

*A History and Overview of
The Urantia Book
and Urantia Foundation*

By Georges Michelson-Dupont, Paris France

Speech delivered in Helsinki, Finland
07 August 1998

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“And when man's ascending soul stands before the Supreme Judge, the decision of eternal import will not be determined by material successes or quantitative achievements; the verdict reverberating through the high courts declares: Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few essentials; you shall be made ruler over universe realities.” [274:3]

Dear Friends,

First of all I would like, in the name of my fellows trustees, the Executive Director Tonia Baney, and all the staff of Urantia Foundation, to welcome you to the first international IUA conference ever held outside the US territory. It is not by chance that this thrilling event is taking place in Helsinki. The Finnish Urantia movement started in the early sixties as a result of a ready made group who were interested in UFO's, finding The Urantia Book. Several attempts to translate The Urantia Book into Finnish were made before Seppo Kanerva, a distinguish linguist and a dear friend of mine, was appointed by Urantia Foundation to that task.

The year 1986 was an exceptional year for international contact within the Urantia movement. The first International Conference for readers of The Urantia Book ever held outside the US took place in Montvillargennes (France) and twelve Finnish people attended!

As a matter of fact the first non-US Urantia Brotherhood society was chartered in Pieksamaki, nearly 10 years ago in 1989. Both my wife Marlene and I attended this celebration and we will always remember those exceptional and intense moments of brotherly relationship. (Including the welcome of the mosquitoes when we were walking around the lake.)

After the dramatic and painful events that led to the de-licensing of Urantia Brotherhood, the Finnish Urantia society was the first to rally courageously behind Urantia Foundation in loyal support of its Declaration of Trust. I take this opportunity to thank you, on behalf of Urantia Foundation, for your steadfastness and faithfulness.

I would also like to thank the previous and current Presidents of the Finnish Association, Raimo Ala-Hynnilla and Kalevi Eklof, the entire Finnish Preparatory Committee who have worked hard and well to organize and make this event happen: Sinikka Lilja, Seppo Niskanen, Eija Seppanen, Kari Kuosmanen, Tuula Parviainen, Hannu Stenroos, Tapio Pulli, and Seppo Kanerva, and the some 160 attendees coming from 15 countries including the United States, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, France, Russia, Australia, Estonia, Canada, Norway, Great Britain, Malta, Colombia, Peru, and Finland.

How do I know all this information? I asked Seppo Kanerva, my good friend, to send me a short summary about the Finnish Association. I would like to quote his words, because to me this is an example of the commitment of the Finnish International Urantia Association to the cosmic task of leavening the spiritual level of our little planet and how other IUA associations may help Urantia Foundation to fulfill its trust:

"The Finnish Association and the Estonian translator team, which Peep Sober had formed, concluded an agreement in June 1995 to the effect that the Finnish Association will pay one half of the expenses of the Estonian effort. This agreement is still in force, and is lived up to the letter. The other half is paid by a group Of 200 Estonians interested in the translation of The Urantia Book. "But Georges," writes Seppo, "you should never mention this in public; we are not important; only the cause is important."

Facts, meanings, and values is the general theme of this international conference. Another significant and related threefold association of words is Origin, History, and Destiny. While the entire conference will be devoted to the general theme, I would like to take advantage of the next 30 minutes to talk about the origin and development of the Urantia Papers in the early days, to introduce Urantia Foundation in this historical context, its trust, responsibilities, and programs and, from there, I will try to explain how we conduct ourselves to fulfill that purpose and the direction that Urantia Foundation is taking for the future.

The Fifth Epochal Revelation: The Urantia Book

Regarding the succession of Epochal Revelations, we are told that Urantia is a decimal planet and subject to experiments. We are also told that our unfortunate world has suffered from betrayal, impatience, and quarantine and therefore we know that "Urantia is not proceeding in the normal order." [597:2].

I guess the spiritual beings in charge of the welfare of our planet were confronted with the following problem: what sort of epochal revelation would they offer to Urantia as the fifth, keeping in mind that the first two failed, the third was an emergency revelation, and the fourth died on the cross with Jesus' teachings and became somewhat distorted and Occidentalized.

As we see, they have chosen a book. And of course we can conjecture about the many reasons for such a choice. Following are two that I believe are important:

- A book is a perfect modern vehicle to convey information and concepts to people. Therefore any individual, as well as each and every family, can be exposed to it. It can also be translated and widely spread at low cost all over the world. But there are also some dangers: for instance, the text can be modified, altered, simplified, digested, and/or dismembered. All of this would lower the strength and efficiency of the revelation. It could simply be destroyed or lost if not enough of the integral text is spread. The quality and accuracy of the translations will be a determining factor for its success to all non-English speaking countries.
- A book is an intellectual challenge to the human mind. We had the physical upliftment of humanity with Adam and Eve. We had the spiritual upliftment with Jesus and his unmatched teachings. We now have the intellectual upliftment with The Urantia Book. Therefore it is important that the integrity and the integrality of the text, as well as the quality of the translations, be respected and spread as a whole, in order to be safe and to continue, century after century, to challenge the human mind.

