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# The Pilgrim

*A Tennessee Voice for the Fifth Epochal Readership*

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Volume 3, Number 1

April, 1992

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## Responses - Dialogue

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If there's anything I've learned in my later years (age 52), it's that there's always at least two sides to a controversy. If you will open your minds for a moment, I will try to describe a side that was missing from your February issue.

My experience with the controversy goes like this:

I first became aware of the underlying problem in the early 1980's when participating in the organization of a new Urantia Society and serving as one of its officers. I was startled and somewhat puzzled by the depth and breadth of hostility toward the Foundation. The hostility centered around the Foundation's policies for managing the "business" of the revelation -- book pricing, dust cover design, accompanying promotional literature, outreach methods, sanctioning of secondary works, etc.

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I witnessed and participated in the debates about these issues in Chicago while serving for a few years on the General Council of Urantia Brotherhood. Again and again those who disagreed with the management policies developed by the Foundation sought to bring pressure through the General Council to replace those policies with ones preferred by the dissidents.

I have watched these disagreements develop into a controversy over these intervening years. Failing in their efforts to change policy direction from the "inside," these same dissidents set about to circumvent these policies from the "outside." For instance, some folks in Boulder set up a book distributorship whereby they could purchase books at a discount, resell them at no profit, and thereby circumvent the Foundation's policy on book pricing. Over time, this

constituted about forty percent of the sales of the book in this country -- effectively subverting the legitimate policy-making authority of the Foundation in these matters. (To some, this began to look more like "rebellion" than "disagreement.") Moving to protect its legitimate interests, the Foundation quit selling books through distributors. The "rebels," of course, now blame the Foundation for the current difficulty in making books available to the public.

I have experience with this sort of political maneuvering by virtue of my job as a cabinet member in state government. All too often I observed situations where social "rebels" try to subvert duly-determined policies, and then, when the duly-constituted authorities act to enforce their duly-determined policies, the "rebels" blame the authorities for the ensuing difficulties. So it goes.

I have thought long and hard about the rift between the Brotherhood and the Foundation, and have come to the conclusion that, despite all the rhetoric about "evil personalities" and despite all the sophistries of "group wisdom," it boils down to a power struggle over management policies regarding the "business of running a revelation." It's not so much a question of whether or not one agrees with the management policies of the Foundation, as it is a question of whether or not one will tolerate duly-determined policies with which one does not agree. This is a fundamental "law and order" question -- a question of rebellion against duly-constituted authority! In my opinion, the "rebels" are quite happy with the split with the Foundation in that they now feel free from any policy oversight -- they can do what they have long-since wanted to do, authority be damned.

This is my experience with the controversy. But even seeing both sides of the issue, where does this leave us? This wonderful book tells us that religionists will inevitably form social groups, but that what happens to those groups will depend largely on wise leadership. Also, the book describes how Jesus delegated the job of organization to the apostles and to John's twelve, and steadfastly refused to solve their social problems for them.

So it is clear to me that these organizational problems are ours to solve, for better for or worse. And it is clear to me that solutions will not come from public opinion polls, from egalitarianism, or from power struggles.

I think it's time to quit bashing each other, and put our energies toward working to understand these complex problems. It's time to seek out wise leadership and honor it when and as it emerges. It's time for social cooperation under the "rule of law," even while we work toward spiritual unity under the "rule of love."

Let us not confuse our spiritual mission, and its attendant problems, with our social responsibilities, and their attendant problems.

While we can attain spiritual unity based on goals, we will never all agree on solutions to our social problems. In our inner life, we must count on our common dedication to knowing and doing the Father's will -- even when our will would be otherwise; in our outer life, we must count on our willingness to live under a "rule of law" -- even when we don't like the duly-determined law.

While we have perfect guides for the inner life, we must settle for imperfect (but hopefully wise) leaders for the outer life.

