

March 21, 1977

Dear Meredith:

I've thought a good deal these past two weeks about some of our problems: The copyright issue as it was discussed during the Executive Committee and Field Representative meetings; and the various letters on the Confirmatory Agreements. Thought I would get it all down at the risk of adding to your pile of material which is probably already excessive.

It is very important that the entire Executive Committee take a unified position on issues. I had thought that they were unified in support of the Foundation's methods, as well as of its goals of maintaining the copyright and marks. I was surprised to learn there was not unity. The General Council has twice voted unanimous support of the Foundation efforts to maintain rightful and lawful control over the URANTIA Book. I can't believe those were empty words.

As I understand their objective the Foundation is going for the full protection of the URANTIA Book under current law so that it can remain intact as long as humanly possible. Most books published are not intended to last several hundred years as is the URANTIA Book. As Julia remarked, this book is different. Fortunately it has come in an era when it is possible to preserve it fully IF WE ARE CAREFUL.

If the Gospel writers had had copyright services available to them, plus a device to verify the genuineness of subsequent copies and translations, then might an accurate record of the Master's life have come down to us, rather than the garbled, carelessly translated and copied versions we have. The adapters and corrupters could not have done their work of confusing their ideas with the real message of Jesus. The Works of Josephus are sprinkled with anachronisms and other insertions in an attempt to prove that Josephus was a Christian. The relatively recent works of Shakespeare, Lewis Carroll, and Mark Twain have suffered revision by well intentioned editors who believe them to be unacceptable to certain groups as they were originally written.

I know there is dissatisfaction with the Foundation's restrictive methods. But these restrictions have evolved over the years in response to the very real threats to the integrity of the book, the word URANTIA, and the symbol. The most notable threats have reached the courtrooms, but Foundation files hold many letters from persons - members and non-members - who have devised plans to bring all or parts of the book to world notice immediately, or who wish to use the book or marks to promote some self-aggrandising scheme. Trustee response to all such plans has been firm, but kindly, explaining the higher calling of the full and original message and the marks. The only cold thing about their letters, in my opinion, is that the letters are sent by registered mail.

I'm sure everybody knows the dangers which could befall

the URANTIA BOOK both before and after the copyright runs out, but what they don't want to believe is how their acts of omission or commission could pave the way for it to happen. They especially don't want to believe it if it interferes with some project dear to their hearts. The most peculiar aspect of the problem is that many of our leaders and most sincere students of the URANTIA Book somehow believe themselves to be "special friends" who are permitted to make copies of parts of the book, and distribute them freely without permission, and in defiance of all Foundation written policy. The discussion about study aids at the field rep meeting pointed up part of the problem. Some were begging for prepared subject references. All for the purpose, it seems to me, of doing the thinking for someone else. Frankly I would have been ashamed to admit I was too lazy or busy to do my own basic research. And of course you already know how I feel about publishing secondary works.

Most books published today carry a warning that no part may be reproduced in any form, for any use, including private, without the expressed written permission of the publisher. The fact that schools and libraries freely allow copies to be made really indicates their disdain for the law, rather than their right to make copies. As the laws liberalize on copying, how much more important it will be that we guard the marks now, so that they can be used as badges of identification and authenticity after the copyright has ended.

I was truly alarmed during the field representative meeting to hear them told to let study groups go ahead and use quotes as they wished without writing for permission, including the comment that what the Foundation doesn't know won't hurt. I'm sorry to say, but I believe it could hurt because it represents inconsistent advice which will probably engender confusion in the field. It could cause greater antagonism toward the Foundation when people learn that the Foundation has not actually deviated from its conservative position.

As the book was being published, Dr. Sadler and Bill Sadler told us many things which could be done as regards use of URANTIA Book material. Most of it turned out to be in error - a fact not discovered until later when people began appropriating things from the book. Bad feelings exist to this day in the Orvonton Society because of the Foundation's subsequent harder line.

Rather than complaining about inconvenience or lack of freedom, we all ought to be more aggressive in pointing out the responsibilities, restraints, and self-control required of every student of the book, if the book is to remain as it was originally presented. Some day our descendents could have many versions of the URANTIA Book to choose from: easy versions, versions with deletions or additions, the black man's version, the WASP version, everything but the original version. If the marks are also attenuated - used on all versions, no one will ever know which was the real version.