While the revelators were preparing to launch this revelation, it is my belief that they were also conscious of the possible dangers mentioned above. As part of their investigations for the place, the timing, and the people, they also looked very carefully at human laws and organizations.

Finally, they came up with a holistic plan that we may divide into three periods or steps, which could be compared to the important periods of the life of a human being:

Step one: Preparation and reception of the Urantia Papers (early 1910-1937) - (pregnancy). At some time during the process, some humans would be involved.

Step two: Organization, planning, launching and early development- (1938-2030) (Birth and infancy of the revelation.) At that time, an organization would be created with the task of dissemination, producing translations, and protection. Also, some kind of social body of believers, as the natural off-spring to the Forum, would take place.

Step three: The full epoch of the revelation (2030-next Revelation), (adulthood of the revelation) -- the time of maturity. The text would be in the public domain, translations available in most of the languages of the world, worldwide spreading, and the evolutionary leavening and blooming of the revelation among the people of Urantia.

In today's presentation, I will mainly be dealing with steps one and two.

STEP ONE: Preparation and reception of the Urantia Papers (Early 1910-1937)

The Past

As we know, in the twentieth century after Christ, our world was considered ready for another revelation of epochal proportions -- The Urantia Book. All prior revelations have consisted of superhuman personalities -- even divine. This latest revelation is in book form.

Planning revelations

We know from The Urantia Book itself how carefully previous revelations of truth have been planned. Not only timing, but location, culture, traffic, specific human personalities, and many other factors have been carefully considered.

In the first epochal revelation, for Prince Caligastia's staff, Adjuster guidance coordinated the convergence upon Dalamatia of one hundred superior human beings from various and distant parts of the planet.

In the second, Van's volunteers spent three years determining the location of the Garden of Eden for the Adamic bestowal.

The third, human families embodying the potentials of leadership were carefully observed before Machiventa Melchizedek chose Palestine and the family of Abraham in conjunction with his activities.

The fourth, the world was searched for suitable families in which our local universe Creator Son could be born. From three possibilities, Gabriel selected Joseph and Mary.

And with the fifth, we do not know what research and techniques were used in selecting the timing, the site, and the human resources for the inauguration of The Urantia Book. No doubt celestial analysis and painstaking care and coordination went into the effort as was done in prior times. What we do know is that the language used was English, that Chicago was "the city of this visitation" and that the roots of the origin of The Urantia Book reach back to the early parts of the twentieth century. We were also told that the Midwayers started planning for this revelation in the 1400-1500's. "The Renaissance" period kept religion alive.

In the early twentieth century Dr. William S. Sadler, a prominent physician and psychiatrist practicing in Chicago, became the acknowledged head of the group known as the Contact Commission, who received the messages and instructions from the revelators which resulted in The Urantia Book.

The Revelatory Commission functioned through a human contact personality whose identity will remain forever in obscurity. "Mortal man is so prone to venerate, even to deify, his extraordinary compatriots and superhuman superiors" [1252:5]

The Contact Commission were the only humans privy to the methods used to produce the Papers in the English language. They were sworn not to disclose details about the transactions. The Urantia Book; because of its revelatory nature, was to stand on its own merit, nature and content.

In the 1920's Dr Sadler led a group of friends and associates who met at his home every Sunday afternoon to study and discuss various scientific, philosophic and religious topics. It was therefore a natural evolutionary step when the transition was made from the study of those topics to the contemplation of other truths of epochal significance.

The doctor started sharing the material that was being received with this group of truth seekers, which became known as the Forum. They posed many questions and the revelation started to take shape. It came to pass that the Forum participated in the development of the Urantia Papers and helped to foster these Urantia Teachings in their infancy.

The Unpublished William S. Sadler History

An interesting unpublished document, written by Doctor William S. Sadler, which is now on public record, explains more about the appearance and the development of the Urantia Papers.

The pre-education of the Sadlers and their little group

Dr. Sadler describes how carefully and intensively his group was trained for twenty years as a pre-education before the Papers started. We read from his history:

Early Development of the Urantia Papers "During these early years we were introduced to many new and, somewhat strange concepts of the universe of universes and as concerned man and his life on earth" Dr. Sadler goes on to list numerous ideas of cosmology and philosophy which were introduced at this time; new concepts such as the far-flung cosmos, millions of other inhabited worlds, scores of different celestial personalities, confirmation of the evolutionary origin of humankind, an evolutionary universe, multiple Creator Deities, Havona, superuniverses, the Supreme Being etc.

Dr Sadler wrote: "Our superhuman friends spent upward of two decades in extending our cosmic horizons, enlarging our theological concepts, and expanding our over-all philosophy."

"We never did realize how much our religious thinking had been expanded until the Papers began to arrive. As the revelation progressed, we came more fully to appreciate how we had been prepared for the vast aberration of our religious beliefs by these preliminary contacts extending over a period of twenty years of pre-education."

"Our apprenticeship training for subsequent services in association with the presentation of the Urantia Papers was facilitated by the fact that, except for contacts with the midwayers, no two contacts were alike. Seldom did we meet the visiting personalities more than once. Every contact was entirely different from any and all that had gone before. And all of this experience was an extensive and liberal preparatory educational training in the expansion of our cosmology, theology, and philosophy..."