While we are assured success in the inner life if only our intentions are sincere, there are no guarantees that good intentions will yield success in "managing a revelation" -- just look at our planetary history.

Sincerely,

John M. Andrews  
242 Seventh Street  
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PS: I think it's fair to ask, from a practical point of view: "How are we doing?" In this regard, I offer two items that, to me, are suggestive of our current status. Ponder these for a moment.

A recent survey of "new-age" literature described Urantia as "a Satan cult group operating out of Boulder, Colorado." (Unfair for sure, but an interesting perception.)

If the Caligastia secession were to have been decided by a vote, Van would have lost! (So much for group wisdom.)

# In Response to Mr. Andrews

by Bruce McCoy

With simple use of language Mr. Andrews establishes the guys in the black hats and the guys in the white hats in his discussion about the development of the controversy at the Foundation. The bad guys are called dissidents and rebels who are interested in circumventing and subverting the "duly-determined policies" of the Foundation. Yet, when I look at what they did it is hard to see the severity of their sin. The "folks in Boulder" simply set up a book distributorship which bought books at the wholesale price and resold them at no profit. This is called a "circumvention" of the Foundation policy and yet it appears as though it fully complied with policy. Why is it called a circumvention? Why is it not simply a service? Why was it not simply a legitimate way for a positively motivated group to expend its money in service to society?

Mr. Andrews appears to be a man who is used to being part of the "ruling group." He seems to have a predisposition to see things from the point of view of the entitled, i.e., to see anyone within the constituency who disagrees as an upstart or an insurgent. He relegates the problem to being one of a central power struggle, a question of law and order. He chooses not to look at the real truth value of the positions of the various sides of the controversy. By simply calling those who are not in power bad names they can be devalued and dismissed.

But in this case the laws which apply are rooted in the laws of Copyright. The Foundation is not a law making body. It is a nonprofit organization whose authority rests solely upon the copyrights which it holds. And it turns out when the copyright laws are applied to revelations from God they become vague and uncertain. Therefore the power to win the struggle which the foundation holds is uncertain. I refer you to some writing by Kristen Maaherra following this article which addresses this issue of copyright laws covering the works of God.

There is always a tension between two polar opposites which exists in the way a ruling body sees itself. On the one hand a ruling group can see itself as servants of those whom it leads and on the other it can see itself as superior subjugators of those whom it leads. I agree with Mr. Andrews that the question here is ultimately a question of wise leadership. And I do not believe there is much wisdom currently coming from 533 Diversy Parkway because I do not believe that the trustees at this point see themselves much as servants of the readership. Instead, they see themselves as enlightened ones who know more about how things should proceed than anyone else and therefore they need heed no input from the readership at large. The fact that they saw local groups selling books at no profit as subversion rather than service is indicative of their own paranoid mentality being oriented toward subjugation and repression rather than cooperative effort towards spreading the word. And now their behavior which has become so involved with these reactionary efforts at repression and combat against faithful believers is evidence of their own default as ready servants of the movement.

Consider the following excerpts from the researches of Kristen Maaherra.

**"If this is a divine revelation authored by celestial beings, it does not and never did fall under United States copyright law. The Urantia Papers were in the public domain from the moment they were gifted to our planet by the revelators. This is because in the United States, you cannot copyright a work authored by a non-human.**

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**Either the circles are the banner of Michael and the emblem of the Trinity government of all creation or they aren't. If they are, they can't be trademarked -- United States trademark law, just as copyright law, has very clear rules in these areas. The situations of non-human authorship and religious marks come up frequently in**

these government agencies. If the word 'Urantia' is how you distinguish your belief system (the "real religion of Jesus"), then that word can't be appropriated as a commercial symbol.

