



URANTIA BROTHERHOOD

533 DIVERSEY PARKWAY CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60614

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND GENERAL COUNCIL LETTER February, 1989

Dear Members of URANTIA Brotherhood:

This past weekend, February 9-12, 1989, there were a series of meetings about which I will report in this letter: the first quarter meeting of the Executive Committee, a special meeting of the General Council, and a Roundtable Discussion between members of the General Council and independent groups involved in service activity related to *The URANTIA Book*. I will try to be both brief and informative, since there is much to cover.

SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS

1. The following applicants were welcomed as Members-at-Large into the growing world-wide fellowship of URANTIA Brotherhood: Robyn Goodman, Missoula, Montana; Dr. Wendell H. Grassmyer, Madison, Indiana; Beatrice Mouganis, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Matt Neibaur, Ponta Vedra Beach, Florida; Raul Pujol, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Marjorie Ray, Birmingham, Alabama; Lise Routhier and Pierre Routhier, Verdun, Quebec; Robert J. Schuer, New Lexington, Ohio; Slade Watson, Mobile, Alabama; and Timothy Young, Muscatine, Iowa.
2. The Executive Committee ratified the Officers' decision to move the 1990 International Conference to Snowmass, Colorado and to change the Conference dates to the period June 30-July 5, 1990. The new site will be able to accommodate the expected number of attendees, and features a new Conference Center with group dining facilities.
3. It was agreed to set the registration fee for the Summer Seminar Program at \$30.00. Registration materials and information will be mailed with the forthcoming *BULLETIN*.
4. We approved the Publications Committee consensus proposal for a new editorial policy for the *BULLETIN*:

"The *BULLETIN*'s purpose is to provide a source of pertinent information about URANTIA Brotherhood and its related organizations. It is also intended to be a medium of fellowship among people of varying languages and cultural backgrounds.

As such, its focus will frequently be on the people involved in events as well as the events themselves. Translations to languages other than English will be used to reduce language and cultural barriers. The style and character of the *BULLETIN* should be one that supports unity and cooperation, that nurtures the joy of service, and that contributes to the warmth of human relationships among the worldwide readership.

The frequency and size of the *BULLETIN* depend largely on the quantity of relevant information needed to be conveyed. The *BULLETIN*'s scheduled publication dates should be annually set at a proposed frequency that is both timely and consistent."

5. Bill Rocap (Connecticut), Claudia Ayers (California), and Lew Clark (Washington State) were approved as Area Coordinators, bringing the total number approved to 84.

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6. The Executive Committee, during the URANTIA Brotherhood Corporation segment of the meeting, established a Sales Agency Oversight and Planning Committee to develop business plans and monitor activity in this important area of book sales and distribution. The Committee will work closely with John Hales (head of the book department) and with the Trustees of URANTIA Foundation to insure that plans are the best possible while fully consistent with and responsive to Foundation policies as detailed in our Sales Agency Agreement. This Committee, comprised of Marilyn Kulieke (chair), John Hay, Gard Jameson, and Jim Johnston, will report to the Executive Committee at its April meeting on its recommended planning approach and schedule.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY SUMMARY/OTHER REPORTS

Judicial Committee: Steve Dreier reported that his committee was nearing completion of the review of the Removal Procedure in preparation for a proposal to be made to the Executive Committee and to the General Council. The committee is also reviewing the Sample Constitution and Commentary drafted by the attorneys and used initially as a basis for development of the Finnish Constitution. The Committee has also reviewed both the Finnish and Ontario Constitutions and is working with Charter in the process leading up to the chartering of both Societies this summer. Steve Dreier, Gard Jameson, and John Hales as liaison, will undertake an evaluation of law firms in the Chicago area which might be utilized by URANTIA Brotherhood in situations which require legal counsel, consistent with the fiduciary responsibilities of our organization (e.g., tax and constitutional management).

Charter Committee: Avi Dogim reported that chartering dates are set for Finland (June 2-4, 1989), and Ontario, Canada (June 9-11, 1989). The Committee has received an application for charter from a Florida group and is expecting an application from Arizona shortly.

