

## Former URANTIA Brotherhood to Be Known by New Name

Informal meeting of society  
representatives at Nordic Hills  
Resort on November 18.



On October 30, 1989, the four trustees of URANTIA Foundation formally terminated the longstanding affiliation between URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation since 1955. They did so by terminating three agreements. The Confirmatory Agreement was cancelled, thereby depriving URANTIA Brotherhood of the legal right to use two identifying symbols from *The Urantia Book*, the word "URANTIA" and the three concentric circles. The second agreement terminated was the Sales Agency Agreement which had provided for URANTIA Brotherhood Corporation to act as the Foundation's agent for the sale of *The Urantia Book* and other items. The third agreement withdrawn was the Brotherhood's lease of office space at the long-time headquarters building for both organizations, 533 Diversey Parkway in Chicago, Illinois.

These precipitous actions were apparently taken for several reasons, some of which were documented in letters from the trustees in recent months. There seem to be primarily three stated reasons for their action. First, in their view, criticism of URANTIA Foundation or any of its trustees constituted a violation of the Confirmatory Agreement and a possible "attack on the integrity of URANTIA Foundation." (The Executive Committee of URANTIA Brotherhood had sent a

critical letter to the Foundation shortly after three of five trustees resigned from URANTIA Foundation.) Second, the General Council of URANTIA Brotherhood unanimously passed a resolution affirming its independence as an autonomous democratic organization, apparently contravening the trustees' belief that URANTIA Brotherhood is an organization subservient to URANTIA Foundation. Third, the trustees had a concern about the activities and processes of URANTIA Brotherhood, which was expressed as "creeping churchification." The trustees have said that they will send their own full explanation to the readership. The General Council has not yet met to discuss its response to these actions.

### Executive Committee Met to Respond to Foundation's Action

A special meeting of the Executive Committee of the former URANTIA Brotherhood was held to respond to the three actions taken by URANTIA Foundation. At that meeting, the Executive Committee unanimously voted not to legally contest any of the actions taken by the Foundation. Members of the committee stated various reasons for their nonresistive vote. Among them was the view that terminating the affiliation constituted a "supreme opportunity to assume full responsibility for the

Brotherhood's founding purposes." The organization was originally founded as an independent, democratically organized religio-social organization committed to the dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and the fraternal association of believers. Several members also expressed the view that donor funds should not be used to wage a legal battle against URANTIA Foundation.

On a provisional basis, until a larger representative body can choose a name, a new name was given to the organization: Fifth Epochal Fellowship. It was also agreed to purchase a new headquarters building, two blocks south of Diversey, into which the staff moved in mid-November. Even though the organization may not act any longer as the Foundation's agent for the sale of *The Urantia Book*, it will continue to undertake many of the other services previously offered.

David Elders, president of the newly named Fifth Epochal Fellowship, made these observations about the recent unprecedented events:

"There is significant irony in the situation we find ourselves in today. The phrase 'unity not uniformity' comes to mind. The wholly democratic, autonomous, social organization with a religious purpose clearly envisioned by our founders seems to represent the oppor-



*"Few persons live up to the faith which they really have. Unreasoned fear is a master intellectual fraud practiced upon the evolving mortal soul." (1556)*

#### New Name (Continued from page 1)

tunity for this concept from *The Urantia Book* to actually function in a living way. That is, through the democratic process the unique material, mindal, and spiritual contributions of a worldwide and diverse readership would guarantee the forging of decisions based upon cultural diversity, tolerance, decentralization, and in keeping with the Jesusonian principles which would enable men and women to cooperate with each other in the spirit of unity. The autocratic and centralized control exercised by the four trustees of URANTIA Foundation using the licensed trademarks seems destined to insure only uniformity, perhaps at the expense of unity. Their claim that these marks, which *The Urantia Book* defines as symbolic of each mortal's citizenship in the higher universes under the Trinity Government of all Creation, cannot safely be used to identify a democratic organization (dedicated to the study and dissemination of the teachings) which is not subject to the direct control of URANTIA Foundation is, to me, extraordinary!

