



URANTIA FOUNDATION

533 DIVERSEY PARKWAY CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60614

May 19, 1976

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE GENERAL COUNCIL:

We thank you for your patience in awaiting our reply to Paul Snider's April 3 letter.

Concerning the prerogatives of URANTIA Foundation and the spirit in which the Foundation has been functioning, the answering of this letter was not a pleasant task. You have received a communication dated April 11 from the Executive Committee specifically repudiating Paul's letter. In addition, you have received a letter from the Trustees dated April 16 enclosing a copy of the proposed guidelines.

The Trustees have carefully studied Paul's letter and believe that it is the result of a lack of understanding of the historical origin and relationship of URANTIA Foundation and URANTIA Brotherhood and that it further reflects an errant perception of the true facts, especially the intents and motivation of the Trustees and more specifically the content of the guidelines themselves.

The group of people originally responsible for the dissemination of the teachings of The URANTIA Book had two specific objectives, namely:

1. The preservation of the text of The URANTIA Book, and all translations thereof, inviolate, and
2. The dissemination of its teachings free from dogmatization, in concert with recognizable trademarks and service marks.

A number of years of study were spent in determining the methods by which this could be accomplished. The conclusions of these studies were:

1. To create a trust with self-perpetuating Trustees who could function as the final and ultimate authority with respect to the preservation of the text and the teaching of The URANTIA Book. The Trustees were to preserve inviolate the text of The URANTIA Book, own the plates and copyrights thereof, as well as all translations, the translation plates and their copyrights, hold ownership of the trademarks and service marks, and hold the power to create, recognize and abandon any and all official institutions or organizations involved in the dissemination of the teachings of The URANTIA Book.

(Continued on Page 2.)

2. To create an official organization for the dissemination of the teachings of The URANTIA Book designed to sponsor and charter local subsidiary organizations for similar purposes, and to constitute the governing authority for the administration of the integrated organizations.

A trust was determined as the proper form for the first entity for two reasons:

1. It had to be an entity which would be capable of enjoying a legal status not only in all states of the United States, but in other countries as well, and
2. This entity had to have the power to own property, sue, and be sued, and be self-perpetuating. Only the trust form as an entity met all these requirements. That trust is URANTIA Foundation, which was established in 1950.

The organization which was designed for the dissemination of the teachings was adopted after an extensive study of various religious orders. This organization, the URANTIA Brotherhood, was intended to function as a voluntary association of individuals interested in The URANTIA Book and the study and fostering of the teachings. It was formed in 1955 by a constitution and by-laws. The constitution in turn created the governing and administering authorities, the mechanics for the creating and chartering of subordinate local organizations, and for the dissemination of the teachings of The URANTIA Book.

The URANTIA Brotherhood is a voluntary association of individuals. Because of the Brotherhood's flexibility, its legal status is not clearly defined. To provide for a legal entity to own and control its property and to perform the fiscal functions required, provision was made in the constitution for incorporating its fiscal functions in the form of a not-for-profit corporation, which is the URANTIA Brotherhood Corporation.

Consistent with the original intent, both URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Brotherhood Corporation have been licensed by URANTIA Foundation to use the registered trademarks and service marks where applicable. In addition, URANTIA Foundation has recognized URANTIA Brotherhood Corporation as its exclusive sales agent for the sale of the English edition of The URANTIA Book and other related publications.

Because the official organizations are legal or quasi-legal in nature, and because the copyright and trademarks and service marks are creations of the law, the Trustees have had no choice but to accept and work with the laws as they found them and as we find them now. These laws are difficult, technical, and in some cases not thoroughly evolved; all are difficult of administration.

(Continued on Page 3.)

The law requires that if the copyright, and the trademarks and service marks--the unique insignia of URANTIA Foundation, its licensees, URANTIA Brotherhood, its Societies, and URANTIA Brotherhood Corporation, and their products and services--are to be preserved, and if URANTIA Brotherhood and its respective autonomous societies are to retain their unique identity and to carry out their mission, the applicable provisions of the law must be recognized and put into practice.

If the copyright is to be maintained, it is incumbent upon the copyright holder itself to police proper use, objecting where necessary. As for the trademarks and service marks, the Trustees must supervise and control their use in relation to the activities with which they are associated. If the Trustees are to achieve the ends of protecting the integrity of the revelation and the unique meaning of the marks of the representative organizations charged with the wise dissemination of the URANTIA Revelation, URANTIA Foundation must actively involve itself in seeing to the proper use of copyrighted material and the trademarks and service marks.