International Fellowship Committee: Berkeley Elliott commented on plans for attendance at both the Finland and Ontario Conference/chartering in June and another "Encounter" north of Paris, France in August. The Committee will meet over this weekend to discuss a full list of activities, including an eventual worldwide expansion of the Area Coordinator Program now just underway in the United States.

Domestic Extension Committee: Harry McMullan reported that the Area Coordinator Program has been launched! Materials were sent out to the now approved 84 Area Coordinators, including a schedule of training sessions (March 3-4, Oklahoma City; March 17-18, Los Angeles; and March 31-April 1, New York), and the Area Coordinators Manual assembled diligently by Mike Painter. Harry also reported that his Committee had initiated work on the Society Communication Project surfaced at last year's Society Conclave by sending out a survey to all Societies. It was agreed that Domestic Extension would assume from Marilyn Kulieke all responsibility in this area, including response to the TDA Resolution on this subject passed last year.

Finance Committee: Gard Jameson reported on the following items: the Deferred Giving Program brochure is being reviewed by URANTIA Foundation attorneys; the large donor special solicitation program will begin shortly; the Matthew Fund has been established with several significant gifts; Polly Friedman is working on a volunteer program which will enable individuals to donate their time to work in the central office; and a program to monitor contributions on an ongoing basis is in place and will be the basis for an initial report at the April Executive Committee meeting.

Fraternal Relations Committee: Peter Laurence commented that his Committee would be meeting this weekend to discuss items including the Summer Seminar Program as well as their ongoing effort to develop educational materials on existing religious groups, their theology, experience, and forms of religious expression, for inclusion in the *BULLETIN*. The Executive Committee agreed that this educational material would be included as an insert with future *BULLETIN* mailings rather than as an integral part of each issue, consistent with the editorial policy change noted above.

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Special Projects Committee: Bob Bruyn noted that materials were slowly being received for inclusion in the "Resource Guide for Secondary Works," and indicated that the next issue of the *BULLETIN* should help in generating some interest. The target publication date is late summer. Special Projects will also meet this weekend to discuss all projects underway.

Education Committee: Dan Massey reported that the Education Committee has been heavily preoccupied with Seminar planning during the last quarter and has not addressed itself to other issues.

Director of Central Support Services: Gloriann Harris noted that the Central Office responded to over 2,900 requests for information during 1988, with turnaround time being reduced from two to four weeks to three to five days; we sold/distributed over 11,000 books during 1988 (French, English, gift and consignment books combined); the production department reported on the following activity: 80,000 pieces produced/mailed; 130,000 pieces photocopied; 55,000 pamphlets distributed; 25 total bulk mailings during the year.

Vice President's Report: Marilyn Kulieke reported that in response to a TDA Resolution inviting the Trustees to attend General Council meetings, the Trustees responded that they felt their presence would not serve either the Trustees or the Council's deliberative process. They believe that improved communications between our two organizations, each functioning as separate but interdependent, would result in the healthiest balance between organizational integrity and respectful and productive communication. Marilyn also noted that the Trustees have indicated that they would like to work as part of a task force on the subject of mailing list policy with her and John Hay, and office liaison, Mike Painter, who constitute our sub-committee on this subject.

President's Report: Dave Elders noted that Andite and the Trustees of URANTIA Foundation have indicated that all but 43 papers have been translated into Spanish. It is expected that initial translation will be complete by early summer and work will begin on the copy editing phase of the process.

Sales Agency Report: John Hales reported that a mailing offering a free copy of *The URANTIA Book* or *Le Livre d'URANTIA* was mailed in September to 6,180 libraries in 127 countries worldwide (excluding the United States). To date, we have received 80 responses from libraries in 34 countries.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

On Saturday, February 11, 1989, representatives from ten independent groups of students of *The URANTIA Book* who are engaged in activities related to its study and dissemination, explored for the members of the General Council their groups' purposes, activities, and vision of the relationships among all related groups in the future. I believe that this open discussion was a profound experience in mutual understanding, and provided the participants, members of the General Council, and the Trustees of URANTIA Foundation who attended, with a sense of certainty that the existence of independent yet cooperative groups of dedicated readers is a vital and important part of the overall mission of those of us in this growing community surrounding the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*. I believe we each learned a great deal about the level of integrity, honesty, dedication, and commitment to this work of the people--both active in URANTIA Brotherhood and Foundation or in associated groups--who have devoted a great deal of time, energy, resources and creativity to furthering our broader purposes; I hope we all learned about each other that if mistakes were made in the past, they were honest ones, based solely upon our collective inexperience with revelatory responsibilities, unintended communication difficulties, and arising from a level of dedication one of the participants described as "just ordinary folks with a strong, burning commitment to find ways to share *The URANTIA Book*."

