

The Boulder School
for Students of the Urantia Book
P.O. Box 19135
Boulder, CO 80308
303/665/6829
FAX/665/5076

May 5, 1995

Executive Committee Members
The Fellowship

Dear Friends,

This letter is a response to Harry's letter of May 1 regarding re-typesetting the Fellowship edition of the Urantia Book. If the Executive Committee wishes to reset the text, that decision is, of course, yours to make. However, before there is a rush to judgement based on Harry's letter and Nancy's samples, I would like to add the following information to the process.

First of all, Nancy and I have spent quite a while on the phone discussing all of this, and while our evaluation of various points differs, I think I can speak for both of us when I say that we are willing and able to co-operate toward the implementation of whatever decision the Executive Committee should make. This is not a personal issue for either of us.

Specific Issues:

1. Column-straddling prayers. It is understandable that Harry and Nancy would like to highlight the differences between the two versions of text, however, these are the only two papers in the book in which single-column poetry appears. In the 1700 pages of our version, there are only 5 which contain single-column poetry, all of which are in the samples distributed with Harry's letter. I chose the single column format for these sections because it does the least damage to the flow of the poetry. I agree that the consistent columns "look" better in Nancy's format, but there is a significant loss in readability because the rhythm of the poetry is so thoroughly camouflaged by the narrow columns. Thus, the wide format of the prayers was not due to poor typesetting, it is the result of an editorial decision to preserve verbal clarity at the expense of visual balance. However, if the Executive Committee would like to have the two column format, it seems to me that resetting five pages would make much more sense than resetting the whole book. (In any case, before making a decision to reset even these pages, it might be worth while for the Committee to look at Paper 144 in the old *Livre d'Urantia* to see how, in book form, the transition from double to single column appears—it is not inherently ugly. In this context, you should also note that copying the formatted pages onto 8 1/2 x 11 paper greatly exaggerates the visual problems of the single-column poetry because the right-hand margin is impossible to discern, allowing the eye to run all the way to the edge of the page.)
2. Readability. As Harry notes, our format appears to be easier to read. It is easier to read because readability was our primary goal; not because the pages are wider. We achieved that goal by manipulating a number of options available to us, all of which were carefully considered. If you wish to use different settings, that's fine, but there is no magic combination that will allow larger type, smaller pages and a shorter book.

a. Typeface. The typeface used in our text is the standard Adobe Postscript Times-Roman font. Although there are a multitude of fonts available to the typesetter today, Times-Roman continues to be one of the most readable fonts ever developed. Most other serif "book" fonts (as opposed to decorative fonts) are variations on the basic Times-Roman form, and after reviewing many of them, it did not seem to me that any of these artistic variations resulted in an improvement in readability. Further, it seemed to me that the conservative dignity of Times-Roman would be more generally approved by current and future readers than any other font which I might prefer on artistic grounds. (I did not feel that a prolonged defense of Goudy Old Style, Palatino, Garamond, or Schoolbook would be profitable given that the differences are strictly artistic, and in the end, all are variations on Times-Roman anyway, and their distinctiveness from Times-Roman appears to laypeople, as often as not, as "eccentricities" rather than as improvements on the original.)

b. Point size of type. The point size used in our format is 10.5 point. The point size used has a significant impact on decipherability (ability to clearly read the letters forming the words), on line justification, on page sizes and on the length of the total text; it is not an insignificant trifle.

1) Decipherability. I think that the difference between the 10 point used by Nancy and the 10.5 point used in our format is dramatically apparent and significant in a book that is read for hours at a time by people of many different visual acuities (and which is not, at this time, available in a large-print version).

2) Line Justification. An increase in point size not only reduces the number of lines per page but the number of letters per line. In a narrow column format, a relatively modest increase in point size can cause a significant and obvious increase in the number of hyphenations and noticeably expanded or compressed letterspacings. This is one of the reasons why our columns (hence pages) are wider than Nancy's. If the point size in her sample were increased to 10.5 to make it easier to decipher, the columns would be too narrow to allow for consistent and visually pleasing line justification.

3) Page Size. As just indicated, point size impacts column width, which in turn impacts page size. The page width which we use (7 5/8 inches, compared to 6 3/4 inches in the old Urantia Foundation edition and 7 7/8 inches in their new edition) flows from the minimum column width required to fluently present 10.5 point type. The page height of 10 1/4 inches is 5/16 inches taller than the Urantia Foundation editions. Page height selection was based on an evaluation of page shape and of total text length.

