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**The Millennium Initiative Committee
Facilitating Movement to Higher Community Ground
June 7, 1999**

Dear MI Participants:

In anticipation of our upcoming meeting, I wanted to provide you with one person's view of a way forward for our community, in the context of where we have been and the job I believe we have been given.

Purpose Summary

I believe that the Millennium Initiative Committee has been assembled for the purpose of helping to lead our broader reader community into a higher order of functioning wherein spiritual leadership replaces political leadership and our deepening commitment is to the greater planetary purposes and plans for this fifth revelatory epoch, and to the Supreme.

Accomplishment of this mission will require that we choose to accept with ever-greater courage and dedication the responsibilities that surely accompany the gift of revelation that has been given us. We are part of the human corps that has found truth in these teachings and has made at least an initial commitment to become a part of this work. To be effective in leading the way to this higher ground, our small group—individually and collectively—must model the spirit-led choosing, dedication, courage, intelligence, personality respect, integrity, and love for each other that will foreshadow the coming of light and life on our world and prepare the “garden” for the coming of another son.

What is required initially is the unequivocal choice to go forward with this and accept fully whatever responsibilities are presented to us. We can be assured that we are choosing the most difficult way, not the easiest; but this is the way that leads to the Supremacy of experience, soul growth, and joy.

Background and Challenge

For the past 50 years, I believe an objective view of our community and its organizations and behaviors would conclude that we have socialized power, not religion. Moreover, we have had mediocre political leadership and virtually no spiritual leadership. Our organizational behavior and indeed much of our interpersonal behavior has been selfish and inconsistent with the principles and values of personality relationships expressed in *The Urantia Book*. What we often point to as causes of strife (copyright issues, trademarks, lawsuits, leadership abuses, the split, identification with scaffolding organizations, structure, demonization of those with whom we disagree, etc.) are really symptoms. I would suggest that the underlying cause is the inertia of human fear that fuels our resistance to being truly uplifted by this revelation. Instead, we have attempted to capture its teachings like a firefly in a bottle so that we can have some light without the risk of crossing the

frontier into territory we have not traveled before and which requires that we seek to transfer the seat of our identity from the ego-self of lower human functioning to our soul.

When I look back, as I have often done, on the events leading to the pivotal severing of Urantia Brotherhood by the Foundation in 1989, I have concluded (after much soul searching) that I, and others as well at that time, made political decisions, not spiritual ones. I personally wish now that I had been able to keep the higher commitment in view and had chosen a course that would not have sacrificed unity of purpose to the lesser cause of dealing with an abusive office-holder. When I look at the way we treat each other organizationally today, I see generally similar behavior—political not spiritual choosing. Rather than confront, or compete with, or demonize, or exclude other groups who are on this common path (whether we agree with them or not), why would we not want all of them to be wildly successful? Why would anyone want Urantia Foundation, the group so clearly dedicated to making the book widely available on the planet, to fail? Why would we marginalize the TEAM movement, a group less political and more dedicated to actually living the teachings than many others? Why must anyone negatively characterize IUA, a group of people who freely committed their energy and loyalty to the Foundation's work, as pawns of the Foundation? Why would anyone want UBF, a group populated by some of the most experienced readers in the world and clearly committed to the revelation as the focus of its work, to fall by the wayside?

Politics, the socialization of power, needs by its very nature to have winners and losers. To be in control, or to have one's ideas validated by like-minded people, or to have a self-elevated common function or purpose seem increasingly to be strategies designed to deal with fear, uncertainty, and doubt. In this context, the ascendancy of one's particular way of acting or believing requires the failure of the opposing viewpoint or group embodying that viewpoint. The spiritual point of view, however, seems to manifest the opposite. One's deeply held beliefs or philosophy or life purpose is not threatened at all by the co-existence of another way to believe, or live, or express experience. In fact, the very success of others in their chosen path validates the spiritual nature of the Father's universe, purposes, and plan. I would suggest that the lack of spiritual leadership in our movement for perhaps its entire 50-year existence is the root cause of our current status. It is painful to think that as new readers enter our organizational arena, filled with the spiritual inspiration we know from experience comes from the teachings, this enthusiasm is relentlessly diluted as they are called to the lower task of joining the work of socializing power on one side or the other. Those of us who have served as leaders in this community over the years are responsible for that. ENTHUSIASM APPROPRIATED BY UF.

