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SUBJECT: A HISTORY OF THE URANTIA MOVEMENT

Dear Barbara:

This letter has been written thoughtfully for the good -- the enduring good -- of our Movement. I hope you and others responsible for the HISTORY will consider it earnestly and prayerfully -- as it was written.

My first viewing and hearing of A HISTORY OF THE URANTIA MOVEMENT was last evening. There was much good writing in it and the narrator was a pro -- excellent. I believe the Movement needs a really creditable and completely honest, and relatively complete, audio-visual of this kind. However, since you requested suggestions, I want to make a few -- all in a serious vein.

While the Foundation does not approve of "promoting" our Book or Movement with any professional help or guidance or advice, it is obvious they believe in "having the best they can get" in the way of talent and experience in promoting the 533 "establishment".

And well they should, for it is that for which the Movement exists: PROMOTION. That is, effort toward, or achieving, a specified objective or goal. However, as I taught English-speaking professional sellers all over the world for a good many years: "ALL GOOD SELLING IS SERVING" -- and disservice alone is the end result of dishonesty or deceit -- either directly or by inference -- in any selling effort.

My comments following will be kept to a few points. One should have your text at hand for anything like a complete commentary. I'll mention only a few things that seem unfair to your audience, that must therefore, ultimately prove ill for the Movement, while gilding the 533 lily.

1. A history of any organization, be it a business, an educational institution, a church, a Foundation, a Movement (what not?), should as a matter of course put emphasis on the objectives or purposes of the subject being memorialized or promoted.

I have sometimes said that 533 seems never to have become familiar with its Declaration of Trust -- its only authorization for existence, and the only official statement of the "OBJECTS" which alone are its reasons for existence.

The Declaration of Trust says that plates for the Book are held in trust by the Trustees "for the uses and purposes . . . hereinafter provided". Then comes the "PRINCIPAL OBJECT", stated forthrightly with no equivocation -- and the Trustees have signed that Declaration, signifying their intention of living up to it. The very next paragraph states the "PRINCIPAL OBJECT", so the "uses and purposes" (if one pays attention to them) cannot be misunderstood. That PRINCIPAL OBJECT reads: "The object for which this Foundation is created (is CREATED) is the promotion, improvement, and expansion among the peoples of the world of the comprehension and understanding of Cosmology . . . and of the true teachings of Jesus Christ."

On page 6, under "DUTIES OF TRUSTEES" paragraph 3.4 reads: "DISSEMINATION OF TEACHINGS OF THE URANTIA BOOK. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to désseminate the teachings and doctrines of THE URANTIA BOOK and to devise, to develop, and to effectuate means and methods for such dissemination, and to apply and use the Trust Estate for the accomplishment of that end."

A history of THE URANTIA MOVEMENT, should be, should it not, an effective and convincing elucidation of that end, namely, the "promotion, improvement, and expansion:" of the world's comprehension and understanding of the Book's teachings.

However, the "PRINCIPAL OBJECT" of the 533 institution is not even mentioned in this interesting but strange and highly selective "history".

A watered down unofficial version, less forthright, of the purpose of the Foundation is mentioned, but only AFTER the "show" makes a "CONCORDANT OBJECT" (preserving the text inviolate) appear to be 533's PRINCIPAL OBJECT. This is consistent, not with the Declaration of Trust and 533's essential purpose, but with 533's different predilections. In short, the HISTORY is misleading because it presents the present Trustees' preoccupation with copyright and quote-control efforts as the main duty and principal object of the Foundation. This variant from truth doesn't appear important to people in your typical audience. Usually they are uninformed as to requirements of The Declaration of Trust. Moreover, they do not feel an intense and dedicated determination to "promote" Jesus' teachings, which the Foundation Trustees and all activist readers should feel -- if they take the Revelators, the Book, and Jesus, seriously.

Actually it IS important to the HISTORY of the Movement. Nothing discredits a religious organization more than research which in due time shows the people in charge were more interested in personal objectives than in hewing to the line of charters under which they operate.

I am reminded of the old-time southern doctor, who -- having diagnosed a child's illness as scarlet fever, told the parents: "I aint really had much experience with scarlet fever. But -- I can throw him into spasms, and I'm hell on spasms!!"

The Trustees, without professional experience in publishing, promotion, communication, have had some education in certain legal areas, and perhaps therefore tend to stress that function which permits the exercise of legal formalities.

The success of our Movement lies much more in propagation of our Revelation, in outreach, in evangelization, than in closely controlling and curtailing quoting. All of you who can influence the HISTORY presentation should plug heavily for consistent TRUTH.

In keeping with the Foundation's low view of "promotion" for Jesus' teachings, and its high view of "promotion" for its own oddly selective teachings and policies, these two OBJECTS referred to are reversed in the emphasis. Thus your audiences are never given a clear view in the history why there is a Movement whose "history" they are viewing. After seeing the history, should not an auditor-viewer be able to clearly and confidently state the purpose of the Movement is outreach, to fulfill the oft-repeated instructions of Jesus to all of us readers -- to disseminate his Gospel to all the world, now and forever?