The Forum

The document tells about the first steps of the little group of truth seekers. A detailed explanation on how the "Forum" was formed, and how they came to ask questions in conjunction with the revelation is presented. We read from Sadler's history:

"We told the Forum all about this and invited them to join us in the preparation of questions. We decided to start out with questions pertaining to the origin of the cosmos, Deity, creation, and such other subjects as were far beyond the present-day knowledge of all humankind."

"The following Sunday several hundred questions were brought in. We sorted out these questions, discarding duplicates, and in a general way, classifying them. Shortly thereafter, the first Urantia Papers appeared, the questions disappeared."

"This was the procedure followed throughout the many years of the reception of the Urantia Papers. No questions - no Papers."

"This was the plan: We would read a Paper on a Sunday afternoon and the following Sunday the new questions would be presented. Again, these would be sorted, classified, etc. This program covered several years and ultimately resulted in the presentation of the 196 Papers as now found in The Urantia Book"

The Forum and the Contact Commission become two separate groups

Then, we are told that in September 1925, Dr. Sadler and his contact group were asked to form a closed group: I quote:

"About this time, (September 1925) the Forum, as it were, was taken away from us. We were instructed to form a "closed group" - requiring each member to sign a pledge of secrecy and to discuss the Papers and all matters pertaining thereto with only those persons who were members of the Forum."

"The last meeting of the Forum as a genetic assembly was held on May 3, 1942. During the seventeen years of official existence the Forum attained a total of membership of 486."

"During the period of the reception of the Urantia Papers, upward of 300 different persons participated in asking these genetic¹ questions. With but few exceptions, all of the Urantia Papers were given in response to such questions."

"The individuals charged with the responsibility of gathering up the questions and comparing the typewritten text with the original handwritten manuscript, came to be known as the 'Contact Commissioners.' From that date forward only these Contact Commissioners attended 'contacts' and received written communications through the contact personality."

Here is another interesting statement from Doctor Sadler: "The Commissioners were the custodians of the Urantia manuscript, keeping the carbon copy of the typewritten transcript in a fire-proof vault. They were also charged with the full responsibility for supervising all the details connected with the publication of the Book, securing the international copyrights, etc."

These statements make it very clear that the Revelators had concerns for the protection of the Papers under copyright laws. Seeking for a copyright could not have been initiated by the revelators' human counter-part, the Contact Commission since, according to Sadler "They were charged with the full responsibility for supervising all the details connected with the publication of the Book, securing the international copyrights, etc." The question is "who charged them" with those responsibilities? And the only rational answer is: the Revelators did. As a matter of fact, Urantia Foundation has written documents showing that as early as October 1932, Mr. Wilfred Kellogg, one of the contact commissioners, was charged with the responsibility of looking into international copyright for The Urantia Book. It is my understanding that the authors were already seeking for the protection of the Book long before it was even finished.

Dr Sadler also said: "We were enjoined to refrain from discussing the identity of the Contact Personality and, after the publication of the Book, to make any statement at any time as to whether the "subject" was still living or was deceased."

STEP II - Preparation, organization, launching and early development of the revelation: the present times

Preparation:

¹ Genetic-"pertaining to origins," coined 1831 by Carlyle from Gk. genetikos "genitive," from genesis "origin" (see genus).

From 1937 until 1955, the text of The Urantia Book was prepared for printing and publishing. After 40 years of careful preparation of the project, and after training so many people, it would appear somewhat strange that the midwayers would just drop the Urantia Papers on Urantia without providing for the care and charge of its protection, dissemination, and translation. We know that in every cosmic project someone is in charge of the ultimate decisions, someone who takes the final responsibility. Who could imagine for one moment that so important a project for our planet would be launched without provision for human watch-care?

Therefore, with the inspiration of the midwayers, Urantia Foundation was created by a Declaration of Trust under the laws of the State of Illinois on January 11, 1950 which states its goals, objectives, and functions. Urantia Foundation received the plates of the text from the Contact Commissioners as the "Trust Estate." A copyright on The Urantia Book was obtained and the three Concentric Circles Symbol and the names "Urantia" and "Urantian" were registered as trademarks to identify the future Urantia Book with Urantia Foundation, who was the custodian of the book and legal owner of the copyright.

In addition, the social body was in its stage of preparation and was formed in 1955 as the Urantia Brotherhood.

The Publication Mandate

Dr. Sadler said: "At long last, permission to publish the Urantia Papers was granted. The Introduction to this mandate reads (and we accept the following to be direct words from the revelators): "We regard The Urantia Book as a feature of the progressive evolution of human society. It is not germane to the spectacular episode of epochal revelation, even though it may apparently be timed to appear in the wake of one such revolution in human society. The book belongs to the era immediately to follow the conclusion of the present ideological struggle. That will be the day when men will be willing to seek truth and righteousness. When the chaos of the present confusion has passed, it will be more readily possible to formulate the cosmos of a new and improved era of human relationships. And it is for this better order of affairs on earth that the book has been made ready." "But the publication of the book has not been postponed to that (possibly) somewhat remote date. An early publication of the book has been provided so that it may be in hand for the training of leaders and teachers. Its presence is also required to engage the attention of persons of means who may be thus to provide funds for translation into other languages."