The point here is not to berate others or ourselves for acting in a way that falls far short of our ideals. Rather, notwithstanding the solace offered by the realization that we may have done as well as we could, we know now that we can and must do far better. We cannot go back, but we can surely go forward with the renewed, more intelligent and experienced dedication to set a truer course. Unless and until we do, we cannot lead ourselves, our community, or the world into the promise of this next great epoch of growth toward Supremacy. If we cannot begin to live with true unity of purpose under the fifth epochal principles of one world, one language, and one culture under the sovereignty of

one God, how can we expect others to accept the teachings we espouse as true? With or without us our planet and its peoples will move toward light and life. Our choice is either to be a part of that grand march or see the mantle of responsibility pass to others. It is worth remembering that God is no respecter of persons. If we can't lead the way into this next epoch someone else will surely do so.

Structural Vision Commentary

General: While it can be argued with some merit that structure is relatively unimportant if we have true spiritual leadership and that even good structure will fail without it, I believe that we ignore the issue of structure at our peril. Our own brief history has shown that spiritual progress is often inconsistent, not only in each of us but in all of us. If we consider structure as the riverbed in which will flow the personality relationships and the socialization of religion consequential to the encounter between the revelation and will creatures, it can be concluded that it is an important means to a greater end. From my perspective, the evolution of this riverbed must be driven by values and not based on temporal functions, organizational goals, or identification with scaffolding entities. In a sense, the riverbed will carry the values, principles, philosophy, and culture by which we live so that others who come after us will join a community dedicated to spiritual decisions--not political ones. It is within that larger community that sub-groupings will form from time-to-time based on like-mindedness, common experience, and to accomplish a specific temporal task. In this way, those who encounter the teachings will join a community attempting to live by the principles and values of the fifth epoch, not enlisted to join a group committed to this function, this job, or this political mode of operation. Loyalty is to the Father, to each other, and to the work of building one's soul, actualizing the Supreme, and to the work of our planetary supervisors and mentors, not to the purposes or functions of the Foundation, or IUA, or UBF, TEAM or other temporal, scaffolding organization. As Carolyn has stated, these groupings are means, not ends in themselves.

A Unified Organizational Entity: It is my belief that we must have a single worldwide organizational entity—something for people to join. Why?

1. It is reflective of and contributory to the actualization of the Supreme, a goal which we need to experience and model in our community relationships.
2. It is expressive of true unity of purpose in the face of multi-dimensional diversity.
3. It represents a step in the direction of our world's destiny—humans united on one world, with one language, one culture, one government—none of which detracts from the essential and lasting diversity of personality uniqueness and experiential expression.
4. It demonstrates where our values lie—united by the unity of our commonality of origin, purpose, and destiny as will children of God, rather than separated by the differences of ideology, culture, and evolutionary background and experience often derived from identification with the ego-self.
5. It demonstrates that we can differ in expression and stay united; that we can disagree over philosophy yet share a common purpose; that we can choose alternate pathways

SMALL GROUP LEAVES THE WHOLE CAMP

IF ITS NOT LOCAL, WITH DIRECT PERSONALITY INTERACTION, IT WILL BE MERELY AN ABSTRACTION

back to our Father yet be certain that we are headed in the same direction; that we value and respect the personality integrity of others more than the need to justify our own choices.

6. It shows that we are focused on the larger work of leading the way into our planet's fifth epoch and validates our belief in the plans and purposes of the revelators and our planetary supervisors.
7. It shows that we can learn from the past, our own and others, and not replicate the centuries of sectarian competition and institutional failures which followed Michael's bestowal on our world.