"The group decisions made by both the General Council and the Executive Committee over these last several months seem to be demonstrative of the power of group wisdom to navigate stormy waters and arrive at what I believe are conclusions which attempt to balance considerations of matter, mind,

and spirit by the decisions of diverse personalities. The living proof of 'unity not uniformity' was plain for me in the experience that the unanimity of our decisions to change our name and not contest the Foundation's actions was built on a broad diversity of viewpoints. Some of the trustees have characterized the Council's stated commitment to blend the values of spirit and the experience of personal religion into our organizational work as 'creeping churchification.' This somewhat negative characterization is the final irony, since it was a diverse group of unique individuals engaged in the democratic process who agreed unanimously that for us to be successful as an organization we must seek to blend the spiritual values from *The Urantia Book* into our work on its behalf."

#### Special Advisory Meeting Held for Society Representatives

On November 1, 1989, URANTIA Foundation sent a letter to each URANTIA society stating that it terminated the Confirmatory Licensing Agreement with URANTIA Brotherhood. The letter also stated that a new organization was being constituted, with the name URANTIA Brotherhood Association which will apparently be vested with the sales agency function and will communicate with readers and groups who choose to affili-

ate with this new organization. The letter did not mention whether this new organization would have a democratically elected representative governing body.

In the trustees' letter of November 1, they stated the requirement that each society's "license from URANTIA Foundation requires that it be affiliated with URANTIA Foundation's licensee, which will be URANTIA Brotherhood Association. It does not permit affiliation with unlicensed organizations. Therefore, under the terms of the license, it is no longer permissible for [any] URANTIA society to affiliate with the organization which heretofore has been licensed to use the URANTIA Brotherhood name. It will be necessary for your organization to affiliate with URANTIA Brotherhood Association. Pending further information from URANTIA Foundation concerning URANTIA Brotherhood Association, the license provision concerning affiliation with URANTIA Brotherhood will be inoperative."

Because the Foundation letter stated that societies must choose between an affiliation with Fifth Epochal Fellowship or URANTIA Brotherhood Association, a special advisory meeting for society representatives was called to discuss the issues. Some 100 representatives met at Nordic Hills Resort in Itasca, IL, on November 18. Attendees included at least one representative from nearly each of the twenty societies chartered by the former URANTIA Brotherhood. Members of the General Council were also in attendance, as well as the Executive Committee who organized the meeting.

The advisory meeting began with short presentations by some members of the Executive Committee who expressed their viewpoints on issues related to the actions taken by the Foundation. This was followed by brief comments by former trustees Frank Sgaraglino, Helena Sprague and Gloriann Harris to explain and respond to questions about the conditions in the Foundation which led to their resignations in July. Also present was Bill Hales, a founding trustee and first president of the Foundation (for 23 years), who resigned as trustee emeritus in protest of the actions of the Foundation with regard to the Brotherhood. Bill voiced his encouragement for the Fellowship to fulfill its functions and his dismay over the Foundation's actions.



### "Walking with God"

#### 1990 International Conference of Fifth Epochal Fellowship—Snowmass/Aspen, Colorado June 30–July 5, 1990

The 1990 International Conference Planning Committee has been hard at work over the summer in establishing what they hope will be an inspiring program in a beautiful physical setting. To encourage family participation, much effort has been given to providing child care and programs for youth at reasonable costs. Your **REGISTRATION PACKET** for the conference will be arriving in the mail in January.

Originally registration packets were to be mailed out in September, 1989. Due to the busy ski season in Snowmass/Aspen, the Snowmass Resort Association preferred to wait until after the first of the year to handle reservations for conference accommodations.

Those who preregistered earlier this year will be getting registration packets mailed two weeks in advance of others on the mailing list, as reservations for accommodations are on a first come, first served basis.

If you know someone who would like a registration packet who is not on the mailing list, please have them contact the Fellowship office. To facilitate the registration process please direct all correspondence to Fifth Epochal Fellowship, P.O. Box 148068, Chicago, IL 60614-8068 or call (312) 327-0424.

We look forward to joining with you as we "Walk with God" in the Colorado Rockies this coming summer.



Three past presidents of the Brotherhood also made some brief remarks. Meredith Sprunger said, speaking of the formation of the Fifth Epochal Fellowship, "This is a tremendous accomplishment, not only for the present, but also for the future." Paul Snider encouraged the group with his statement, "The organizational issues will fall into place as we go forward in faith, not fear, placing trust and confidence in each other." John Hales thanked the group for their encouragement and good will over the preceding weeks.