"Upon receipt of these instructions, the Contact Commissioners entered upon the task of publishing The Urantia Book and preparation of plans for its distribution."

Purpose of Urantia Foundation

We see that every revelation requires two sides, the revelatory side and the evolutionary side. When you look at the Planetary Prince episode, you find Van and his fellows as the human side. When you look at Adam and Eve, you find the best tribes and individuals as guests in the Garden. When you look at Melchizedek, you find Abraham and the missionaries. Finally looking at Jesus, you find the twelve apostles, the woman corps, and the seventy. It would then appear to be strange if no humans were associated with, or in charge of and responsible for, the Urantia project.

On page 1569 of The Urantia Book, and just before the "sermon of the Ordination of the twelve" we are told how Jesus, in a solemn address to his Father in heaven, presents his apostles: "My Father, I now bring to you these men, my messengers. From among our children on earth I have chosen these twelve to go forth to represent me as I came forth to represent you. Love them and be with them as you have loved and been with me. And now, my Father, give these men wisdom as I place all the affairs of the coming kingdom in their hands." [1569:6]

And the narrative continues on "... A great silence pervaded the place while a host of celestial beings looked down upon this solemn and sacred scene--the Creator of a universe placing the affairs of the divine brotherhood of -man under the direction of human minds. [1570:1]

And were these twelve men specially gifted? We are told: "... And this is just why he chose as his personal representatives twelve commonplace men, the majority of whom were rugged, virile, and manly fishermen. [1582:1]

Concerning the present revelation, the Urantia Papers project, the midwayers placed in the hands of the Trustees of Urantia Foundation the complete responsibility for the dissemination of the teachings and the full authority for the protection of The Urantia Book as it is stated in its Declaration of Trust. It is a cosmic mechanism placed by the spiritual brotherhood to carry Epochal revelations to the human realms.

Some individuals deny this human authority over the dissemination and protection of the revelation, invoking their "spiritual liberty" or their direct relationship with God. They claim that they are free to do whatever they want with the revelation because it is a gift

from our unseen friends to humankind. Their so called "liberty" is more important to them than their obligations toward the group or their duties as cosmic citizens. They should meditate on the following statement of Jesus:

"In my universe and in my Father's universe of universes, our brethren-sons are dealt with as individuals in all their spiritual relations, but in all group relationships we unflinchingly provide for definite leadership. Our kingdom is a realm of order, and where two or more will creatures act in cooperation, there is always provided the authority of leadership". Jesus, p 1959:0]

This social, epochal responsibility exercised by Urantia Foundation does not impinge upon, nor is opposed to, individuals' religious rights. The book tells us that: religion is purely and wholly a matter of personal experience. [1539:4] Urantia Foundation always has, and always will encourage any and all individuals to experience, in their inner lives, the teachings of The Urantia Book.

But, situations for potential social conflict arise when individuals place the importance of their own liberty above the liberty of their fellows: "Liberty subject to group regulation is the legitimate goal of social evolution. Liberty without restrictions is the vain and fanciful dream of unstable and flighty human minds." [906:5]

Therefore, invoking religious freedom to justify any attempt against the protection of the text of The Urantia Book displays immature and selfish behavior. In this matter as well as others, the Trustees are committed to exercising their full and somewhat difficult obligations to their responsibilities as necessary.

As with previous revelations, the early stages need to be nurtured and protected. The early days of the revelation are like a new born baby that needs wise and loving protection in the early stages of its life by a caring, devoted father and mother. I like to use the analogy between the early days of this revelation and a river at its source. The course of the river can be deviated with the point of only a finger, however once it is large enough, deviation becomes more difficult.

The Declaration of Trust as the plan for the spreading of the revelation

What to do with those plates, and were precise instructions given on how to proceed with the spreading of the revelation?

Since all written instructions were burned, we only have hearsay and oral testimony to rely upon -none of which can be scientifically proven (even if the instructions are consistent with our understanding and appear to be rational.)

The only document upon which we can surely rely upon is the Declaration of Trust creating Urantia Foundation. In fact this document institutes Urantia Foundation as the owner of The Urantia Book, assigns the goals of Urantia Foundation, builds the plan for the dissemination of the teachings of The Urantia Book, and gives instructions for the protection of the text. It indicates how Urantia Foundation and the Trustees should operate to launch and construct the foundation for the worldwide spreading of the revelation.

While this Declaration of Trust is a typical, usual, and classic 1950's Foundation document, articles No. 1, 2, and 3 are inspired if not authored by the revelators themselves. Those articles are very specific and precise: they describe what Urantia Foundation is set up for and what the duties of the Trustees are.