Can a HISTORY OF THE URANTIA MOVEMENT honestly keep secret that our "raison d'etre", our Movement's only justification for existence, is the "promotion of Jesus' teachings"? Take that objective from our Movement, the very reason for establishing a Foundation and a Brotherhood, and you have a straw man Movement, a false front, an aborted religious purpose, an almost secret society of people blessed by possession of The URANTIA Book, while they believe the rest of the world is not ready for it. Is this a typical cult smugness? Jesus seemed to believe his Gospel was for all but very few on earth in his time. The Book, and Jesus' instructions to us in the Book (which surely did not come to us over his DISapproval), seem to indicate that our job is to make the world ready by evangelization. 533 and the HISTORY seem to say: "We know better than Jesus what your instructions should be in reference to the URANTIA Movement. Pay no attention to Jesus' many admonitions. Do as we tell you." The HISTORY supports the 533 attitude, and seems to seek audience support for 533 policies. It warps reality to do so.

If this history is to be revised and corrected, I believe it should clearly and honestly emphasize the clearly stated real objectives of the Movement, and of the Foundation and of the Brotherhood, whose constitution echoes the "promotion, improvement, and expansion" of the comprehension and understanding of the teachings of Jesus among the peoples of the world.

2. It is interesting that the 533 organization would use a competent professional narrator for the history's presentation, which is a promotion of the Movement and the 533 organization, whereas it has consistently kept within the handling of its own amateurs, execution of

its own PRINCIPAL OBJECT -- in connection with a "once in 2000 years, EPOCHAL REVELATION". The PRINCIPAL OBJECT of the Foundation is not propagandizing for 533, but dissemination to the whole world of an EPOCHAL REVELATION. Yet 533 propagandizing utilizes highly professional talent, while the EPOCHAL REVELATION'S handling ignores the professional capabilities even of its own members.

In comparatively recent months, very capable Urantian activists on their own initiative, independent of any initiatives from 533, have become awakened to our Movement's foundering and regression, and have made notable progress at regaining lost ground -- for the Foundation. The awakening of initiative on the part of a widely scattered few activists is a notable Movement development. Although this is the reverse of activities inspired widespread by 533, it could be gracefully handled in a revised, updated history, without making the Foundation look bad. (I am fully in accord with a HISTORY, and I know one will never be produced at Chicago unless it shows the headquarters in a favorable light.)

3. The HISTORY flatly states that Book sales leveled off at about 10,000 copies per year. It is true that about that level was maintained for 6 years. During that period a good many religious movements and cults were growing prodigiously. Then, due to an unfortunate policy decision, the Foundation defeated its major OBJECTIVE of "promotion" (and dissemination), and sales dropped substantially. Without looking up the figures, I believe the decrease was about 35% & from 10,000 the next two years. (Local initiatives in several places across the country, in attempts to end this disastrous sales shortfall, are being effective, I believe. And sales should start climbing back to the level of 7 or 8 years ago.)

The substantial drop in sales was not mentioned in the HISTORY or in your commentary. Yet everyone associated with creating the HISTORY must know the truth.

Any business or corporation that went before audiences with a HISTORY and quoted a figure for 6 years and omitted mention of the most recent years that had shockingly declined would be charged with fraud and deceit. The Securities and Exchange Commission of the Federal Government would prohibit further like presentations and perhaps prosecute for misleading stockholders. Readers and contributors of our Movement constitute our stockholders.

Is it appropriate that standards of honesty demanded of commercial enterprises be violated by a religious organization established even with the knowledge of the superuniverse executives, by a religious organization supposed to be promulgating the Golden Rule?

Does 533 have any idea at all of the gravity of spreading misinformation in connection with an EPOCHAL REVELATION? Would 533 be willing to permit readers and speakers and writers on our Movement, to be equally deceptive and misleading? Has no Trustee objected to this HISTORY presentation, and to figures that have been misleading for over 2 years? The errors of judgment and the mistakes of business corporations are

frequently given light in annual meetings and in publications. I cannot recall the Foundation's ever having admitted error. This in the long run will be seen to have multiplied error.

Can you personally present the history without some emotional and rational reluctance? Done too many times, you can become unresponsive to the reproaches of conscience.

The truth could be gracefully handled in connection with a new pick-up in sales due to local efforts in the hinterlands. Honestly, despite the reluctance of some Trustees to trust it, is honestly the best and only policy befitting our Revelation. And I know you know it.

4. The HISTORY makes quite a point of one of 533's favorite views -- that the Book is not an end in itself. This is used again and again when an "apology" is needed to excuse 533 inactivity in promoting, and an explanation for ignoring the instructions of the Declaration of Trust.

Attempting to confuse the public or readers by confusing ends and means is a common device adopted by some speakers, mainly politicians, deliberately to deceive. I believe the 533 people simply have not faced any analysis of the validity or invalidity of their argument.

