
prepare and submit further suggestions for procedural guidelines
for such production of a machine-readable version of the text of
The URANTIA Book.