The personalities who brought us 'the shadow of a hair's turning' certainly knew copyright and trademark law and certainly wouldn't ask humans to lie to obtain a copyright and trademarks on the **Urantia Papers**. Simple as that. The **Urantia Papers** are a gift from God to his children -- all his children -- on **Urantia**. And now that I've studied United States Copyright Law, I firmly believe that the **plan to copyright the Urantia Papers never originated in the minds of the revelators**. That is the only conclusion consistent with the high ethical principals taught us by the revelators.

We all know Jesus' beautiful, 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's; render unto God that which is God's.' Urantians have been led to believe that copyrighting our revelation is just 'rendering unto Caesar.' However, what we haven't been aware of is that in the situation of Copyright Law, Caesar says, 'If it's God's, I'm not going to waste my time and tax-paying citizens' money protecting it for God. Let God protect it for himself.' The Urantia Papers were published under authority of the Ancients of Days, not Caesar. There is nothing here to render unto Caesar. The revelators aren't tax-paying citizens, so the government isn't gong to spend money protecting their property.

I think we are supposed to protect the integrity of the Urantia Papers by filling the world with the fifth epochal revelation. Print enough copies so that 'the real text' will never be in doubt. Get the Papers into every language, into every home. Every human being on the planet needs the opportunity to accept these supernal teachings. Until each person has a chance to make a decision, our job is not done."

## Historical Perspective

by Greg Thomas  
Brooklyn CT

The February issue of the newsletter, The Pilgrim, and your various and serious discussions of the central issue of UBK distribution and a central controlling body, the Urantia Foundation, struck a familiar cord.

As a reader of the UBK and a firm believer in its truths, I hope you will not find it too odd that I am also ending my first year at a major East Coast seminary in route to a Masters of Divinity degree. A discussion of why I chose this path in what many of you would assume is a traditional Christian construct is a matter for another time. I share this with you for another reason.

The questions that you and I struggle with concerning the dispute between the U. Foundation and the U. Brotherhood and others, is not a new one. It seems to me that the issues that we are discussing boil down to this; Central Control. Should there be in existence an organization that will determine policy of distribution, guard against the corruption of the UBK material, and decide by whom, when and how

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Put into the language of the 1st through 5th century AD; (as distasteful as this may sound)--- by what mechanism will heretical teachings and movements be disclaimed? And--- What authority shall determine that which is canonical and that which is heretical. As much as you may cringe at this statement, please hear (read) me out.

The Early Christian church met many challenges from various movements and the leaders of these movements that threatened to fragment the teachings of Christ and His Apostles. Before a complete canon had been collected and agreed upon, charismatic evangelists culled writings, that were in circulation at the time, that supported their own philosophical theories. UBK readers are fortunate that our text is complete



(extant), but without safeguards there is nothing to stop individuals from extracting portions of the text to support aims other than those of our Invisible Guides.

The Gnostic's pointed to the two creation stores in Genesis, (Gen 1-2:4a & Gen 2:4b-2:25) claiming that the first creation was a purely spiritual one that was created by what they called the Demiurge, a bumbling near God who created an imperfect spiritual world that was corrupted by sin. Due to the corruption of many of the spiritual beings a physical world had to be created to accommodate these fallen spirits, thus the material world. Hence, they taught, physical reality was evil and the Son of the True God could not have been born of woman. Therefore they denied Christ Michael's life with us in the flesh, after all, Divine Goodness could not or would not encase itself in a sinful and corruptible flesh body.

From their selective readings they preached that; 1 Since there were a finite number of these fallen spirits, not all humans possessed an immortal soul, 2 The body is the prison of the soul, they therefore cared not what they did with their physical selves to the point of neglect on one hand and vice on the other, 3 Only by understanding the Gnostic mysteries could one be assured that he possessed a spark of the divine and upon death be reunited with God.

Arius, another heretic of the early church denied the Divinity of Christ. He claimed that Christ was God's first creation and therefore denied one of the Christian church's fundamental teachings, that Christ is coeternal and coequal with God the father.