The PREAMBLE and ARTICLE I of the Declaration of Trust create and institute Urantia Foundation as the owner of The Urantia Book:

We read:

"PREAMBLE: Whereas the Contributors, being desirous that their identity remain unknown in order that the creation of such foundation shall have no limitations by reason of its association with their names, coincident with the execution of this Declaration of Trust and with full knowledge and in consideration thereof, have caused their nominees to deliver and turn over to the undersigned the said plates for the printing and reproduction of The Urantia Book, to be held in trust to make possible the accomplishment and fulfillment of such desires and to carry out and perpetuate the objects herein expressed." And,

"1.1 CREATION: We, the undersigned, for and in behalf of the Contributors and those whose inspirations have this conceived, by this Declaration of Trust, hereby create, found, and establish this Foundation to be known as 'Urantia FOUNDATION' "

"1.2. ACCEPTANCE AND DECLARATION: We, the undersigned, for ourselves and our successors in trust as hereinafter defined, do hereby acknowledge that there have been transferred and delivered to us approximately two thousand two

hundred (2,200) nickel-plated stereotype plates of patent thickness prepared from the manuscript of the Urantia BOOK for the printing and reproduction thereof..." etc.

ARTICLE II assign the goals and objectives of Urantia Foundation for the dissemination and the protection of the teachings of The Urantia Book:

Article II: "2.1 PRINCIPAL OBJECT: The object for which this foundation is created is the promotion, improvement, and expansion among the peoples of the world of the comprehension and understanding of Cosmology and the relation of the planet on which we live to the Universe, of the genesis and destiny of Man and his relation to God, and of the true teachings of Jesus Christ; and for the inculcation and encouragement of the realization and appreciation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man- in order to increase and enhance the comfort, happiness, and well being of Man, as an individual and as a member of society, through the fostering of a religion, a philosophy, and a cosmology which are commensurate with Man's intellectual and cultural development."

"2.2.CONCORDANT OBJECT: The concordant objects for which the Foundation is created are to perpetually preserve inviolate the text of The Urantia Book and to disseminate the principles, teachings, and doctrines of the Urantia Book.

ARTICLE III gives the plan for the Trustees to fulfill their trust and to carry out their task:

"3.1 - PRESERVATION OF THE TEXT OF THE Urantia Book : It shall be the primary duty of the Trustees to perpetually preserve inviolate the text of The Urantia Book, and the Trustees shall use and employ such means and methods, and facilities and apply and expend as much of the Trust Estate as in the judgment of the Trustees shall be necessary, proper, or appropriate, for the preserving and the safekeeping of copies of the original text of The Urantia Book, duly authenticated by the Trustees, from loss, damage, or destruction and from alteration, modification, revision, or change in any manner or in any particular."

"3.2. EFFECTING PRINCIPAL OBJECT: It shall be the duty of the Trustees to use and employ such means and methods as they shall from time to time devise and develop and to apply and expend the Trust Estate to promote and effectuate the general purposes as set forth in paragraph 2.1."

3.3. PRESERVATION AND CONTROL OF REPRODUCTION OF THE Urantia BOOK: It shall be the duty of the Trustees to retain absolute and unconditional control of all plates and other media for the printing and reproduction of The Urantia Book and any translation thereof, to make or cause to be made such additional plates and other media as shall from time to time be required to print and reproduce The Urantia Book and any translation thereof, to retain the absolute and unconditional control of the possession, custody, use, and disposition of all such plates and other media for the printing and reproduction of The Urantia Book and translation thereof, and to apply and use the Trust Estate thereof."

It is my understanding, my belief, and my conviction that as long as we follow the instructions of the Declaration of Trust creating Urantia Foundation, we are respectful of the Revelator's plan and therefore we are in partnership with the Revelators. We co-operate with them and our way is safe and right. We are faithful servants.

To deviate from this path can be really easy. Sometimes it can become tempting for some people to deviate from the initial course when an argument or formulation of a subtle new plan is appealing and presented in a way that appeals to the emotions, or is presented in a friendly, seemingly logical manner. Often these arguments fail to take into account the historical context. But we are on this planet to be tested for our loyalty, faith, and trustworthiness. "Is loyalty -- devotion to highest duty -- desirable? Then must man carry on amid the possibilities of betrayal and desertion. The valor of devotion to duty consists in the implied danger of default." [51:11]

"On first thought it might appear that Urantia and its associated isolated worlds are most unfortunate in being deprived of the beneficent presence and influence of such superhuman personalities as a Planetary Prince and a Material Son and Daughter. But isolation of these spheres affords their races a unique opportunity for the exercise of faith and for the development of a peculiar quality of confidence in cosmic reliability which is not dependent on sight or any other material consideration. It may turn out, eventually, that mortal creatures hailing from the worlds quarantined in consequence of rebellion are extremely fortunate. We have discovered that such ascenders are very early entrusted with numerous special assignments to cosmic undertakings where unquestioned faith and sublime confidence are essential to achievement." 1578:6]

The reasons for a copyright

Unfortunately, Urantia is branded with the seal of rebellion and impatience: "Impatience is a spirit poison..." [557:4] says an Archangel of Nebadon. The history of our planet shows that since the rebellion of Lucifer, all revelations have been under severe attack. The Fifth

Epochal Revelation is no exception. Because this one came in book form, the attacks are directed against the text itself as well as against the tools in place for its protection and dissemination. Therefore it is of the greatest importance that, until its worldwide dissemination, the text is protected with a copyright.

Within the human realms, the midwayers must use human laws. The only legal way to protect a text is with a copyright, which provides for protection during the birth and infancy of the revelation. It insures protection until a time when it can stand safely on its own. Until then there is an incubation period whereby the text must be protected and its reproduction and translations must be carefully controlled. This copyright is also useful and necessary for many other reasons.