Now as regards the Oklahoma Society's reasoning concerning the Confirmatory Agreements. Is the Oklahoma Society trying to prove that the Foundation has not continuously supervised the marks as far as they alone are concerned? Or by raising the issue, sending

copies of their letter broadcast, are they hoping other societies will refuse to sign the agreements? Would they also be attempting to show that the Foundation has been remiss in its trust to protect the copyright, since they speak of lack of contact from the Foundation?

Are they implying that since their dealings in the early days were only with the Brotherhood, that it is the Brotherhood, and not the Foundation, which has the right to supervise the copyright and marks? Is this why they answered the Foundation letter by writing to you instead of making an answer to the Foundation? Where in the Brotherhood Constitution does it say that the Brotherhood has such responsibility?

They surely knew that the Foundation owned the copyright and marks, didn't they? If they didn't know it, who did they think owned them? I would find it difficult to believe that people whose profession is the leasing of rights to land and resources wouldn't consider ownership a factor. I can't buy their innocence. Rather than demonstrating failure by the Foundation to supervise, doesn't it show that Oklahoma failed to ask for permission from even the Brotherhood (which would have turned their request over to the Foundation), before embarking upon some venture involving the use of marks or copyright? Or were they afraid they would be denied use for some pet project?

In their letter they twice acknowledge the Foundation's ownership of the marks, but with regard to control and supervision they only once say this: "... (an) answer that will eliminate the perjury aspect and still let us help the Foundation maintain supervision of the proper use of the registered marks." (P. 12) It seems less than wholehearted. But they say on Page 10 that since they have operated for a period of time with the marks, they do not believe their rights to use them could be destroyed. (Here is where we have to be extremely careful about expressing personal opinions.) That seems to rule out their acknowledgement of control and supervision, doesn't it?

I don't think the Foundation should weaken the Confirmatory Agreements. If they were to admit to careless custodianship of their trust they could jeopardise their holdings. The Foundation can never afford to negotiate from a position of weakness in any courtroom situation. They have to be able to show the judge they have granted each society the right to use the marks, and that the society understands the terms.

I don't believe that Oklahoma will sign the Confirmatory Agreements, anyway, even if all references to the past are removed, for the reasons they state on Page 10, Par. 6. Several existing societies probably won't sign for the same reasons, not that they have committed any "sins", but simply because they won't sign away their supposed "rights". They have been alerted to this by Paul Snider in his Doctrine of Primacy thesis. I believe "perjury" and so-called "sins" are phoney issues.

I firmly believe no new society should be chartered which does not sign the Confirmatory Agreement, the Guidelines for Conferences, and such other documents designed to nail down the control of the marks, the copyright's armour. (Refer to the Resolution, again.)

Now about the "sword of Damoclese hanging over the heads of the Brotherhood and the societies": This is probably a correct reading of the situation, in my opinion. The Foundation has had, and should have, that power with respect to the marks and copyright. Oklahoma and Paul have always confused this right over the marks and copyright, with interference over the internal affairs of a society. One could speculate at length as to why there is no mention of Foundation-Brotherhood relationships in either the Declaration of Trust or Brotherhood Constitution. Could anyone seriously regard it as an oversight? Have they asked themselves why the Brotherhood was designed along democratic lines with elected officials, and the Foundation as a self-perpetuating group not subject to periodic election whose function is to control and supervise the use made of the URANTIA Book? To my mind this places the heaviest responsibility on the Foundation to exercise restraint and wisdom. But it also requires that they have the courage to take necessary action regardless of the consequences to their personal popularity. If they default or seriously impair the success of the revelation - a reminder which is constantly with them - they as individuals will be answerable upon their deaths to the personalities who are overseeing this venture; plus they would have to live throughout eternity knowing they had further retarded the spiritual progress of their native planet.

Meredith, I hope you'll forgive me for telling you everything you already know. But knowing your strong proclivity to fairness and the desire to see the viewpoint of others; I thought I had seen evidence of your taking the side of those who express desire for freedoms, of an excessive nature. We all want all of the rights under the law (copyright, etc.) but responsibilities go with those rights, too. Even those of us with non-legal minds have to accede to the requirements of law in order to insure the freedom of future generations.

Looking forward to seeing you at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Cordially,

*Carlynn Lindall*