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During the course of the ROUNDTABLE, it became clear, to me at least, that there is tremendous value in the co-existence of URANTIA Brotherhood and these many related yet independent groups pursuing their own creative ways of sharing *The URANTIA Book* and its teachings with others, all the while accepting joint responsibility to be responsive to, communicate openly with, and fully respect the commitment of each other in pursuing respective goals and objectives. As you will see in the General Council report hereunder, the Council passed a resolution which underscores a determination to improve understanding and communication with all associated groups.

The members of the groups who participated and to whom we owe our thanks are: Michael Challis (Asoka Foundation); George Sammis and Tim Young (Brotherhood of Man Library); Zola DeFirman, Samsara Duex, and Barrie Bedell (CUBS); Marvin Gawryn (High Reach Press); Barbara and Mark Kulieke (Morning Star Foundation); James Kimmel (Peace, Inc); David Kulieke (Pervaded Space Publishing); Diane Bishop (School of Meanings and Values); Byron Belitsos (Telecosm); and Tom Choquette (Undershepherds). All but one of the members of the General Council were present for the ROUNDTABLE and Martin Myers, Gloriann Harris, and Frank Sgaraglino, Trustees of URANTIA Foundation, also attended.

SUMMARY OF GENERAL COUNCIL ACTIONS

1. In response to the valuable educational process of cooperative relationships between all groups working on behalf of the study and dissemination of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*, begun at the ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION, the General Council passed the following resolution:

URANTIA Brotherhood, as part of its mission to achieve its organizational goals as outlined in its stated purpose, shall establish and institutionalize a mechanism of communication and facilitation between URANTIA Brotherhood and all associated groups working on behalf of the fifth epochal revelation to the end that mutual support, understanding, education, experience, cooperation, and respectful interaction may take place so that the broader, planetary purposes of our unseen supervisors may be achieved. The Executive Committee is charged with the responsibility of implementing this resolution in an expeditious manner.

2. The Council voted to require the officers to develop, by the next meeting of the General Council, a Policy and Procedures Manual to become a part of a more complete orientation program for newly elected members of the General Council.

3. We agreed that the pamphlet, "Suggestions for Sharing *The URANTIA Book*," inasmuch as it necessarily contains much in the way of personal and group opinion, be published under *The URANTIAN, Journal of URANTIA Brotherhood* masthead as a special publication available to the reader community. The editors will work with the Publications Committee to complete final editing and publication as soon as possible.

4. The General Council voted to hold a special meeting in winter, 1990 on the weekend of January 26-28, 1990 at the Franciscan Renewal Center, Paradise Valley, Arizona and authorized the Conference Department to finalize the necessary reservations.

5. While no resolution on the issues of dual service or ethical standards was reached at this meeting, the General Council directed the chairman, as originally charged in a vote by the General Council at its January 1988 meeting, to proceed with the establishment of an ad hoc committee to develop a "Code of Ethics for Organizational Service."

While there was much discussion on these subjects at this Special Meeting of the General Council, the actions detailed above provide a summary of the conclusions reached.

CLOSING COMMENTS

One of the issues raised by the participants in the ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION, both implicitly and explicitly, concerned the trademarks owned by URANTIA Foundation (the logo type word "URANTIA" and the Concentric Circles Symbol), and the degree to which trademark protection infringes the rights of individuals honestly attempting to share the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* with others. While I don't profess to have any answers which would satisfy everyone, I do have some ideas on the subject which I hope will stimulate your thinking.

I believe that there are at least four levels on which the symbols/marks are of meaning and value, and that much confusion arises when these levels (and perhaps others) are not clearly considered in any evaluation of this issue. I will discuss them below in the higher to lower order which is expressive of my own experience.