A copyright to protect the integrity of the text

The best way to destroy or abort the Fifth Epochal Revelation before it can stand on its own would be to change the content of The Urantia Book. We have seen previously how the Revelators were concerned with the protection of the text. 43 years after the first publication we must try to understand their motives for being so concerned with its protection.

The idea of dismembering The Urantia Book by splitting it into parts; for example to publish Part IV separately, is appealing to some. Some individuals think that because of the difficulty of the text, many potential readers are disadvantaged in that they may miss out on the opportunity to enjoy at least a portion of the revelation such as "The Life and Teachings of Jesus."

First I see no evidence that Part IV is easier to understand than the other parts of the book. In fact, we are told how the apostles experienced difficulties with Jesus' teachings, and some of Jesus' talks are indeed very difficult.

Second, it is not up to us to decide what people should read. Let the potential reader have his own experience with the book. Let the reader decide for himself what is good for him. Let him be exposed to the entire revelation.

Third, Jesus and his unmatched life are also extensively described in the other parts of the book. I don't see the wisdom in printing only Part IV simply for the sake of presenting Jesus to potential readers. To present it out of the context with the rest of the Fifth Epochal Revelation is taking the plan into our own hands and deviating from the original plan.

Fourth, it is possible that, in some western Christian countries, publishing Part IV separately would become a best seller with the possible consequence of eclipsing The Urantia Book itself and making the revelation appear as "Occidental" to the rest of the world.

Fifth: the world needs the entire revelation. Like Adam and Eve who were told to give birth to at least 500,000 children before starting to intermarry, The Urantia Book must be spread widely before it is dismembered. When the copyright expires in 2030, it will be important that the world is already saturated with the entire revelation.

And if those arguments are not explicit enough then, listen to what Jesus said to his apostles as a very clear instruction during his last appearance: "I admonish you ever to remember that your mission among men is to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom--the reality of the fatherhood of God and the truth of the sonship of man. Proclaim the whole truth of the good news, not just a part of the saving gospel." [2052:4]

This revelation is so powerful and attractive that it is inevitable that it attracts, and will continue to attract immature, impatient, and unbalanced individuals or groups who, under the false pretext of religious freedom or so-called unselfish service, would want to appropriate The Urantia Book for their own purposes, thereby having to fight against the copyright in order to put the text in the public domain before the book is safe and translated into many languages.

This is my belief: that, among many other reasons for a copyright, one of the most important is to protect the revelation against such individuals and groups. In dealing with the Urantia papers we should always remember that it is a thousand year project and we should think about long term solutions. How sad and ironic it is that all these problems have taken place in the very country where the revelation was born.

A copyright for the control of the quality of translations

Another good reason to have the copyright in effect is so that Urantia Foundation can control, or oversee, the quality and accuracy of the translations. It is of the utmost importance to make sure that translations reflect, as closely as possible, the English text so that the original meanings are not jeopardized or distorted for the non-English speaking people.

Past experience shows that specific conditions are required to translate The Urantia Book in a manner that will meet the criteria of quality, consistency, and accuracy. Among those qualities and conditions the translators must possess the following:

Love for the revelation, be long time readers, willing to work with a team, are not restricted by time frames, are available, dedicated, cooperative, and willing to work without reward or recognition. These are all conditions that we cannot find with commercial and professional translation firms whose conditions are purely economic and results purely financial. How could we expect a professional translator to spend two, or even three, days on a sentence, trying to be consistent with other ideas and concepts expressed somewhere else in the book? Unless the translator is in love with the revelation, how can he be sensitive and receptive to the spiritual messages in the book?

Potential translators are individuals who are moved by the teachings of The Urantia Book and wish to help with the translation project. They make contact with Urantia Foundation, the owner of the copyright, and show a willingness to work harmoniously and cooperatively with us. Urantia Foundation, being responsible for the spreading of the revelation, exercises its control and watch-care through the copyright.

A copyright as a barrier against impatience and immaturity

We must understand and recognize that the present struggle among our readership groups is a struggle between the forces of patience and the forces of impatience, the forces of cooperation and the forces of competition. Intelligent and fraternal cooperation between religious groups leads to spiritual unity, while competition leads to disunity and failure.

The book teaches us the following about competition: "Throughout the earlier ages of any world, competition is essential to progressive civilization. As the evolution of man progresses, co-operation becomes increasingly effective. In advanced civilizations co-operation is more efficient than competition. Early man is stimulated by competition. Early evolution is characterized by the survival of the biologically fit, but later civilizations are the better promoted by intelligent co-operation, understanding fraternity, and spiritual brotherhood." [805:3]

Step two of the plan is still at work. English, Spanish, and French speakers represent only 15 % of the world in terms of language. We encounter extreme difficulties with the distribution in Russia. Eighty-five percent of the world has not yet been exposed to the teachings of The Urantia Book and the launching has not yet even begun. It is utopian to think that with only a total of 350,000 copies sold in very few countries, and with only a handful of translations completed, the teachings of The Urantia Book are safe from being distorted or presented to the world in a way which is not in keeping with the intentions of the revelators.