The Trustees are presently in court with two law suits wherein copyright is one of the principal issues. The Trustees recently won one case involving an infringement of one of its registered marks and have just obtained a court settlement finalizing the discontinuance of another infringement. The Trustees are presently involved with the prosecution of a third infringing activity.

The Trustees in proceeding on copyright and trademark and service mark matters have never done so arbitrarily or capriciously. The Foundation has only taken action after it has deliberated as a group and after it has consulted with competent legal counsel. Suit has been filed in those instances only where all other avenues of reconciliation have failed.

To administer these laws (much less to first understand them) is both a difficult and time consuming task. As most of you know, the Trustees donate their time; long hours are spent in giving attention to the manifold problems that surround this fledgling URANTIA Revelation which is only a little over 21 years old.

Competent legal counsel who has specialized in the area of trademarks has advised us that supervision and control of the trademarks and service marks must extend not only to the Brotherhood but also to the individual societies and their activities in view of the autonomous status of each Society. The Confirmatory Agreements and the related guidelines are necessary. The Trustees are presently working on the finalization of the Confirmatory Agreements. The guidelines were formulated only by drawing on the past experience of our prior conferences. We do not believe they contain anything that has not already been put into practice.

(Continued on Page 4.)

We therefore find it difficult to understand how one can characterize the guidelines as "an attempt by the Foundation completely to dominate the forthcoming conference sponsored by the First URANTIA Society of Oklahoma, and to extend this dominance to all future affairs of URANTIA Brotherhood." Insofar as the Oklahoma URANTIA International Forum is concerned, we have not chosen the site or date, have not selected the speakers or subjects, and have not asked to review the presentations in advance. URANTIA Foundation is not attempting--nor has it ever attempted--"completely to dominate" the URANTIA Brotherhood and its societies. The Foundation is primarily concerned with the protection and regulation of the use of its trademarks and service marks and the maintenance of the copyright. In matters relating to these specific legal mandates the Foundation is of course active; that is its purpose and function. But there are, have been, and always will be thousands of study group meetings, discussions, and various other functions and activities of members in the URANTIA Brotherhood which will be of no immediate concern whatever to URANTIA Foundation. The typical member of the Brotherhood during a typical year will have no legal dealings whatever with the URANTIA Foundation. Far from attempting to "dominate" the URANTIA Brotherhood and its societies, the Trustees are in fact granting the maximum legal liberty possible to Brotherhood members consistent with the mandates of trademark, service mark, and copyright protection with which the Foundation is intrusted.

The assurances of "support" from Paul are most welcome, but from a practical standpoint they seem to be of little substantive promise. The rightful and legal control of the Trustees over the copyright and registered marks cannot be had except by the methods prescribed by law. Were the Trustees to relax their resolve, then the doctrines of self-determination and ultra-individualism would inexorably assert themselves and could cause the fragmentation and ultimate collapse of the present grand strategy of uplifting the world from its present planetary dilemma.

The realities of historical origin and development including the philosophy of interrelatedness of function of URANTIA Foundation and URANTIA Brotherhood and its respective societies provide the basis for a co-ordinated and fraternal attack upon the world's stalemate of spiritual lethargy.

The Trustees to date have acted as consistently as possible with the historical origins and responsibilities of URANTIA Foundation and with its long term purpose and mission.

URANTIA Societies enjoy the greatest religious freedom ever accorded a human organization. However, with the granting of rights also pass responsibilities. One may buy a URANTIA Book and study it all one wants, profiting from its teachings, but one may not violate its copyright or misuse the identifying marks. URANTIA Societies have been given a great privilege to serve as beacons of spiritual light in a world of darkness. With that privilege is the privilege to use the registered marks as identifiers of bona fide Societies that are engaged in the serious study and wise dissemination of the URANTIA Revelation.

However, with those privileges goes the responsibility to help protect the copyright and especially the registered marks, the uses of which URANTIA Foundation wishes to extend to URANTIA Societies to identify them as official URANTIA organizations and to distinguish them from other organizations which might or might not be interested in the true teachings of Jesus and the unadulterated associated revelations of The URANTIA Book.