Consider truth: If you have any end in view, it cannot be achieved without some "means". Whatever end is in view in the minds of headquarters people for our Movement, they have to use some means. If we aspire to advance a belief in sonship of all to God, and the brotherhood of all men to one another, The URANTIA Book's teachings, hence The URANTIA Book, is our means to that end. If we do not need the means, The URANTIA Book, it would not have been given us as an EPOCHAL REVELATION. The ideas of sonship and brotherhood are in the Bible.

For every Urantian who has fully accepted the Jesusonian Gospel of Sonship and Brotherhood without using the new "means", The URANTIA Book, there are probably (select your own figure -- 10, 50, 100? --) who have done so through reading and studying the Book itself.

We were given the Book to achieve certain ends. It is a juvenile argument to say the Book is not an end in itself. Who has said it was? What book is? Books exist for the dissemination or use or entertainment of their content. So with The URANTIA Book.

If the Book itself and its specific content, its means to our end, were not vitally important, why would it be necessary to protect the validity of the text? Why would anyone pay \$34 for the Book? How successful have headquarters people been at "promoting, improving, and expanding the comprehension and understanding of Jesus' teachings (or of cosmology) among the peoples of the world", ignoring the means to our ends, The URANTIA Book?

No computer is an end in itself. But few distributors or users of computers would try to excuse their poor handling of a computer by saying, "The computer is not an end in itself".

Aspirin is not an end in itself, but is a means to an end. Like all other means, it needs to be used, or the end is not achieved. What is gained by saying: "Aspirin is not a means in itself"? The desired end simply is not achieved without the means.

There should be an end to the unperceptive and confusing use of the irrelevant argument: "The Book is not an end in itself". I have never heard anyone say it is. But it is a perfect, precious, immeasurable, indispensable, non-duplicatable means to ends we cannot achieve without the Book. Anyone who "promotes" the Book knows he is doing so to promote Jesus' teachings.

5. Showing pictures of people unknown to your auditors is puzzling to them. Dr. Lena -- a good illustration. I am glad you are going to name her in future.

Despite the unhappy denouement of the Bill Sadler experience -- and although he was a very dear and close friend of mine, I was as critical as anyone -- Bill was a fantastic scholar of the Book and made contributions across the country that made enduring progress for the Movement. He is not adequately mentioned.

You volunteered that the Concordex will be mentioned in future. I then told you that the omission of what hundreds of readers have been grateful for (expressed in letters I have), and what a good many of the "biggest" Urantians have written me is -- next to the Book itself -- the most important element in our Movement, namely the Concordex -- the omission of its mention, I say, in your history, did not disturb me. I am sure the omission hurts headquarters more than it hurts me. I do not expect fair or rational treatment -- personally or for the Concordex -- so long as present stature of policy makers' thinking dominates all of 533. I will be content (if the Concordex' creation merits it) for whatever credit I may be given upstairs -- credit far more important to me than any the 533 personnel can give.

Much more could be written, but this is already a good deal longer than I thought it would be. I'll begin to close.

A good HISTORY is needed. There is much that is good in what you now have. For the sake of the Movement I hope it will be improved. One thing you may be sure of, Barbara. Sometime in the future, intensive research of our Movement will be done by both friends and enemies. Notes of old-timers will appear that no one now knows exist. Correspondence in the files of a good many people will support truth and not 533-influenced "propaganda". Whoever is in a position to influence revisions of the history will be far wiser to write as fairly and accurately as possible, rather than to accord with present Trustee policies and views. Those connected with a biased HISTORY will inevitably be named and exposed at some later date. You may be sure, too, that certain celestial beings are not blind.

I think I should mention another detail that misleads your audiences. Briefly. That was the mention that implies the midwayers or Revelators were as instrumental in shaping the Declaration of Trust as was Dr. Sadler

and his human associates. I believe that their serious collaboration cannot be effectively supported.

I have a five page elite-type letter to Mr. Kellogg, dated in 1933, devoted practically to one point (Doc Sadler had asked some of us who had read his early drafts for what became The Declaration of Trust, to write our reactions to Mr. Kellogg who would eliminate duplicates, et cetera). My letter was as cogent and impassioned a plea as I could devise AGAINST life-term, self-perpetuating Trustees.

But the great old doctor's original view prevailed. That feature of the proposed Council (I believe the group was to be called that as then projected) was the most serious mistake in all probability, that Dr. Sadler ever made in connection with the Book and Movement.

The point I wish to make though is this: When the Revelators had the final version of the Declaration of Trust submitted to them, their response was (almost in these words): "There are provisions of this we do not agree with, but we will go along".

Those of us who raised our voices with some emphasis in the formulation of the Declaration of Trust, believed, I am confident, that the provision not liked by our unseen friends, was the one mentioned.

Sooner or later, this (already known by a good many) will be known generally, even published in due time, I suppose, and it would be better not to have your HISTORY at odds with the truth. Doc Sadler was the formulator of the Declaration of Trust. I believe it seems universal that Revelators do nothing for the recipients of Revelation that the recipients can do -- and should be expected to do -- for themselves.

Sincerely yours,

Clyde Bedell