We understand that people are moved by the teachings of the book and honestly want to busy themselves with the Father's business and promote the teachings of The Urantia Book without restrictions, but we must keep our souls in patience because the building of the foundation of the revelation is not yet finished. Who would be so foolish as to build a skyscraper on unfinished foundations?

There is much, very much, that readers and groups can do to disseminate the teachings, without the need to infringe on the copyright and trademarks

The trademarks: The three concentric-circles symbol and the word "URANTIA"

Another issue I would like to address today is the one on the trademarks -- the three concentric-circles symbol and the names "Urantia" and "Urantian" -- especially the three concentric-circle symbol. First of all, we are told that the symbol is the material emblem of the Trinity government [606:0]. They were displayed as "the banner of Michel" under which the loyal beings rallied when "there was war in heaven" during the episode of the Lucifer rebellion. Then, they were used by Machiventa during his emergency revelation on earth and, as such, they became associated with the third revelation.

Therefore, it is natural that, as an identification mark of its origin, The Urantia Book, being the material form of the Fifth Epochal Revelation carries the three-concentric circles symbol. It is only natural that Urantia Foundation, being its publisher, (owner of The Urantia Book and not of the Fifth Epochal Revelation) registers them as service marks, trademarks, and membership marks (this was done in 1952, 1971, and 1978). This trademark identifies the organization in charge of the Urantia project, as well as identifying its affiliated associations who support Urantia Foundation in its task for the dissemination and protection; those groups who are desirous of cooperating with the plan of the revelators.

But, let's suppose for a minute that the copyright was in the public domain and Urantia Foundation had lost its trademarks. What would be the foreseeable consequences? Immediately a number of publishers would break the book into separate parts and publish them. Simplified versions of the text would flourish on the market, digests would be published, and great confusion would ensue because people would not know which book carried the entire and authentic revelation.

Immediately publishers would start dozens of translations of parts of the book, using professionals with no mechanisms in place to insure quality and accuracy, resulting in pandemonium and leading to confusion in all countries and among the potential readership. Social groups of believers would also become publishers and enter into a wild business of competition for the control of both the market and the readership instead of being busy with social activities such as education, dissemination, and brotherhood.

Is this what we want for the unfolding of the Fifth Epochal Revelation? Is this the desire of the Revelators? Will this help the development of a worldwide brotherhood of believers?

What is Urantia Foundation going to do?

Urantia Foundation will continue the programs that have been implemented to fulfill its trust and duties.

Translations:

Among them translations are of great importance and are considered to be vital for the spreading of the revelation.

Since we know that the copyright is a temporary and transitional state for the revelation, and that it will ultimately end, Urantia Foundation must use this period of protection to provide accurate translations and to control their quality. For that purpose, Urantia Foundation has developed a 30 year plan. Our plan is to translate The Urantia Book into 60 languages by the year 2030. We will concentrate on the most important languages so that more than 80% of the world population will have access to the Revelation in their own tongue by that time. We will ensure that the translation to be provided will be the best which can be achieved through purely human efforts. Urantia Foundation, with its past and ongoing experience, has set up guidelines, principles and criteria concerning the choice of the translators as well as the translating technique.

Because it is impossible to translate this 2,097 page book without mistakes, Urantia Foundation has developed a technique of improvement for each translation, which consists in extensive revision work during the first two or three printings in order to reach a 99% accuracy and fluidity. Once again, we have the duty to provide the best, most accurate translations because we must respect the Revelator's work and plan; we must translate and not interpret the book, and provide the readership with an excellent translation that will be the standard when the copyright expires.

Continuation of the efforts of publishing and distributing The Urantia Book worldwide

Urantia Foundation believes that business and social activities should be clearly separated. It is not wise or safe for individuals or social groups of believers to concern themselves with publishing. Social groups of readers must focus their efforts on social activities and outreach -- dissemination of the teachings.

Publishing and distribution of The Urantia Book is a business task and therefore needs a professional approach. Urantia Foundation attended more than 12 international book fairs last year and has expanded its network of distributors.

Promotion of a friendly environment for cooperation:

"One of the most important lessons to be learned during your mortal career is teamwork. The spheres of perfection are manned by those who have mastered this art of working with other beings. Few are the duties in the universe for the lone servant." [Mighty Messenger, 312:1].

Teamwork is based on trust and respect for one other. We are all dedicated readers and believers. The Trustees of Urantia Foundation are willing to cooperate and work in harmony with individuals or groups who believe in the importance of the revelation for our planet, and who are willing to work in partnership with the revelators and in support of the Declaration of Trust.

We are dealing with a superhuman phenomenon. The revelation is not the work of humans, but its management happens through humans. Consequently, the humans who are involved in its management have to adopt and apply the ways of the universe.

Leadership is an essential, a crucial, feature of the ways of the universe. Urantia Foundation is willing to exercise its leadership role by creating, encouraging, and fostering an environment in which an individual, as well as a group, can function and cooperate harmoniously.

Very soon, new policies for secondary works and permission to quote will be implemented which will meet the need of 98% of the readership, covering the educational as well as the commercial use. There will always be an extremist fringe of individuals who are never happy with whatever we may give them.

