

Friends of the URANTIA Revelation,

There are events that are presently occurring which are of central importance in the spiritual evolution of civilization on this planet. I am referring to the hearings that are ongoing in the Federal Court in California, between the URANTIA Foundation, and the organization that has called itself Urantian Research. The URANTIA Foundation is bringing suit against Urantian Research for the violation of the Trademark and Service Mark Registration which the Foundation holds on the name "URANTIA" and the copyright of the text of The URANTIA Book. It is necessary that readers of The URANTIA Book become aware of the import of this situation. The following are personal thoughts on some of the crucial questions being raised on the issues surrounding the copyright trial.

Some have asked, "What purpose does the copyright serve?"

It must be realized that legally, economically, in the affairs of men, The URANTIA Book does not exist if it is not a copyrighted entity. The issue is not one of control over The URANTIA Book. Without the copyright, there is no URANTIA Book; simply a series of writings with which anyone may do as they please. Anyone could use revelatory quotes mixed in with their own interpretations without indicating where one began and the other left off. No one could say which was original revelation, for there would no longer be an official body of revelation.

The purpose of the copyright is not to control what individuals may say about The URANTIA Book or its contents. Its purpose is to insure that revelation and personal interpretation remain recognizably and distinctly separate. Urantian Research has jeopardized that purpose in major ways. They have mixed URANTIA Book quotations, often in distorted form with their own insights, and failed to indicate by quotation marks and proper referencing, what part of their literature was from The URANTIA Book, and what was not. Their use of the registered URANTIA name has given to some the misleading impression that their interpretation of the revelation is in some way an officially recognized version. I myself was bothered by this impression for a period of three years, until, after coming into close contact with F. U. S. L. A. and the URANTIA Brotherhood, I realized that there was no "official" interpretation of what The URANTIA Book teaches. It is the copyright that insures that our revelation remains independent of any one person's interpretation.

Some may ask, "Why should the URANTIA Foundation be allowed to control the availability of The URANTIA Book?"

In reality, it is the Foundation that guarantees the right of any individual to have The URANTIA Book. If the copyright were broken, one could never be sure that what one was receiving was indeed the original URANTIA Revelation. The URANTIA Foundation does not limit anyone from receiving The URANTIA Book; by its maintenance of the copyright, it guarantees that any person can obtain the revelation as it was originally given to the planet.

Some have said, "We should have the freedom to do what we want with the URANTIA revelation."

It should be remembered that, unlike false liberty, true freedom ever goes hand in hand with responsibility. We of this generation are intrusted with the weighty responsibility of protecting the Fifth Epochal Revelation for the generations to come. The liberty of personal influence over the form or content of the revelation, is a liberty we must not allow ourselves to indulge in, for it jeopardizes the very revelation that future Urantians are looking to us to preserve. The copyright insures our responsible freedom; it protects The URANTIA Book from the abusive false liberties that some will attempt to secure for themselves.

Some have said, "Urantian Research has but a small following, and they do not present enough of a threat to warrant the efforts and cost of a long court proceeding."

If the copyright is upheld in court, a legal precedent will be established. This will allow the URANTIA Foundation to quickly and effectively deal with groups or individuals that might pose a much more substantial threat to the preservation of the revelation. For instance, if the URANTIA Foundation had to fight a years-long court battle with a group that was all the while actively and effectively distorting the content of The URANTIA Book, irreparable damage might be done to the mission of the revelation before the case could be settled. There will be individuals with the charismatic appeal that Urantian Research lacks. They may attempt to use the Fifth Epochal Revelation as a tool for their own power and glory, their own self-serving ends. The Foundation must have the legal precedents to effectively protect the revelation from such misuse.

Some may say, "Taking legal action against our fellows contradicts the ideals held high in The URANTIA Book."

Jesus himself counseled that the apostles should "be as wise as serpents but as harmless as doves". He clearly perceived that spiritual truth survives or is lost within the arena of the affairs of men. He also taught that the courts of the land are the rightful arbiters of these secular affairs. We must be "harmless as doves" in our personal dealings with those whose actions threaten the URANTIA revelation. But we must also be "wise as serpents". Our love must be matched by our wisdom in assuring that the spiritual truth that has been intrusted to us is preserved intact for future generations.

Many have asked, "What can I do to help in this situation?"

Although in the largest understanding of things, the Father's will shall prevail, we as the instruments of that will, must take the necessary human steps. The individual services we can each render can be sought in communication with our Father-fragments. However, there are several things we can all do. We can pray daily, alone or in groups, for wisdom and courage for those who are carrying on the more immediate struggle in the courts. We can communicate our grateful

support and thanks to the Foundation, for the stand it is taking (any effort is heartened by the encouragement of a cheering section). We can send support in the form of financial contributions to help with the heavy costs of carrying on the court proceedings. In conversation with fellow URANTIA Book readers, we can try to stimulate a deeper understanding of the gravity of the copyright issue, and the position that the Foundation must take on it. And we can, alone and together, continue to explore ways of augmenting the Foundation's efforts.

In summary, there are good reasons for the URANTIA revelation being in a copyrighted book form. One of the major advantages is that because it is preservable printed information unlike any previous revelation, it can be protected from the interpretive distortion that results from misguided human zeal. Paul of the early church, although deeply spiritual and idealistic, seriously distorted the fourth epochal revelation for succeeding generations. Will we allow The URANTIA Book to be accorded a similar fate? Will future generations struggle with multiple texts and interpretations, trying to piece together what we have in its original crystal clarity? Will the beauty, the precision, the balanced symmetry of organization of our URANTIA revelation be lost to them? These are the crucial questions that we, by the acts we perform in the very near future, must answer. I pray sincerely that each one of us may have the wise insight, the courageous initiative, to search out the Father's will in these matters, and to act decisively in accord with that will.

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