4) Length of Text. As Harry noted, the point size also has an effect on the length of the text because of the number of lines per page is reduced as the point size goes up. The effect is determined by the page dimensions and margins used. Our goal was to produce a text of about 1700 pages in order to create a book that was thinner than the Urantia Foundation edition even though we were adding the Index and other appendices. In our analysis, it was determined that it is the thickness of the Urantia Book, more than its face dimensions, which gives the impression of massiveness, and which impacts portability most significantly. Therefore, we strove to decrease thickness at the expense of the face dimensions. However, it should be noted, that the net result of our compromises is a book which is only 7/8 inch wider than the old Foundation edition (and 1/4 inch narrower than their new edition) and only 5/16 inch taller. Based on the thickness of the paper which is currently under discussion (24# supercalendared), the new edition, based on 1700 pages of text, 50 pages of introductory materials and 130 pages of Index and appendices, the Fellowship edition will be about 1/4 inch thinner than the Foundation editions.)

3. Costs of Resetting the text. If the Executive Committee should decide that re-typesetting is required, I agree with Harry that the monetary costs should not be an impediment (although I do feel that they will be higher than the estimate, particularly when the proofing costs are included—the final proof which we had done cost about \$8,000; I don't know how a thorough, professional proof can be done for much less). However, I am greatly concerned about the time delay required. Even if Nancy resets the text in 2 months, the proofing will take at least the same amount of time (our team at the University of Colorado took 2 1/2 months with 2 full-time-equivalent workers.) And only after the proofing is done can the film be produced and proofed. If everything works extremely smoothly, with the proofing proceeding as typesetting is done, and Nancy gets the go-ahead on May 25, I don't think you'll have books until November at the earliest, probably it will be the first of the year.

4. The last point I wish to make is that I strongly disagree with Harry that the typesetting improvements will be of paramount importance to the buyers in the trade and that the delay required to recreate the text will be inconsequential. The most important factors for the trade, when comparing the Fellowship book to its only competition, the Foundation edition, will be:

- 1) "Is there a market for this book?"
- 2) "Do we already have a Urantia Book listed?"
- 3) "What is the profit margin?"
- 4) "What plans do you have to promote the book?"
- 5) "How does this book compare to its competition in the eyes of the consumer in pricing and features?"

Our salesman's answers to questions 1,3, and 4 are unaffected by typesetting. Our answer to numbers 2 and 5, which are critical, may be directly determined by the decision which you make regarding re-typesetting the Book because a delay may create a potentially disastrous window of opportunity for Urantia Foundation to move aggressively back into distribution. We can all hope that they don't, but I do not believe that relying on the fulfillment of that hope is wise.

There are clear indications that Urantia Foundation is preparing to compete with the Fellowship if its legal strategy fails—the announced publication of their paperback volume reveals their ability and commitment to respond to the challenge by the Fellowship. They are quite capable of deciding to hire a salesman or two and of re-working their margins and distribution policies if they believe it to be necessary, and I am convinced that they will do so because they know what we are doing and what to do to best compete with us. If I were a Trustee, I would go right out to the bookstores with both editions to attempt to preempt the Fellowship on presence and on price. If they decide to bracket the Fellowship edition, by pricing their paperback at \$22.95 or something similar, it will be extremely difficult to penetrate the market if they get there first. If our publication date is August, they have time to do some damage, but not much. But if our book doesn't come out for several more months, there is plenty of time for them to get to all of the major distributors and retailers and to make a mail and phone pitch to the large independents. Remember, all it takes is money, and they have never been slow to spend money when they think it will help their cause.

The Foundation appears to be motivated by a strategy to control as many readers as possible. In the past, the tactic of withdrawing from the market served their strategy because it gave them greater control over a market in which they were the sole source of product. However, that tactic will not work in a market with multiple sources; the best tactic in that situation is to be "first-est with the most-est." It would be unwise in the extreme for us to mistake their tactics for their strategy. They are not stupid or incapable of adaptation. Indeed, their tactics to date have been very effective and consistent with their strategy. I expect them to adapt their tactics to the new situation in order to fulfill their strategic goals. And I think they will take full advantage of any opportunity we give them. We must be "as wise as serpents," not only "as harmless as doves."

It is important to remember that the first printing by the Fellowship will, hopefully, not be the last. The Fellowship will always have the option of resetting the text at any time in the future, just as it will be able to add maps, to improve the Index, or to add other appendices if it chooses. One of the reasons for adopting the paragraph numbering system was to allow for differently typeset editions without causing problems for readers. Because the first printing is not the only opportunity for improving the text, the pressure to "do it now" loses much of its power, particularly in view of the market situation.

Sincerely,

Merritt Horn

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