New policies for website licenses will be implemented in order to expose The Urantia Book and its translations to more potential readers and be consistent with the copyright laws.

New policies will be introduced which enable individuals to use the concentric circles symbol within precise rules that will also protect the usage by Urantia Foundation of its trademarks.

Secondary works

We all agree that secondary works are, some times, necessary and desirable. They express the understanding, interpretation, and experience of their authors with The URANTIA Book. Sometimes, when they are good, they can be of some help to others in the discovery of new meanings.

Nevertheless, it should be reminded that The URANTIA Book is the revelation and should not be supplanted or replaced in the mind of the potential reader by any human interpretation. Once again what is the most important is the first-hand experience of the reader with The URANTIA Book in its entirety and no human work, as good as it can be, can replace the spiritual chemistry that takes place in the arena of the human mind when the spiritually starving soul tries to grasp the reality of spiritual values within The URANTIA Book.

Following is the statement of an Orvonton Divine Counselor about The URANTIA Book. "We are fully cognizant of the difficulties of our assignment; we recognize the impossibility of fully translating the language of the concepts of divinity and eternity into the symbols of the language of the finite concepts of the mortal mind. But we know that there dwells within the human mind a fragment of God, and that there sojourns with the human soul the Spirit of Truth; and we further know that these spirit forces conspire to enable material man to grasp the reality of spiritual values and to comprehend the philosophy of universe meanings. But even more certainly we know that these spirits of the Divine Presence are able to assist man in the spiritual appropriation of all truth contributory to the enhancement of the ever-progressing reality of personal religious experience -- God-consciousness." [17:2]

Concerning the so called "channeled material" it must be reminded also that, according to The URANTIA Book itself, the 196 papers represent the entirety of the Revelation. Therefore, no one can claim that he/she is receiving complements of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. URANTIA Foundation being concerned with the possibility of confusion, distortion, and amalgamation is not willing to associate The URANTIA Book with those materials.

Promotion of unity and peace among the readership

Genuine, justifiable and durable unity can be built only on the acceptance of wise cooperation and recognition of the revelators' plan for the revelation. Unity must be principled. It would be very easy to achieve unity within the readership for the sake of public relations if the Foundation gave into certain demands and gave public licenses for the use of the text and trademarks, or better still, simply to drop the text into the public domain. These demands to allow blanket, public licenses would virtually allow anyone to do as they pleased with the text as it would become impossible to monitor adherence to the conditions of license.

It would be extremely unwise for the Foundation to compromise the Plan to this degree for the sake of unity.

Unity, if achievable at all, must be principled. The basic principles and fundamentals need to be accepted. Unity must not be bought by sacrificing the will of the revelators: the uncompromissable responsibility of the Foundation to fulfill its trust. Unity for the sake of unity is dangerous. The idea of a (re)established unity of the movement is desirable and hopefully will prevail. But unity cannot be achieved through concessions such as giving up the copyright and/or trademarks.

Arguments, sometimes angry, occasionally friendly, whose objective is to extract concessions from the Foundation and to lure it to deviations from its principles, for the sake of unity, are presented every day. Trustee, Gard Jameson, in answer to statements made at a recent USUA conference made it very clear that the Foundation was not like the straw house in the children's story of the "three little pigs." He used this metaphor to indicate that the Foundation's house is built out of bricks and will stand strong and true to its trust to protect the inviolate text of The Urantia Book, and in order to do this it must maintain the copyright and marks.

We understand that there will be those who don't want to join with us in this task and we respect their decision in a spirit of brotherhood and unity. All the Foundation is asking of readers is to recognize the law and conduct their dissemination activities within that law.

Conclusion

We should always remember that this life on this planet is the beginning of the most exciting adventure of searching for God our Father, but it is also the place where human beings are loyalty tested. Ultimately, what we are doing is not so important because the Most Highs rule over the planet and the book teaches us that the succession of failures in former revelations, the betrayal of the Planetary Prince and default of Adam and Eve, were beneficial in the long run because of the important lessons learned. The most important thing is the way we exercise our free will, our loyalty to the revelation and the determination we show to follow the plan that has been established by the revelators.

We all observe and experience that, for the present time, The Urantia Book is appealing only to a minority of individuals. This is proof that the book was given to us before the world was ready for it. Therefore and once again, Urantia Foundation is willing to cooperate with all individuals and service oriented groups all over the world who realize the importance of such a project, who understand the necessity for friendly cooperation and loyalty to the revelators' plan, and to establish a solid and stable foundation for the time to come when the teachings will be accepted on a broader scale.

At this time, I would like to quote one of my predecessors in Trust: "We must be living examples of this new revelation -- individually and collectively."

And in conclusion, the following quote from The Urantia Book:

"And this which your eyes now behold, this small beginning of twelve commonplace men, shall multiply and grow until eventually the whole earth shall be filled with the praise of my Father And it will not be so much by the words you speak as by the lives you live that men will know you have been with me and have learned of the realities of the kingdom. And while I would lay no grievous burdens upon your minds, I am about to put upon your souls the solemn responsibility of representing me in the world when I shall presently leave you as I now represent my Father in this life which I am living in the flesh." [1566:4]

Thank you for your attention.