Specific: Although I believe that the design and nature of a new organizational entity for our community should be the work of many minds together, I would like to offer some ideas to initiate the structural conversation.

1. I believe that we need to develop a statement of mission for our reader community that is value-driven and which balances individual spiritual development (soul-growth, circle attainment, the realization of cosmic citizenship), group commitment to the purposes of the revelation, the responsibilities of this dawning fifth epoch, and the realization of duty to and actualization of the Supreme. Existing organizational statements should be reviewed and utilized only if it is determined that they are consistent with the higher purposes we can now envision after 50 years of experience.

2. I believe that we should together develop a series of "Principles" that would be the primary framework in which we would conduct our community's organizational work. These principles would also be value statements and might include:

--All of our decisions, activities, and organizational relationships shall reflect our recognition of the sovereignty of God and our duty to the Supreme;

--We pledge that our work together shall become increasingly alive with the meaning and value of the Gospel—"sonship with God, brotherhood with man, and ever ascending citizenship in the eternal universe." (1078.7)

--In all our community relationships we will attempt to live by the highest meaning of the Golden Rule: to do to others that which we would have them do to us.

3. I no longer believe that the democratic governance model of organization is the correct one for a community established for the purpose of socializing religion. It is my sense that that model has, not surprisingly, contributed to our focus on politics—the socialization of power. Instead, I would propose that we look closely at service-based organizational structures. In particular, it is my sense that Alcoholics Anonymous is the kind of non-governmental, service-oriented, and largely self-governing structure that will facilitate our movement to higher functioning and be reflective of the values we espouse. The AA structure is minimal: it has two foundations that develop and publish their materials, provide communication and coordination, and hold conferences when and where appropriate. Local chapters are wholly self-governing and follow no particular or mandated structure thereby being free to reflect the style and

YET — LOCAL, INTIMATE CONTEXTS —

culture of those who populate it. The only apparent requirement is that the local chapters function based on the overall mission and guiding principles for AA. To me, this kind of minimal structure would be more consistent with our purposes and would allow people to gather to socialize their religious response to the revelation in their own way and yet be able to identify with a world community dedicated to the purposes of the revelation. The foundation we might charter would provide the coordinating, publishing, educational, and pooling of resources required to achieve our planetary purposes.

4. The socio-religious entity I am describing here should be entirely separate from Urantia Foundation but, inasmuch as its worldwide success will be based on the work that Urantia Foundation does, it must be wholly cooperative with and supportive of that work. We must overcome the temptation to harm, marginalize, or control those with whom we disagree and instead dedicate ourselves to mutual support in the work—both individual and collective—we have before us.

Summary

It seems clear to me that our young community, when faced with problems not unlike those faced by the Apostles and John's Disciples some 2,000 years ago, placed higher value on our divergent beliefs and viewpoints than on unity of purpose and so, inevitably, ended up where we are today. It seems clear from the way in which Jesus handled this situation and what he said to the gathered group that unity of purpose was demonstrably more important than whether baptism became a necessary part of conversion to the Jesusonian Gospel. "But when you enter upon the co-ordination of divergent human interpretations of religious questions and upon the socialization of religion, you are destined to solve all such problems by your own decisions. Albeit, I am ever sympathetic and always interested, and when you arrive at your conclusions touching these matters of non-spiritual import, provided you are all agreed, then I pledge in advance my full approval and hearty co-operation. (1625.0) Can we any longer allow the relatively petty issues that divide us to continue to do so when we can be guaranteed of Michael's full support for our choice of a higher, unified course?"

In my view, our Millennium Initiative Group has been assembled in order to commit ourselves to the process of leading our community to a higher level of functioning which is more consistent with the fifth epochal revelation and the purposes of revelation on our planet generally. Considering our origins, and using the lessons of the past (both our own and those of previous revelations) in relationship to the destiny we envision, we should be able to respond to this responsibility and initiate this process. If we do so, we will leave a legacy for those who come after us to evolve and improve on the process so that this revelation can do its work in the next millennium.

Looking forward to spending this weekend with each of you,

David Elders