We think that you are all aware that the Trustees gain no power over anyone or any society except to the extent that is required by law, and then only to the extent necessary to preserve the registered marks for the use by the Brotherhood and Societies.

The Trustees are unaware of any instance where they have interfered with the substantive inner functioning of any society. Neither URANTIA Foundation nor the individual Trustees themselves have ever attempted or even claimed to exercise spiritual authority over their fellows, be they or be they not society members. Furthermore, the Foundation does not require and has never required such things as: that each society conduct its meetings in a certain sequence or in a certain formal, rigid way, that a society set certain dues, that societies must adopt certain creeds, beliefs, ritualistic practices, etc. The only interference--if one prefers to call it that--is the minimal rules and regulations required by the law (law that the Trustees did not create).

Now let us address ourselves to Paul's letter more specifically. (Please refer to your copy of Paul's letter.)

The Trustees have not written the laws and we regret that legal documents might be described as "unilateral, patronizing, unloving," etc. Nevertheless, what really is important is not how they might sound to an idealistic layman, but what they really accomplish in the real world for the carrying out of the long-term objectives of the URANTIA mission.

While adhering to certain laws often costs us considerable time and money and causes us to experience some discomfort, these same laws also make it possible for the Fifth Epochal Revelation to find its way safely and unhindered into the uttermost parts of the world--even to such ideologically different areas as the U.S.S.R., East Germany, Cambodia, and Cuba. The URANTIA Book is protected by copyright and trademark laws in these countries as well as scores of other "friendlier" nations. These laws should be regarded as evolutionary achievements which are favorable to the URANTIA movement. Gravity is also unloving and creates manifold problems for us, but we do not question its necessity and value.

(Continued on Page 6.)

It should be emphasized that while Paul may have signed various legal agreements, his signing was authorized and directed by the full Executive Committee of URANTIA Brotherhood and he did so on their behalf. It is by virtue of the authority of the Executive Committee that the various documents obtained binding legal effect.

The Trustees are unaware of any requirement ever made of any society to display any materials "in the face of the society's announced decision to the contrary." We would be most interested to know when and where this happened.

Nothing will be found in the guidelines given to Paul on Sunday, March 28, which require submission of all talks "in advance of the conference, whether or not containing quotes from The URANTIA Book." A brief perusal of the guidelines will show that to the contrary, the Trustees wish to continue the practice of issuing permissions prior to a URANTIA conference to speakers to use as yet unspecified quotations from The URANTIA Book in their talks.

Please note, only hand-outs which use quotations must be submitted for approval of the use of the quotations prior to distribution (as opposed to giving a talk). This is standard procedure for any copyright holder and it should be obvious to anyone.

The right (if not the duty) of the Foundation to issue guidelines for a conference where there are copyright and/or registered mark considerations is certainly legally clear. Ultimately, of course, it is not the Foundation which requires guidelines; it is the dictates of the law itself.

On the contrary, if no careful and consistent supervision and co-ordination were exercised, the URANTIA mission would founder.

A careful reading of the opening sentence of the guidelines will belie any interpretation that URANTIA Brotherhood is necessarily co-sponsoring the guidelines.

One should realize that Article II of the URANTIA Brotherhood Constitution reads in part:

"The purposes of URANTIA Brotherhood are the study and dissemination of the teachings of The URANTIA Book . . .
ever obedient and subservient to the laws of this country
and of all countries wherein URANTIA Brotherhood may extend."
(Emphasis supplied)

(Continued on Page 7.)

We humbly point out that the relationship between the Foundation and Brotherhood, and between the Foundation and Brotherhood Societies is subject to, among other things, the copyright and trademark statutes which are a part of the law of the land and which therefore supersede the provisions cited by Paul from URANTIA Brotherhood Constitution concerning the autonomy of the Societies.

In closing, let us take note that The URANTIA Book has only been in print for 21 years. Adam and Eve had a little over 100 years before their mission failed because of impatience and an unwillingness to follow their long-term program. The Trustees have their marching orders and in carrying them out we have, we believe, acted according to the rules of evolutionary law and the wisdom of cumulative experience found therein and elsewhere.

Let us stand together in grand and united protective array, and as Soldiers of the Circles may we wholeheartedly enlist in the solid ranks of those mortals who shall go forth in this coming battle for truth against error under the unfaltering leadership of the mighty Seraphim of Progress.

Sincerely,

The Trustees of URANTIA Foundation