1. **The religious value of the symbols.** For me personally, our symbols have value only to the degree that they serve to remind me, in ever-deepening ways, of the divine qualities of our Father, as expressed in the spiritual life of his son, Michael of Nebadon, and in his (Michael's) human life on this single planet, Urantia, in the form of Jesus of Nazareth. Because this is a sublime and inner process, NO ONE has any control whatsoever over the purity and integrity of this experience for me, and I have not ever personally experienced any person or group even trying.

2. **Symbolic value to those outside our reader community.** We are told that *The URANTIA Book* has been given to this planet to inaugurate our entry into our fifth epoch of evolutionary growth. This epoch is to be built upon the religious foundations of the fourth epoch (and those previous), given in the form of a human life lived by our Creator Son, in communion with our common Father in the imperfect and even hostile world as he found it. Through reading *The URANTIA Book* for themselves, people now outside our reader community can come to know personally an experience akin to what I have described above. By observing, listening to, and interacting with those of us who are already readers dedicated to living up to its revelatory challenges, our non-reading fellows will come to certain conclusions about what our symbols mean. It is by the quality of our lives and our relationships that the symbols will either become animated with spirit and truth, or whether they come to be seen by others as the dead symbols of just another sect hustling their version of written "truth." As with the level above, there is no external or group control over this phase. It is by our own personal and interpersonal decisions that we will invest these symbols with "soul." The "new wine in old wineskins" warning seems especially pertinent here.

3. **Symbolic value within our reader community.** I believe that the marks can be a powerful symbol of our combined unity and diversity, if together we can learn how best to express these dynamic principles in our group interactions and relationships. If in the social outworking of the challenge of this revelation, we can overcome all of the obstacles separating humankind (e.g., language, nationality, race, culture, heritage, experience, etc.) to unite into a planetary corps of human workers dedicated to weaving this revelation slowly and steadily into the fabric of a world community now clearly in a major and historic process of social, economic, political, and religious re-adjustment, we will have experienced and become increasingly expressive of the principles of our planet's fifth epoch. Because this is a social and outward expression, there is a measure of group control of the process in the form of appropriate mechanisms of fair, honest, and respectful decision-making, cooperation, and action--the true experience of teamwork.

4. **The trademark value of the marks.** With some irony, it seems to me that this most materialistic and limited level of the significance of the marks is the evolutionary foundation which we must be wise enough to build with diligence since it is the riverbed in which the originally-given, written revelatory material can flow unimpeded into the hands, minds, and hearts of the future generations of humankind born into this fifth epoch. If we can leave no other legacy to those who come after

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us other than to provide a certain and reliable identifier of the original material, we will have performed, in my judgement, an immeasurable service. We have barely more than one generation until the copyright protection of the book expires. It may be that the only way for those born into self-conscious existence after the first half of the next century to be certain which of the books claiming to be "the one, original" is in fact the one given by the Revelatory Commission, is the identifying logo and circles, both on the book itself and as utilized by those organizations institutionalized from the times of its original publication. URANTIA Foundation does this work of trademark protection with a single-minded commitment which sometimes rankles many of us. But I believe they deserve our admiration, respect, and wholehearted support for this often unsatisfying work, the profound value of which is easier for me to fully appreciate when I better separate the levels on which these marks have meaning and value.

Certainly most of us, desirous of being "...wise regarding the ripening of an age...[and] alert to discern the signs of the times..." (1915:3), are aware of the stresses developing in the world community as the old social, political, economic, and especially religious traditions and institutions begin to crack like an eggshell in preparation for the birth of the fifth epoch. The recent reactions in both the Christian and Muslim communities to creative expressions which question the bastion of religious tradition, should give us pause as we consider the "signs of the times" in our work of bringing new truth to the planet. If we are indiscreet or impatient, the very symbols which we hope will one day signal to ourselves and to a watching universe the maturation of our planet and its inhabitants into the full consciousness of our origin, nature, and destiny, can just as easily become the shorthand used by those who fear the truth to urge rejection of this revelation. While we most certainly have been given the freedom and **right to choose** what to do, we have also been challenged to a higher responsibility to choose to do **what is right**, fully attentive to each other, the evolutionary world around us, and to an honest and unremitting determination to grasp the difference between our own wills and that of our Paradise Father.

Yours in deepest fellowship.

David N. Elders, President