After the presentations, questions and comments were made by participants. The large group broke into smaller groups for further discussion and to formulate additional questions or statements regarding the current situation. Issues from these small groups which surfaced frequently included the kinds of programs and services the Fellowship will offer; the relationship with the Foundation and possibilities for reaffiliating; encouraging a sense of unity among the community of believers; communication between the former Brotherhood and readers; the role of societies in the Fellowship and/or URANTIA Brotherhood Association; and speculation about the Foundation's approach to carrying out its tasks.

After a great deal of discussion of these issues, the group ended the meeting by giving each other a hug and personally expressing their feelings to each other. As one participant said: "We cannot operate from fear. Some are afraid we are making a mistake. The group had to make a choice and has made a wise decision. I see the current situation as temporary—in five, ten, twenty or forty years it will all come back together. We need to correct things so that the same mistakes will not be made. We cannot affect what URANTIA Foundation does; we can only extend a welcoming hand if we are not subservient and not afraid."

The formal implications of the Foundation's actions with regard to societies were discussed in a memorandum to URANTIA society officers by Judicial Committee chairperson Steve Dreier:

"URANTIA Brotherhood has changed in name only. Our entire organizational structure remains intact. We are still an association of twenty societies and more than two hundred and fifty members-at-large, approximately 1,200 members in all. The Constitution of the former URANTIA Brotherhood continues in effect as the Constitution of Fifth Epochal

Special meeting of General Council held September 16-17, 1989, at which goals were evaluated and a decision made to embark on a redefined course.



Fellowship, and, as before, it is the procedural basis for our democratic group decisional activities. The members who have been elected by societies to serve on the General Council continue to function in those positions. The officers, Executive Committee members, and all nine departmental committees continue to carry out their constitutional responsibilities. Most services and actions will continue without substantial interruption.

"In addition, each society has its own local constitution and should continue to adhere to [its] requirements, including notification and majority vote requirements.

"Unfortunately, URANTIA Foundation has encouraged societies to ignore constitutional process. In selectively distributed written statements...the Trustees have claimed that their actions affect only 'the formal organization represented by the leadership of URANTIA Brotherhood at the national level.' In making this claim the Trustees are knowingly misrepresenting the basic structure of our organization and encouraging societies to disregard the requirements of both their local and international constitutions....There is no 'national level' apart from societies. The societies and their elected representatives are one body, one integrated organization."

Chairperson of the Charter Committee, Avi Dogim, detailed some of the difficulties inherent in the Foundation request:

"By terminating the Confirmatory Agreement with URANTIA Brotherhood, URANTIA Foundation insured that the former Brotherhood will be unable to use the three concentric circles symbol or the word 'URANTIA' as part of the organization's name without risking litigation. The Foundation can do the same to any URANTIA society. It should be clear, however, that the Foundation has no authority to revoke any society's charter. The charters have been issued by the Brotherhood and are valid even though URANTIA Brotherhood has had to change its name.

"Societies have been forced by the Foundation into making a choice. If they want to continue to use the marks, they must abandon the chartering organization with which they have been affiliated and join a new organization created by the Foundation for its own reasons. The other option societies have is to continue their affiliation with the former Brotherhood, provisionally named Fifth Epochal Fellowship. The latter choice would enable society members to maintain their involvement in a democratic process into which they have a great deal of input and over which they can exert influence. The former will relegate them to the status of subordinates who can be easily threatened with disaffiliation at the slightest provocation.

"When it comes down to it, the choice is between using the marks on our letterheads or acting in a way that upholds the values for which the marks stand. I hope that all societies will choose the latter. Regardless of each society's choice, however, I am certain that the present crisis presents a significant growth opportunity and that when the dust settles we will all be better off for it."

As of late December, 1989, nine of twenty societies have met and decided to maintain their affiliation with Fifth Epochal Fellowship. Oklahoma, New York, Seattle, Ontario, Alaska, Kansas City, Rocky Mountain, Glenview, and First Society are the societies which have thus far chosen to remain with the former URANTIA Brotherhood.

