

Memorandum

Date: October 3, 2001

To: Avi Dogim, President, The Urantia Book Fellowship, and Members of Executive Committee

CC: Fellowship Societies

From: The Governing Committee, The First Society for Readers of The Urantia Book, Chicago, IL

Subject: Publication of Uversa Press edition of The Urantia Book

Last Sunday, September 30, 2001, the First Society met in its first Governing Committee of the season. One of the issues discussed was the recent decision by the General Council to publish the Uversa Press edition of The Urantia Book. Our Society had submitted a resolution to the 2001 TDA in Santa Cruz asking, "that the Fellowship refrain from publishing" the book "in exchange for a cooperative sharing of mailing lists between the two organizations,..." It did not reach the Council because it was defeated 7 to 5.

We agreed Sunday to again, respectfully, ask the Executive Committee to reconsider the decision to publish The Urantia Book. Alternately, we ask that the Executive Committee delay the final decision until after Urantia Foundation's appeal process has run its course. Further, before proceeding with publication, the views of societies should be sought. Our reasons are grounded in a desire to see the Fellowship avoid another confrontation with the Foundation, and with individuals and groups that support the Foundation.

Most of the trouble we find ourselves in is due to the fact that the Urantia Book-related organizations engage in an overlapping maze of functions. Here is how it used to be: Between 1955 and 1985, Urantia Brotherhood and Urantia Foundation were complementary, cooperative, organically unconnected organizations with identical purposes, but with separate functions. The Brotherhood's mission was to carry out the disseminating, coordinative, and educational work. The Foundation's assignment was to publish, translate and protect The Urantia Book. (The 1985 to 1989 period is best left unmentioned.)

After 1989, and until 1997, their roles became muddled because each organization assumed some of the prerogatives of the other. While the book was temporarily in the public domain, the Fellowship (the new name of the Brotherhood) published the Uversa Press edition of the book. When the Foundation regained the copyright through appeal to a higher court, the Fellowship withdrew its copies from public distribution. Meanwhile, International Urantia Association (IUA) was created by the Foundation with the intent of duplicating some of the functions of the Fellowship. The Foundation itself coordinates U.S. and international reader service activities, a task normally performed by social outreach organizations.

In recent years, in a move toward unity between reader groups, Fellowship and IUA members have engaged in joint projects such as study groups, regional conferences, holiday programs and picnics. The most notable joint activity was the Millennium Initiative, which investigated how Fellowship and IUA might form an alliance.

Close upon the heels of the June 2001 jury decision in Federal Court in Oklahoma City, which was favorable to the publication *Jesus a New Revelation*, consisting of the fourth part of The Urantia Book, the Fellowship's General Council voted 28 to 7 to again publish the Uversa Press edition of The Urantia Book. The Fellowship decision to publish the book distresses us because:

1) It indicates that the leadership of the Fellowship was sympathetic with the infringing publication even while they were engaging in unity efforts such as the Millennium Initiative, and in the year-long negotiations between Foundation and Fellowship over the Fellowship's website infringements.

2) The Uversa Press edition will again compete with the Foundation's English language edition. It is the Foundation's fiduciary responsibility to publish, translate and protect the integrity of the text. The Fellowship's decision to publish could ultimately jeopardize the Foundation's international copyrights.

3) The consequences of this decision will be renewed confusion among new readers, as well as exasperation among long time readers who see no real benefit to this wastefully duplicative effort.

4) This decision will have the effect of alienating members of IUA, delaying indefinitely unity

between the two reader groups.

5) This decision to embark upon such a divisive program occurred without apprising Fellowship societies. It risks incurring the disaffection of some of these societies.

6) The Constitution contains no Article empowering the Fellowship to publish The Urantia Book. However, it does outline many duties that the Fellowship either is not performing, or could perform more effectively.

The Fellowship certainly needs to refresh and renew itself. We urge Fellowship leaders to reexamine our Constitutional purpose to determine how we can broaden our scope, inspire our members, and extend a cooperative hand to fellow believers to join in the challenging spiritual regeneration of our planet. There must cease immediately repeated assaults upon the text of The Urantia Book, especially by our own leaders! The copyright shield could very well save the life of the revelation when attacks come from outside.