As readers of the UBK, we understand better the creative process of God the Sevenfold, but the Early church did not. To them, if one called into question whether there "was a time when He (Christ) was not," the typical Arian statement, then the entire Christian doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ was called into question. Beyond this the very fabric of the Gospels was in jeopardy, i.e.: "I and the Father are one," "He who has seen me has seen the father," and of course the entire prologue in John(1:1-1:18).

There are many other movements found to be heretical by the Early Church, too numerous and involved to mention here. Suffice it to say, these movements over the first 4-5 centuries threatened to so severely fragment the Christian Church that they had to be dealt with.

Out of these controversies came the various creeds that were developed in reaction to these perceived heresies. It was necessary to determine what was Christian as well as what was not.

This was not necessary in the first Century AD when the word and truth was still fresh in the mouths of eye witness apostles, but it was vital in the 3rd and 4th century as the waters were muddier and the faith was in serious danger of fragmentation.

The lesson to be learned here in the First Century of the 5th Epoch is not to wait until fragmentation is immanent, but decide now how challenges to and potential corruption of the UBK and its teachings will be handled and by what mechanism.

## **The Text Inviolable**

I must say that I am sympathetic with much of the discussion I have read in the February issue, but the issue raised by Herman A Sain, that the preservation, inviolate, of the UBK text is "both unwise and impractical" is a position that demands the most careful and scrupulous attention.

Although I agree with his premise that the meanings of words change and evolve with each passing generation within a specific language group, I would strongly argue against revision. This would seem to me an extremely dangerous solution to the stated problem.

I would argue instead for an annotated UBK and a comprehensive interpreters Dictionary of the UBK. This would have the effect of freezing at this moment in time, when the meanings of potentially troublesome words and phrases are still clearly understood, the true and original intention of the UBK's Celestial Authors to be used as an inviolate base which future readers and scholars will treasure.

Would we rewrite Shakespeare's use of the word fool simple because it means -one who does ill advised things- to us today? No! It is part of the richness of literature that we study to understand the usage of the word 400 years ago as the court jester, a job description, rather than an unflattering adjective. How much more sacred is the UBK than a Shakespearian play?

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One of the most significant reasons that the King James Version of the Bible seems so archaic to Sain and others is because of the very revision process that he advises. The texts that Biblical translators have to work with have been violated repeatedly throughout the centuries.

Any human who takes on the task of updating the language of the UBK will either consciously or unconsciously bring his or her own mental furniture to the process. Worse still, there may be those who would bring their own agenda to the process. This would be disastrous?

It is naive to think that Sain's proposed editors would stop at simple updating the lexicon. With all the best intentions, once words are allowed to be changed, these editors will want to change the language of passages to, in their minds, more clearly state the original author's intended meanings. This would result

either in intentional or unintentional corruption of the material.

Again, the only book akin to the UBK is the Bible, so I will use it as an example.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *nephesh* is used hundreds of times. No one has a clue as to what it meant to the original author(s), so therefore translators and theologians have had to employ systematic word studies to try to reconstruct its meaning. In Genesis alone it is used 44 times, (Genesis. 1:20,21,24,30; 2:7,19; 9:4,5,10,12,15,16; 12:4,5,13; 14:21; 17:14; 19,17,19,20; 23:8; 27:4,19,25,31; 32:30,31; 34:3,8; 35:18; 36:6; 37:21; 14:21; 17:14; 19:17,19,20; 27:4,19,25,31; 32:30,31; 34:3,8; 35:18; 36:6; 37:21; 44:30; 46:15,18,22,25,26,27; 49:6). Modern translators believe that the word had several meanings to the Ancient Israelite; soul, life, throat, heart, blood, breath, et al. These Ancients no doubt never thought that the meaning of this word would cause so much scholastic consternation 4 millennium later, so they did not even consider (or more probably understand) the concept of annotation. But now translators in their attempt to clarify the meaning in English have scholars wondering if they have a clue of the original intent. But the fact remains that we still have, inviolate, the Ancient Hebrew texts as a basis for the start of our investigations. So much the better for the UBK if it is annotated now.