### General Council Embarked on Redefined Course

*Editor's note: The following report was written prior to the October 30, 1989 actions of URANTIA Foundation, at which time URANTIA Brotherhood Corporation was still the name of the organization.*

The General Council held a special meeting on September 16-17, 1989, to discuss the impact on URANTIA Brother-



*"I tell you that, even when a cup of cold water is given to a thirsty soul, the Father's messengers shall ever make a record of such a service of love." (1125)*

### VALUES TO SEEK

Faithful • friendly • self-forgiveness • teachable • self-correcting • open • self-critical • cooperative • communicative • group-wisdom and group-process oriented • committed to seeking both good ends and means • facilitating • coordinating • unifying • committed to full disclosure • accountable • flexible • active • truth-oriented • ethical • pluralistic • democratic • respectful • valuing integrity • truthful • tolerant • caring • theocentric • trusting • socially engaged • confident • forgiving • inclusive • just • fair • patient • kind • merciful • cherishing diversity • progressive • responsive to our stewardship responsibilities • humble • service-motivated • loving

hood of the resignation of three of the five trustees of URANTIA Foundation in late June and early July. It was this meeting, and the resolutions passed, that apparently precipitated the Foundation's actions. During this meeting, a variety of topics were considered including perceptions of the current situation within URANTIA Foundation; the relationship between URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation; the role of URANTIA Brotherhood as a fellowship organization which encourages study and dissemination of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*; a letter sent to the Foundation by the Executive Committee of URANTIA Brotherhood detailing concerns with the situation in the Foundation; and an assessment of the kinds of values that were considered to be important for our organization in carrying out responsibilities associated with the fifth epochal revelation of truth on our planet.

Several resolutions emerged from the two-day meeting. One, which passed with the unanimous approval of the General Council, summarizes the direction set by this meeting:

"The recent culmination of events affecting the relationship between URANTIA Brotherhood and URANTIA Foundation has led the General Council to embark on a course of action which redefines that relationship. We therefore resolve to evaluate our organizational goals and plans and to institute such measures as to affirm our existence as an independent, autonomous organization, operating on the basis of group wisdom, and in keeping with our highest understanding of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*."

The General Council passed other resolutions which reflected the Brotherhood's desire to function independently and in keeping with high values. (See "VALUES" box for a list of

values which were specifically identified as important for our organization.) One resolution read: "Be it resolved that the fundraising function of URANTIA Brotherhood pertain only to the raising of funds for URANTIA Brotherhood." Previously the Finance Committee of URANTIA Brotherhood raised funds for both organizations. Because of differences in contributor accountability between the two organizations, the Council felt it financially prudent to raise funds for the Brotherhood only. It was also resolved that URANTIA Brotherhood would "...use its mailing list in any manner it deems appropriate." This decision reaffirmed the Council's commitment to move toward the achievement of the Brotherhood's purposes

### What was that word?

LAW—The common use of the word would mean a rule established by authority, society, or custom. The word is used in this way in *The Urantia Book*. But an archangel of Nebadon offers still another definition: "Law is life itself and not the rules of its conduct... Falsehood is not a matter of narration technique but something premeditated as a perversion of truth... The shadow of a hair's turning, premeditated for an untrue purpose, the slightest twisting or perversion of that which is principle—these constitute falseness." (\*555)

Fifth Epochal Fellowship is dedicated to the study and dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and to the growing fellowship among readers.

Your continuing moral and financial support is greatly appreciated. Contributions to Fifth Epochal Fellowship are tax deductible.

using its autonomous and duly constituted group process.

In light of the more independent direction set by the General Council at this meeting, it was deemed appropriate to again affirm that the General Council stands firmly behind the principles for which URANTIA Foundation was founded. The resolution read, "Be it resolved that the General Council of URANTIA Brotherhood affirms the principles for which URANTIA Foundation was founded and the purposes which we share in common, as stated in the Declaration of Trust."

Members of the Brotherhood were sent a report detailing the actions of the Executive Committee and General Council. If you would like more information on these actions, feel free to request a copy of "Report to the Members of URANTIA Brotherhood on the Special Meeting of the General Council" by writing: Fifth Epochal Fellowship, 529 Wrightwood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614, or P.O. Box 148068, Chicago, IL 60614-8068, or calling (312) 327-0424.

Your personal thoughts and comments on these events are invited and encouraged. Please send them to the General Council at the above address.

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