The most serious problems of revisions may be in the specific area that Sain mentions, mainly the updating of language. When the Greeks of the mid 3rd century BC translated the Hebrew texts, all feminine attributes of God had to be translated into Greek words that meant both male and female, they had no gender specific language to use. Then when the Greek was later translated into Latin, the translators only brought forward the masculine. The result was the loss of the feminine component of God.

Whether this was intentional or not, it destroyed the original intent of the author, and if we did not have the original language of the Hebrew text as the base source, this knowledge would have been lost forever!

In the New Testament, the problem comes into clearer focus. In trying to update the texts, early Christian scribes (with their best intentions notwithstanding) imposed 3rd and 4th century notions into the texts that they were copying. Thus the following problems:

1) a. Diametrically opposed statements in the body of a single letter of Paul. Compare 1 Corinthians 8:4-13 with 1 Corinthians 10:14-33. On one hand Paul is saying (8:4-13) in regard to eating meat that has been sacrificed to an idol, vrs 8, "But food does not bring us closer to God, we are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do." In other words, it matters not if you eat food sacrificed to a pagan god. However, 10:28 states, "But if any one says to you, 'this has been offered in sacrifice' then do not eat it..."

b. In 11:5 Paul supports a woman's right to pray and prophes aloud in the church. But later in 14:34 he would forbid women to even speak in church. Now, Paul may have had his problems, but I find it hard to believe that he actually wrote these diametrically opposed statements in the same letter. Biblical scholars believe strongly that this is the work of a later revision.

2) Paul in his Galatians letter calls Peter a hypocrite for insisting that Gentiles be circumcised Gal (2:11-14), but the writer of Acts would have us believe that Paul performed this very ceremony of circumcision on one of his gentile followers, Timothy, (Acts 16:1-3).

These are but a few examples, others are too numerous to mention.

How can we not repeat the mistakes of the past? By preserving the text of the UBK inviolate. We must produce an annotated version of the UBK and develop an Interpreters Dictionary so that the original intent is clearly understood. And we must absolutely refrain from movements that will ultimately corrupt the Divine message of the UBK. Future generations of readers and scholars will thank us, and find such a system an invaluable tool in their quest to better understand the inspirational truths of the UBK.

never thought that the meaning of this word would cause so much scholastic consternation 4 millennium later, so they did not even consider (or more probably understand) the concept of annotation. But now translators in their attempt to clarify the meaning in English have scholars wondering if they have a clue of the original intent. But the fact remains that we still have, inviolate, the Ancient Hebrew texts as a basis for the start of our investigations. So much the better for the UBK if it is annotated now.

The most serious problems of revisions may be in the specific area that Sain mentions, mainly the updating of language. When the Greeks of the mid 3rd century BC translated the Hebrew texts, all feminine attributes of God had to be translated into Greek words that meant both male and female, they had no gender specific language to use. Then when the Greek was later translated into Latin, the translators only brought forward the masculine. The result was the loss of the feminine component of God.

Whether this was intentional or not, it destroyed the original intent of the author, and if we did not have the original language of the Hebrew text as the base source, this knowledge would have been lost forever!

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*The Pilgrim is published by the group of Urantia Book Readers in Knoxville, TN.  
We welcome your response and comments. Please send them to:*

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# AN OPEN LETTER TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE URANTIA FOUNDATION AND TO DEDICATED READERS OF THE URANTIA BOOK

What began many years ago as a noble venture to assist Urantia in knowing **truth** has become, in just a few short years, an embarrassment to the mission of **truth**.

Visibly poised to insure access to unaltered **truth** contained in The Urantia Book, the Urantia Foundation served this need quite well for many years. In blind pursuit of weird policy in recent years, the Foundation no longer fulfills its purpose.

The accelerating decline of The Urantia Foundation will soon reach a point of irreversible descent.

I ask, of what **value** is the Foundation today?

Decisions made by the Trustees have all but eliminated books from effective distribution, and these actions have resulted in discord and disarray.

Decisions made by the Trustees have squandered **huge** amounts of money prosecuting readers who simply want to spread the word of God's plan more effectively to those who need it.

The sole activity of **importance** to the Trustees has become waging inane tactical battles with readers.

According to the Foundation's own legal filings, the majority of the budget is being spent for legal expenses, not in making the book available in useful form to more and more readers.

What business is the Foundation in anyway? Is it the legal business, or is it the business of preserving and disseminating **truth** to the planet?

I ask, how long can it continue?

Here are my guesses:

- (1) Until the **big** money contributors get sick and tired of throwing away personal assets needlessly.
- (2) Until other readers stop sending **any** money to the Foundation.
- (3) Until the accumulated resources are gone.
- (4) Or, until the Trustees themselves wake-up and admit the errors of their direction.

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In the "fight to the death", the apparent motive of legal attacks on a number of individuals and groups of readers, the only death recorded will be that of the Foundation, whose resources are being slowly but surely sucked dry every day on an output of meaningless and endless legal drivel. One conspicuous group of survivors will be the lawyers who will take the money as long as it lasts. But I remind you, readers will also survive, as will **truth**.

Show me even one minor gain you've made through legal activity and I believe I can find you a dozen losses.

**Right now**, readers are stepping-up their own activities in thwarting the Foundation's "authority", every day, all over Urantia.

**Right now**, you are powerless to stem the tides you've created by your failure to see **first** the spiritual purpose of your **trust** position.

**Right now**, in third-world corners of the planet, there are printers all too happy to print unauthorized publications. Ask any major computer software publisher. If you think your legal maneuvers will prevent it, particularly when your well runs dry, you'd better think again.

When it is "said and done", when the "war is over", there will be readers who will somehow get the book published. When it happens you won't have enough resources left to wage a battle, then distribution of **truth** contained in The Urantia Book will flourish.

And, you'd better hope I'm right, because if I'm not, if the Book doesn't flourish when the Foundation is essentially gone, you'd have served **no purpose** whatsoever to mankind with your Foundation efforts.

## THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Can the Foundation change direction? Is it too late?

A conditional **maybe** to both these questions.

I don't personally believe it possible without **total** reorganization, including the recognition that some, perhaps most, even all of the current Trustees will be perceived by the people that count -- the readers -- as incapable of exercising the leadership, commitment, and resources necessary to achieve spiritual purpose.

**Total** reorganization means unequivocal dedication to maintaining and spreading **truth** on Urantia.

A half hearted effort simply won't fly. Nor will it be possible to return to the status of the past.

You can't patch up the damage you've already done. It may be possible, however, to restructure the Foundation to include the very elements you've so casually dismissed as unimportant, and those whom you so blatantly attacked as perceived enemies. A new and **effective** coalition must be formed, and this can only be achieved through open and above-board cooperation, not through additional maneuvering to maintain personal control and power.

It's your choice, of course. You've already engaged in a plan which has brought disaster. What you do about it is the responsibility inherent in your positions of **trust**.

It seems to me that these questions must be answered. Are you **trustworthy** in putting the needs of truth seekers ahead of egoism? Are you capable of generating the cooperation necessary to avoid institutional disability or death? Are you flexible and open to reality? Can you even recognize the time to cut your losses? Do you even want to?

In the meantime, we, the readers, will be watching and waiting -- and not so patiently. We'll be waiting for the inevitable and impending fatal stumble, because we are certain to take advantage of your weaknesses to exercise our collective will and strength in making the **truth**

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Sincerely,

David A. Smith  
1236 Wallingford Road  
Knoxville, TN 37923  
(615)691-4213